

FROM MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION COMPETENCE TO PEDAGOGICAL ENACTMENT: THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS IN VIETNAMESE SCHOOLS

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Received April 24, 2026. Revised June 2, 2026. Accepted June 25, 2026.

Abstract: This study examines the gap between teachers' multicultural education competence and its reported pedagogical enactment in Vietnamese general education. Multicultural education is understood as an approach to teaching that recognizes students' cultural, linguistic, and social diversity and uses this recognition to inform curriculum, participation, interaction, and assessment. The study approaches competence as a professional capacity whose classroom use is shaped by school conditions. It draws on survey data ($N = 800$), a professional development intervention ($n = 120$), and illustrative qualitative interview material. At baseline, teachers reported stronger attitudes toward diversity than knowledge and instructional skills. In the intervention group, pre-post comparisons showed increases in knowledge ($M = 2.84$ to 3.71 , $d = .83$), skills ($M = 3.02$ to 3.77 , $d = .71$), attitudes ($M = 4.08$ to 4.44 , $d = .58$), and values ($M = 3.69$ to 4.04 , $d = .63$). The absence of a control group limits these results to evidence of within-participant changes and does not support a causal interpretation of intervention effects. The 12-week follow-up means are reported descriptively. Knowledge and skills were lower at follow-up than immediately after training, although the available data do not establish an inferentially confirmed decline. To interpret these patterns, the article proposes three conditions relevant to pedagogical enactment: conceptual guidance, instructional exemplarity, and institutional continuity. This model remains provisional and is intended to organize the available evidence and provide a basis for further empirical examination.

Keywords: multicultural competence; pedagogical enactment; institutional mediation

1. Introduction

Multicultural education has gained prominence as classrooms have become more diverse in cultural, linguistic, and social terms. In this study, it refers to a pedagogical orientation that recognizes these differences and brings them into decisions about curriculum, participation, teacher-student interaction, and assessment. The emphasis is instructional because the question pursued here concerns what happens when commitments to diversity enter the practical work of teaching. Policy frameworks and professional standards in many countries, including Vietnam, now give greater weight to teachers' capacity to respond to student diversity. Relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions have consequently become central to accounts of effective teaching (Banks, 2019, p. 11; International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021, pp. 85–86). The more difficult empirical issue is how far these expectations reach classroom practice. Formal frameworks often specify the competence expected of teachers without explaining how it becomes usable in everyday instruction. Prior research has documented a related tension: teachers can hold affirming views of diversity and still encounter difficulties when those views must inform concrete pedagogical decisions (Civitillo et al., 2019; Spanierman et al., 2011). The question is therefore how multicultural commitments acquire practical form in the organization of teaching. This problem has particular relevance in Vietnamese general education. Policy discussions increasingly invoke inclusion and responsiveness (Pham & Doan, 2022), while teachers work across markedly different institutional settings. Access to professional development, leadership practices, and opportunities for collegial exchange vary across schools and regions (Pham &

Doan, 2022; Nguyen & Pham, 2023). Such variations make an exclusively teacher-centered explanation inadequate. Competence can exist without becoming consistently visible in practice when the conditions needed for its use are weak or discontinuous. The present study examines this relationship between competence and enactment and explores how school conditions may shape whether multicultural education competence becomes usable and sustained in teachers' work.

The analysis is organized around three research questions. They guide an empirically informed examination of the evidence and are not used as a causal test of intervention effectiveness:

(RQ1) How does the competence–practice gap in multicultural education manifest in Vietnamese general education?; (RQ2) What descriptive changes are observed in different components of competence after structured professional development?; (RQ3) What institutional conditions appear to support or weaken the sustained pedagogical enactment of such competence over time?

The competence-practice gap in Vietnam may not be adequately explained by teacher capacity alone. A less resolved question concerns what happens to commitments to diversity when teachers must accommodate them within established school routines and instructional demands. The analysis therefore considers competence alongside the institutional conditions in which it is used. From this perspective, the study develops the idea of *institutional convertibility* to describe the problem of turning professional capacity into usable and sustainable pedagogical practice. A provisional three-condition model is used to organize this argument. The empirical materials provide support for examining the model, although the design cannot establish it as a validated causal theory.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Multicultural Education Competence

Multicultural education competence is conceptualized here as the professional capacity to interpret student diversity and bring that interpretation into pedagogical judgment (Banks, 2019, pp. 44–49; Deardorff, 2015). It encompasses knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity, skills for adapting instruction and interaction, attitudes of openness and respect, and values associated with equity and participation. Taken together, these components describe an orientation to practice rather than a checklist of discrete behaviors. Teacher education and professional development frameworks often translate MEC into competence standards so that the construct can be assessed and addressed through training. This operationalization is useful, but it can narrow attention to whether competence is reported as present. Classroom enactment, however, poses a distinct challenge. The present study therefore distinguishes reported professional capacity from enactment understood as the use of that capacity in pedagogical decisions (Civitillo et al., 2019). This distinction matters because policy recognition of intercultural understanding, evident in the International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021) and the OECD (2018), offers limited guidance on how teachers work with such competence under uneven institutional conditions. Conceptual specification is necessary, yet it leaves the practical problem of enactment open.

Evidence from Vietnam illustrates this problem at the level of teaching practice. Hua and Le (2025, p. 10) found that Vietnamese EFL instructors incorporated cultural content through interactive and reflective activities, with variations across teachers and professional backgrounds. Chau and Truong (2019) reported a related difficulty in Vietnamese secondary schools: awareness of intercultural integration did not consistently appear in classroom activities. This finding suggests that competence can be more evident in teachers' understanding than in the stability of their pedagogical practice. The educational setting in which competence develops also matters. In Chinese ethnic minority education, Wang (2022, p.1) found that multicultural competence did not receive much attention in teacher education programs and its development was shaped by broader social, economic, political, and educational reform contexts. While the Chinese case cannot be directly generalized to Vietnam, it nevertheless supports examining competence together with the conditions under which teachers are expected to use it.

2.2. The Competence-Practice Gap

The literature repeatedly shows an uneven relationship between reported competence and classroom enactment. Treating this simply as inconsistency between belief and action obscures the practical work involved in turning an orientation toward diversity into instruction. Teachers require mechanisms to interpret broad principles, examples that make these principles pedagogically workable, and organizational conditions that allow new practices to be tried and revisited. The competence-practice gap can therefore be examined as a problem of translation across professional and institutional contexts. Recent studies provide further insight into the professional resources involved in this process. Comstock et al. (2023) reported relationships among professional learning, teachers' beliefs, self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching, and reported instruction. Paulick et al. (2024) found greater growth in culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy among teacher candidates who completed a hands-on anti-bias family and community engagement module than among earlier cohorts who did not. Greenlees et al. (2024) also examined the development of culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and attributional beliefs, with implications for educator preparation. These studies address diverse populations and outcomes, and thus do not provide direct evidence for the model proposed here. However, they still bear strong relevance to the present study by showing that favorable orientations and the professional resources required for culturally responsive practice are analytically distinct.

2.3. Institutional Mediation

Policy implementation research offers a valuable framework for situating this problem within schools. Here, the problem refers specifically to the difficulty of translating teachers' reported multicultural education competence and commitments to diversity into consistent pedagogical decisions within everyday school routines. Educational practices develop through interpretation and adaptation in particular organizational contexts (Ball et al., 2012; Spillane, 2004). Teachers work within collegial relationships, leadership arrangements, resource constraints, and established routines, all of which affect how formal expectations are understood and used. A fidelity account of implementation captures only part of this process because policy is repeatedly interpreted as it moves through institutions and reaches classroom judgment. Research on professional development makes a similar point. Continued practice, reflection, and feedback over time are important features of professional learning environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, pp. 14–16). Skills introduced in training may remain difficult to incorporate into regular teaching when such support is absent. This issue is especially relevant in Vietnam, where centrally established policy is implemented across diverse local settings. Schools differ in leadership, resources, and professional culture, and these differences can affect the opportunities teachers have to use what they learn. Studies of culturally responsive professional development make the institutional dimension more concrete. Castagno et al. (2023) examined a long-term model in rural, Indigenous-serving schools and analyzed teacher-developed curriculum units for culturally responsive principles and STEM practices. Nganga and Kambutu (2024, p. 1) highlighted contextually appropriate curriculum and community-based collaborative professional development in work with Native communities. Although their settings differ substantially from Vietnamese general education, these studies demonstrate how professional learning can be situated within sustained, collaborative, and context-sensitive activity rather than understood only as exposure to training.

Vietnamese research on teacher professional development provides a more immediate context for this argument. Policy has actively promoted teacher capacity building, while implementation varies at school level (Pham & Doan, 2022). The organization of learning activities, the quality of teaching materials, and the relationship between training content and classroom practice are among the factors considered in this work. These features direct attention to the institutional setting in which professional knowledge is used. A related difficulty concerns evaluation. Nguyen and Pham (2023, p. 93) identify a shortage of systematically developed and validated tools for assessing teacher

professional development in Vietnam. This limitation makes longer-term changes harder to document and constrains claims about what happens to competence after training.

2.4. Provisional Analytical Model: From Competence to Enactment

The literature reviewed above suggests that the competence-practice gap should be treated as a mediated process. The working proposition is that multicultural education competence becomes pedagogically useful under conditions that help teachers interpret it, apply it in instruction, and return to it over time. Given the limits of the present evidence, this proposition functions as an analytical heuristic. No statistically tested structural relationship among the proposed conditions is claimed.

Three conditions are proposed. Conceptual guidance concerns the interpretive resources teachers use to connect broad ideas about diversity, inclusion, and responsiveness with decisions about content, participation, interaction, and assessment. Strong commitment to diversity may otherwise remain difficult to express in instructional terms. Instructional exemplarity encompasses workable representations of practice, such as lesson examples, classroom strategies, discussion formats, assessment cues, and reflective tools. These resources can help teachers see how a principle might operate in a lesson without prescribing a single model of teaching. Institutional continuity concerns the opportunities schools provide for teachers to revisit and refine new practices through leadership support, peer collaboration, resource access, and continuing professional discussion. Together, these conditions form a provisional analytical model. The evidence in this study is used to examine whether this account is plausible and useful for interpretation. It does not establish the strength, direction, or causal ordering of relationships among the three conditions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study used an empirically informed analytical design to examine multicultural education competence and its reported enactment in Vietnamese general education (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative strand identified patterns across competence components and within-participant changes following structured professional development. Interview material was used to interpret how teachers and school leaders understood enactment and to illustrate institutional conditions that may shape the application of competence in practice. The design does not support a full causal theory-building claim. There was no control group, the qualitative material does not comprise multiple fully documented cases, and the proposed conditions were not formally tested as relationships. The three-condition model is therefore used as a provisional analytical account for subsequent empirical examination.

3.2. Participants and Sampling

The quantitative survey included a sample of 800 teachers working in Vietnamese general education. Participants were drawn from different school levels and institutional contexts in order to capture variations across the education system rather than restrict the analysis to a single locality or school type. The sample comprised teachers from primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools, as well as teachers working in metropolitan, regional urban, rural, and highland settings. A subsample of 120 teachers participated in the professional development intervention. These teachers completed the competence questionnaire at three time points: pre-intervention, immediately post-intervention, and at a 12-week follow-up. Because no control group was included, this design permits comparison within the same participants across time, but it does not permit strong causal inference about intervention effects.

Qualitative data were collected from teachers, school leaders, and education specialists and are utilized here as interpretive and illustrative material. The available study records used for this manuscript does not provide a sufficiently documented interview sample size, participant-selection

procedure, or case structure to support stronger claims about qualitative representativeness. These details are therefore not reconstructed or inferred in the present analysis.

3.3. Instrumentation and Reliability

The questionnaire, referred to in this paper as MECS-VN, measured four components of multicultural education competence: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was adapted for the Vietnamese general education context with reference to the multicultural teaching competence literature, and piloting considered item clarity, response consistency, and contextual suitability. The available study record does not contain the number of items per component, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, EFA, CFA, or a complete account of the adaptation process. These statistics cannot be reconstructed from the materials available for this manuscript. MECS-VN is consequently used here for component-level comparison and analysis of within-participant changes. The present study makes no claim that it establishes the instrument's reliability, factorial structure, construct validity, or broader psychometric validity. This distinction matters because stronger measurement claims require direct validation evidence. Thresia et al. (2025, p. 303), for example, developed a Multiculturally Responsive Teaching instrument with 335 pre-service English teachers and assessed validity and reliability through Rasch analysis, reporting Cronbach's alpha of .92 together with person and item reliability indicators. Their instrument is different from MECS-VN. It is cited to indicate the type of evidence needed before MECS-VN could be presented as a validated scale.

3.4. Professional Development Intervention

The professional development program combined conceptual input, guided lesson design, classroom-oriented reflection, and peer discussion. Its design reflected the view that familiarity with multicultural principles is only one part of professional learning. Teachers also require opportunities to interpret those principles in relation to lessons, consider how they might work under local constraints, and discuss difficulties encountered in use. The program began with key concepts in multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching. Teachers then redesigned selected instructional activities with attention to student diversity, participation, and cultural relevance. Subsequent discussions focused on how these activities could be adapted to the conditions of their own schools.

3.5. Data Collection

Data were collected in three stages. The first stage consisted of the baseline survey administered before the intervention. The second stage involved the immediate post-intervention survey and measured short-term changes in competence components. The third stage consisted of a 12-week follow-up survey designed to examine whether these changes were retained. Qualitative interviews were conducted after the intervention and follow-up phases. Interview questions focused on teachers' understanding of multicultural education, their attempts to apply training content, the types of institutional support available in their schools, and the barriers that limited sustained enactment. School leaders and education specialists were interviewed about institutional expectations, professional development structures, and the extent to which schools provided conditions for continued practice.

3.6. Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis began with descriptive statistics for the four competence components. Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to evaluate within-participant changes from pre-intervention to immediate post-intervention measurement. The 12-week follow-up means were compared descriptively with the immediate post-intervention means to consider the apparent stability of the post-training pattern after teachers returned to school. Cohen's *d* was calculated for pre-post changes (Cohen, 1988, p. 20). Inferential *p* values are not reported for post-intervention to follow-

up differences because the raw paired dataset needed for those tests is not available in the study record used for this manuscript. The available materials likewise do not provide the item-level measurement information and model specifications required for a defensible EFA, CFA, structural equation model, or other advanced test of the proposed relationships.

Qualitative data were analyzed interpretively to identify recurring institutional explanations in the interviews, including leadership support, professional collaboration, instructional resources, shared pedagogical models, and opportunities for continued use after training. The manuscript materials do not document a formal multi-coder thematic procedure or an inter-coder reliability statistic. Interview excerpts are therefore used to illuminate possible mechanisms and not to support national-scale thematic claims. Integration occurred during interpretation. Survey results indicated where reported competence was stronger, weaker, or less stable over time, while the interview material helped consider why institutional conditions might matter after the intervention.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Patterns of Multicultural Education Competence

The baseline survey (N = 800) shows an uneven profile across the four components of multicultural education competence. Attitudes received the highest reported scores, followed by values, while knowledge and instructional skills were lower. This distribution is consistent with the possibility that favorable orientations toward diversity can coexist with more limited conceptual and instructional resources for enactment (Civitillo et al., 2019). Variations also appeared across teaching contexts. Teachers in urban schools generally reported higher competence levels than those in rural and highland areas, although these differences are descriptive and are not derived from a full subgroup model. Prior participation in professional development was associated with higher competence scores in the reported data. Conversely, teaching experience alone was not treated as evidence of multicultural education competence. Most participants had received no prior formal training in multicultural education, which provides relevant context for the lower knowledge and skills scores.

4.2. The competence-practice gap

The survey profile places the competence-practice problem in a more specific form. Teachers reported stronger attitudes and values than knowledge and instructional skills, and reported competence also differed across school contexts. The central difficulty lies in how teachers translate favorable orientations into effective, repeatable instructional decisions. Metropolitan teachers and those with prior formal training tended to report stronger knowledge and skills than teachers in rural and highland settings. This pattern directs attention toward access to structured professional learning. Exposure to diverse students alone cannot be assumed to generate multicultural pedagogical competence. Teachers additionally require opportunities to study possible responses, implement them in practice, discuss the outcomes, and refine their judgment over time.

The interview material provides concrete illustrations of this challenge, although the excerpts remain illustrative. One teacher explained: “I understand that students come from different cultural backgrounds, but when I design lessons, I am not always sure how to reflect that difference in specific activities”. A school leader similarly observed that “teachers often attend training sessions with enthusiasm, but without structured opportunities to apply what they have learned, those ideas tend to remain at the level of intention rather than practice”. These accounts cannot establish a national qualitative pattern. They do, however, clarify a difficulty also observed in the survey profile and the literature. Support for culturally responsive teaching may coexist with uncertainty regarding lesson design, classroom interaction, and assessment. Teachers then depend more heavily on situational judgment. Such judgment can be productive, but it is harder to sustain when teachers have few shared strategies, models, or opportunities for professional discussion. In this sense, the competence-practice gap concerns pedagogical convertibility: favorable orientations

become only partly visible in reported practice when the surrounding conditions provide limited support for making them actionable.

4.3. Pre-Post Changes Following Professional Development

Table 1. Pre–Post Intervention MECS-VN Component Scores and Effect Sizes (n = 120)

Component	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	12-wk M (SD)	t (119)	p	d
Knowledge	2.84 (0.71)	3.71 (0.58)	3.44 (0.63)	14.82	< .001	.83
Skills	3.02 (0.67)	3.77 (0.54)	3.49 (0.61)	12.14	< .001	.71
Attitudes	4.08 (0.60)	4.44 (0.48)	4.39 (0.51)	7.23	< .001	.58
Values	3.69 (0.56)	4.04 (0.44)	4.01 (0.46)	8.91	< .001	.63

Note. 12-wk = 12-week follow-up.

All d values are calculated as Cohen's d (paired) for pre-post change. Conventional thresholds: d $\geq$ 0.20 small, $\geq$ 0.50 medium, $\geq$ 0.80 large (Cohen, 1988, p. 40). The table permits only a descriptive reading of the follow-up pattern: knowledge was 0.27 points lower and skills were 0.28 points lower at 12 weeks than immediately after the intervention, whereas attitudes and values were 0.05 and 0.03 points lower. No p values are reported for the post-to-follow-up comparison, and no inferential claim is made from aggregate statistics.

All four competence components increased from pre-intervention to immediate post-intervention measurement. Knowledge showed the largest pre-post change, from 2.84 to 3.71 (d = .83), followed by skills, which increased from 3.02 to 3.77 (d = .71). Attitudes rose from 4.08 to 4.44 (d = .58), and values from 3.69 to 4.04 (d = .63). These are within-participant changes. Without a control group, the results do not establish that the intervention alone produced the improvement. The follow-up means add a further descriptive pattern. At 12 weeks, knowledge was 3.44 compared with 3.71 immediately after training, and skills were 3.49 compared with 3.77. Attitudes changed from 4.44 to 4.39 and values from 4.04 to 4.01. The larger numerical differences for knowledge and skills may be relevant because these components require more direct instructional use. However, no inferential post-to-follow-up test is available, therefore the lower means are treated as a descriptive signal and not as a confirmed decline.

This follow-up pattern can be considered alongside Vietnamese research on teacher professional development. Pham and Doan (2022) draw attention to the relationship between professional learning and classroom practice, while Nguyen and Pham (2023, p. 93) identify limitations in the systematic evaluation of teacher professional development in Vietnam. Against that background, the lower follow-up means should not be taken as evidence of training failure or statistically verified decay. They raise a narrower question about the stability of short-term change once teachers return to their schools. Opportunities to revisit, rehearse, and adapt what was learned may be relevant to that stability. It should be acknowledged that the present data have yet to determine the effects of such opportunities. That said, they have highlighted the crucial role of institutional setting in helping teachers turn professional learning into sustained pedagogical practice.

4.4. Institutional Conditions for Sustained Enactment

The available evidence permits only a cautious interpretation of institutional conditions. In schools characterized by stronger leadership support, active professional collaboration, and access to instructional resources, teachers reported continued use of ideas and strategies introduced during professional development. Interviews from less supportive settings described fewer opportunities to apply, discuss, or adapt what had been learned. Although these observations do not identify the independent effect of any institutional conditions, they provide valuable insights into why the competence-practice gap may need to be examined within school organization as well as in relation to individual teacher readiness. More substantial qualitative evidence and direct statistical testing would be required to assess the proposed mechanisms.

4.5. Implications for Multicultural Education in Vietnam

The findings of this study suggest a way of thinking about multicultural education in Vietnam that extends beyond the provision of training, although the implications remain study-based recommendations rather than national policy prescriptions. When teacher competence is treated as the sole problem, the institutional circumstances in which new knowledge is applied receive insufficient attention. In the present study, professional development appears most relevant when conceptual input is connected with guided application, classroom experimentation, and reflection. This interpretation is compatible with Paulick et al. (2024), who reported greater growth in culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy among teacher candidates following a hands-on anti-bias family and community engagement module. Comstock et al. (2023) similarly linked professional learning, beliefs, self-efficacy, and reported culturally responsive instruction. Neither of the studies establishes the effect of the intervention examined in this study. Their relevance is in the broader possibility that professional learning can provide resources through which competence becomes pedagogically usable.

The interview material also directs attention to school settings, particularly leadership support, professional collaboration, instructional resources, and opportunities for continued use of ideas and strategies introduced during professional development. While the present design has yet to estimate the independent contribution of these conditions, research from other culturally responsive professional development settings offers useful comparative contexts. Castagno et al. (2023) studied long-term professional development in rural, Indigenous-serving schools and examined the development of culturally responsive principles through teacher-authored curriculum work across successive cohorts. Nganga and Kambutu (2024, p. 1) identified contextually appropriate curriculum and community-based collaborative learning as important features of professional development involving Native communities. Taken together, these studies highlight the importance of sustained and context-sensitive professional learning although their program models cannot be transferred directly to Vietnam.

4.6. Methodological Caution

The study's inferences are constrained in several ways. First, in the absence of a control group, the pre-post results are limited to within-participant changes and insufficient to establish a causal intervention effect. Repeated testing, maturation, and concurrent contextual influences remain possible explanations. Second, the analysis of the 12-week follow-up is also descriptive because paired inferential tests for the post-to-follow-up period are not available. Accordingly, the lower follow-up means are not treated as a statistically confirmed decline. Third, measurement presents a further limitation. MECS-VN is used to compare components and trace change, but the manuscript materials do not provide Cronbach's alpha coefficients, item-level factor analysis, EFA, CFA, or a fully documented adaptation pathway. Stronger claims about reliability or construct validity would require that evidence. Fourth, the qualitative strand is similarly limited by the available record. Interview sample size, participant-selection procedures, a formal coding protocol, multi-coder procedures, and inter-coder reliability are not sufficiently documented to support broad national thematic claims. Finally, the three-condition model has not been tested through structural modelling or a design capable of identifying causal mechanisms. It remains an analytical proposition. These limitations define the level at which the findings can be interpreted and identify the evidence needed for a more rigorous test of the model. The measurement issue is particularly relevant, given recent instrument-development work that reports explicit validation procedures (Thresia et al., 2025, p. 303). No equivalent evidence is available for MECS-VN, and the external study is not used to infer its reliability or construct validity.

5. Conclusion and Future Directions

This study examined three aspects of the competence-practice gap in multicultural education in Vietnamese general education. For RQ1, the survey profile indicates that favorable orientations toward diversity were stronger than the reported knowledge and instructional skills needed to bring those orientations into classroom decisions. For RQ2, all four competence components increased from pre-intervention to immediate post-intervention measurement, with the largest changes in knowledge and skills. These findings represent within-participant changes and do not establish causal intervention effectiveness. At 12 weeks, knowledge and skills were numerically lower than immediately after training, while attitudes and values were more stable. Because post-to-follow-up inferential tests are not reported, this finding remains a descriptive pattern. For RQ3, the analysis identifies three conditions that may be relevant to sustained enactment: conceptual guidance, instructional exemplarity, and institutional continuity. The three conditions offer a provisional account of why reported competence may not consistently become stable pedagogical practice.

This study treats the competence-practice gap as a possible problem of institutional convertibility and uses the available evidence to specify three conditions through which enactment can be examined. It puts forth an analytical proposal, not a validated theory or a statistically confirmed causal structure. A stronger test would require comparison groups, fully reported measurement properties, item-level reliability and construct-validity analyses, paired post-to-follow-up tests, and a more substantial qualitative strand with transparent sampling, coding, theme development, and credibility procedures. Multivariate or structural models could then be considered where the data and measurement properties justify them. Future validation of MECS-VN should report its own scale structure and reliability rather than rely on evidence from other multicultural competence instruments such as Thresia et al. (2025, p.303). Qualitative work should likewise document participant selection and analytic procedures in sufficient detail to assess the proposed institutional mechanisms against a transparent empirical record.

Notes for contributors: Dr Vuong Thi Hai Yen is Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, at Hanoi Metropolitan University, Vietnam. Her research focuses on teacher professional development, multicultural education, and English teaching methodology.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements: ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used for language editing, clarity, academic phrasing, and consistency checks. The tool was not used to generate research data, conduct statistical analyses, or determine the study findings. The author reviewed and takes responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

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