Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Bridge over the Diversity Divide in Historically White Multicultural Schools of South Africa

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Abstract The purpose of this paper is to report on white teacher perceptions of the characteristics associated with multicultural education and the related classroom practices in promoting Cultural Responsive Teaching (CRT) in historically white schools (HWS) in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. The pre-democratic South African education system was characterised by inequality based mainly on race. There were enormous inequalities between the education provided for blacks and whites. The advent of a democratic South Africa in 1994 made it possible for black learners to enroll at HWS. The majority of schools reacted by assuming an assimilation approach. This resulted in a number of challenges for HWS's. The authors argue that the promotion of CRT in HWS's could serve as a bridge to address the diversity divide experienced in most HWS's. The researchers are elected to employ the quantitative research method, to ascertain white teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of multicultural education and their perceptions of multicultural classroom practices in promoting CRT in HWS's in South Africa. Some of the findings of the study indicate that white teachers regard the eradication of fear and suspicion as an important multicultural characteristic to promote CRT.

Keywords Culturally Responsive Teaching, Diversity Divide, Multicultural Schools

1. Introduction

The pre-democratic South African education system was distinguished by three critical aspects. Firstly, the system was divided according to race and ethnicity. Secondly, great inequalities existed between the education offered to blacks and whites, respectively. Thirdly, the education system displayed no democracy [14]. In this paper, the concept black includes coloured (mixed race) and people of Indian descent.

1.1. Education under the Nationalist Party

When the white Nationalist Party, came to power in South Africa in 1948, they "believed that black people should be subjugated through education to enforce the apartheid ideology" [9]. Simultaneously, the party's accession to power coincided with the adoption of the policy of Christian National Education (CNE). According to Arendse [2], the CNE policy was more than a policy, it was also "a philosophy rooted in the particular religious and political beliefs of the Afrikaner". (Afrikaner is an Afrikaans-speaking white person in South Africa, especially one descended from the Dutch and Huguenot settlers of the 17th century). In line with the said policy imperative, all societal systems and structures had to espouse a Christian philosophy of life that encourages nationalism in all spheres of education. Therefore, under

the CNE policy, black learners, teachers and parents were excluded from decision-making processes. This segregated education system controlled by a CNE policy, compelled teachers to impart the cultural norms and values of whites - this development may have been to assimilate subdominant groups (black learners) into the mainstream culture and in so doing, ensured the establishment of cultural homogeneity and supremacy [40]. In this regard, Harro [30] postulates that the socialisation of humans is aimed at preparing them for either a dominant or a subdominant role in society, depending on the group they belong to. Therefore, it could be argued that the previous education system (before the 1994 democratic elections) was cardinal to the entrenchment of racial inequality and the safeguarding of white supremacy in the apartheid South African context [2]. In keeping with the aforementioned socially constructed hierarchical structure, it is worth mentioning that the cultural legacy of blacks, as well as their influences on society was ignored. The subdominant groups refer to the black South African population. This process resulted in the subsequent devolution of the cultures of the subdominant groups. Moreover, a further feature of inequality in the system was that the curriculum of white schools was of a more academic nature, while that of blacks focused on practical subjects that equipped them for future menial labour [2].

1.2. Education in Democratic South Africa

The advent of democracy in 1994 resulted in the process of educational change in South Africa that was propelled by essential issues, such as disabling the destruction of apartheid, and the establishment of a socially just education system [55]. Subsequently, this process emanated in a new schooling system, which in essence became multicultural in nature and as such took the cultural needs of all South African learners into consideration [1]. Correspondingly, Bennett [10] regards this transformed schooling as the undertaking to accomplish an education that is just and fair for all children, particularly ethnic minorities and the economically disadvantaged. While Bennett [10] concurs with the aforementioned imperatives of this transformed schooling, she however elects to focus on matters of the hidden curriculum. Bennet [9] in agreement with Gonzalez et al. [26] who emphasize the criticality of the hidden curriculum and advises that careful attention should be given to certain critical aspects which include the characteristics of multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching and classroom practices.

In spite of a significant educational transformation in South Africa, several children, parents, as well as teachers continued to struggle and adjust to a democratic society. The difficulty may be rooted in the manner in which humans are socialised. A person's personal upbringing, their years of schooling and other social interactions all play a role in shaping their world view [49]. Human beings generally find it hard to adjust to change., simply because

their actions are influenced by their convictions and behavioural configuration.

In support of the latter notion, Tajfel & Turner [59] argue that the manner in which humans are socialised encompasses interconnectivity with their broader social context. It could well be argued that the difficulty experienced by the various stakeholders in the transformed educational context may be related to the South African society's socialisation that took place along, political, economic, racial and cultural lines during the pre-democratic era.

1.3. Admission of Black Learners to Historically White South African Schools

With the admission of black learners to multicultural schools, referred to as, historically white schools (HWS), several challenges, which seemingly mostly affect black learners and those from socioeconomically marginalised families, became evident [24], [31], [32], [50]. One such challenge was the exorbitant school fees charged by (HWS). Bekisizwe and Ndimande [9], and Yamauchi [61] expound on the school fees issue by using the example of some HWS, who in 2005, charging school fees of R600, in comparison to the R60 charged by township schools (A township in the South African context, refers to a strategically designed municipal area for blacks on the outskirts of the city with poor amenities). The same scholars further make the point that R600 excluded the added costs of transportation from the township to the schools in the suburban areas. Another issue that compounded the admission of black learners to HWS is that many of these institutions, solely catered for learners from a mono-cultural and Eurocentric backgrounds, hence they responded by adopting an assimilationist approach, as a means of accommodating the diverse needs of black learners. The consequence of this action by HWS was that most parents felt overwhelmed and marginalised, all over again, because their indigenous languages and culture were not accommodated by these schools [9]. Thus, the mentioned challenges were being perceived by various relevant stakeholders as a deliberated attempt to prevent black learners from accessing HWS.

1.4. Twenty-Seven Years into Democracy

Currently, more than twenty-five years into democracy and notwithstanding the gains made in transforming the South African education system, the media continue to report on the sustained marginalisation of black learners at HWS. A case in point is where a school in the Gauteng province, of South Africa, crafted its language policy in such a manner, that it excluded black learners, because they were not conversant in Afrikaans [42]. Another media report in The Guardian [60], accounts on some HWS policy proclaiming black school girls' hair styles "untidy". In a related media report, a learner recount how white

teachers ridicule black learners in the classroom, by comments such as "this isn't a taxi rank". Black people frequently use informal taxis, as they are cheaper than formal public transportation [4]. By the same token, Lemmer et al. [39] and Moletsane [47] contend that many white teachers consider black learners to hail from academically and ethnically lower upbringings and thus have lesser educational anticipations from them. Concomitantly, low academic expectations and academic success seem to be equally prevalent in other parts of the world. Alghamdi [1] remarks that "whites are more likely to succeed in the American society compared to African Americans and other minorities at public schools".

Against this backdrop, it would seem that much will still need to be done regarding racial and cultural relations, mainly in HWS. Equally, studies undertaken by Brown [12] and Deering and Stanutz [18] with white pre-service teachers, revealed that in spite of these pre-service teachers being exposed to teaching their culturally diverse learners, their attitudes remained unchanged. Given these media reports and results of the afore-mentioned study, it would seem that while apartheid education had been undone, "the educational reform has not yet achieved a truly inclusive and anti-racist education" [9]. A possible way of responding to cultural relations between teachers and black learners at HWS, could reside in encouraging culturally responsive teaching (CRT). According to Au [5], CRT is rooted in the multicultural worldview of society, accepting that cultures of different ethnic groups differ, but the learning context should be included in the curriculum with which all learners can identify with.

2. Unpacking Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

Globalisation, together with ever-increasing migration has transformed the appearance of the world in the 21st century considerably. The global migration of people across national and international borders has correspondingly transformed classroom across the globe. It has therefore become the responsibility of education planners to ensure that schools find creative ways to ensure that learners of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are provided with an effective and equitable education [52]. In keeping with this responsibility, scholars such as Au and Kawakami [6], Erickson [21], Gay [22], Jordan [33] and Ladson-Billings [36] played a key role in addressing equitable education for learners of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds [52]. Essentially these scholars argue that there is indeed a need for CRT, so that all learners could be assisted to succeed in school and this may yield significant benefits for education in general. They further contend that the value of CRT resides in the creativity of teachers during lesson- planning and presentation, relentlessly considering the diverse cultural

backgrounds of all their learners. They additionally advise that teachers should continuously experiment with various teaching strategies, until a suitable one is found. The latter, they argue will enable all learners to participate in learning activities.

Likewise, the need to narrow the divide between the cultures of the learners' homes and that of the school, necessitated the reformation of the schooling system [11]. This reformed schooling system is referred to as culturally responsive teaching (CRT). In some instances, the literature elected to refer to CRT as, *culturally compatible*, *culturally congruent* or *culturally relevant* teaching Brown [12]. For the purpose of this paper, the concept of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) will be used.

As previously mentioned, the years of separate existence between blacks and whites, together with the fragmented organisation of education along racial and cultural lines have created a cultural divide between blacks and whites in South Africa. This divide is equally prevalent in HWS context, between white teachers and their black learners, as alluded to earlier by media reports. One possible way of bridging this divide could be to foreground the implementation of CRT in HWS classrooms. Research undertaken in the discourse indicates that teachers who implement CRT in their classes, result in more equitable teaching and learning experiences for all learners [8], [15] [19], [23], [35], [38], [48].

Numerous scholars have attempted to circumscribe CRT. For Gay [22], CRT involves incorporating the cultural features, experiences and viewpoints of culturally diverse learners, as a point of departure to ensure effective teaching and learning experiences. By the same token, Griner and Stewart [28] delineate CRT as strategy of including "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them". Au [5], on the other hand, advances that the purpose of CRT is to ensure that learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds attain academic success, especially since many of these learners' experience failure in their scholastic endeavours. Cruz et al. [17] postulate that CRT has the proclivity to enhance the learning of culturally diverse learners. The same scholar insists that CRT should build on the learner's contextual knowledge and experience gained in the home and community. The former, he contends, that CRT could well serve as a vehicle to narrow the rift between learners of "diverse backgrounds and their mainstream peers".

While Cruz, et al. [17] tend to agree with the above sentiments, the same scholars elected to problematise a critical drawback learner from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have to contend with. In this regard Cruz, et al. [17] foreground the practice where these learners are often inadvertently identified as learners with barriers to learning, when in reality, the apparent learning or behavioural underperformance may be related to cultural or linguistic reasons [17].

Guild [29] and Alghamdi [1], make a profound point by stating that teachers are inclined to treat all learners the same, irrespective of their cultural differences. Teachers use the same teaching strategies, administer the same assessment activities and in the process "always marginalize diversity, and only carry biases toward uniformity". These practices hamper learners' performance, none mainstream learners whose cultural backgrounds are dissimilar to that of the mainstream ones [29].

To this end, Kieran and Anderson [34] advise that when planning lessons for culturally diverse learners, teachers should take into account in how learner differences impact learning and align this with teaching strategies to successfully address these differences. Correspondingly, being unaware of how learner differences affect learning, may result in confusing barriers to learning with diversity. This may be a noteworthy view, especially in the case of HWS.

Against the background of the above definitions, it would seem that most scholars agree that CRT has to be structured on the following critical pillars, namely:

- Providing an educational experience that takes into account their cultural knowledge, their lived experiences and their world view so that they can obtain optimum academic success in a culturally diverse and multicultural school setting.
- Having high academic expectations of all learners, while ensuring a solid support structure.
- Nurturing critical consciousness within learners as far as power relations [37].

Based on the above discussion, the researchers argue that it is cardinal to provide teachers with continuous professional development training in CRT. The researchers further argue that infusing CRT in the educational practices, operations, school culture and ethos of, particularly HWS, may succeed in addressing the diversity divide, as well as other challenges emphasised earlier.

3. Multicultural Education

Numerous scholars in the discourse agree that the essence of multicultural education resides in an education system that has been specifically designed, factoring in the various cultural upbringing of all children and using information of their varied upbringing to create a classroom environment that will enhance learning of all learners [10], [45], [58]. Moreover, the school reformation should also focus on the characteristics of multicultural education, as well as aiming to at transforming classroom practices [41]. The following characteristics of multicultural education, namely: developing as positive attitude to other cultural groups; Understanding and appreciating the valuable contribution made to society by other cultural groups; Reducing cultural prejudice and stereotyping; Helping learners to explore ways to expand

their contact with other cultural groups; Strengthening social skills that will support learners to grow into active change agents and Eradicating underlying fear and suspicion.

3.1. Characteristics of Multicultural Education

3.1.1. Developing a positive attitude towards other cultural groups

Fostering a positive attitude towards other cultural groups could lay the ground work for entrenching a climate of tolerant, acceptance of diversity and mutual respect in multicultural classrooms, as well as in the broader society. In this respect, Alghamdi [1] reasons that in schools where multicultural education has been implemented effectively, racial attitudes among learners have a tendency to decline and have improved learning among all learners. Arsal [3] concurs with the afore-mentioned notion, the scholar adds the another dimension, stating that the inclusion of multicultural learning content in school curricula and which is effectively presented during class activities have the potential to improve attitudes amongst cultural groups. To this end, Banks and Banks [7] further recommend that teachers can create positive ethnic and racial attitudes, particularly in HWS, through their lesson presentation by including images and knowledge contributions of the normally marginalised groups in society.

Cultivating positive attitudes towards other cultural groups is key in promoting CRT in HWS, as positive attitudes and elimination of stereotyping towards subdominant cultural groups can enhance learner learning of the marginalised learner [34]. The researchers therefore argue that the promotion of CRT in HWS, as well as other schools, may have long-term socio-cultural cohesion benefits for education in general, given the diverse nature of schools in the 21st century.

3.1.2. Understanding and Appreciating the Valuable Contribution Made to Society by Other Cultural Groups

The inclusion and recognition of the valuable contribution made by black scholars and other ethnic leaders in the curriculum and promoting diversity is important, as this may contribute a sense of belonging and acceptance amongst black learners in multicultural HWS [44]. Sleeter [57] refers to this transformative initiative as equity pedagogy. Accordingly, Buescher et al. [14] and Grant and Sleeter, [27] make an important point in this regard- these scholars maintain that most curricula in the United States are inclined to marginalise the knowledge contribution made by other racial and ethnic minorities in society and/or fulfilling a prominent role in shaping the history of a country. On the contrary, there is a sense that the knowledge contributions made by the dominant (white) groups are afforded the most attention [27] and in most

cases, are perceived to be more relevant. The same may hold true for the South African context, judging from the persistent calls of learners and students, attached to higher learning institutions, for the decolonisation of school and university curricula. By the same token Mampane [43] argues that "when the mainstream curriculum represents indigenous knowledge, then we are closer to the decolonisation of education". A curriculum that is that is structured on "cultural and community-based knowledge and frames of reference, and that situates academic concepts at least partially within the intellectual knowledge produced by racial and ethnic communities of which students are members, makes a positive impact on students…" [57].

Understanding and appreciating the valuable input made to society by other cultural groups is cardinal in encouraging CRT, as this enables learners to identify with learning content similar to their own worldview [5]. In this manner, CRT offers the possibility to bridge the academic achievement divide that so often exists between black and white learners in HWS. Moreover, implementing CRT in HWS's, as well as schools in general, may result in minimising the deficit perception that subordinate cultural groups are often viewed with in society.

3.1.3. Reducing cultural prejudice and stereotyping

Learner populations in many multicultural schools across the globe display considerable racial, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity. South African classrooms are no different and more so in HWS. Learners enrolling in HWS have dissimilar features compared to their white peers. These features encompass the recognition of diversity in totality, and include aspects such as different physical and mental abilities, ethnic and racial backgrounds, socioeconomic classes, languages and religions [1]. It is therefore important that HWS school should make a concerted and deliberate effort to assist all learners to navigate these differences, in an attempt to reduce cultural prejudice and stereotyping. Hence, teachers have the accountability to guide learners in developing positive, progressive and democratic racial attitudes. Implying that teachers should guide learners to celebrate and embrace the uniqueness of difference [1]. Correspondingly, Mavuso [44] postulates that prejudice has the added benefit of assisting learners to appreciate various context and the degree to which such context has influenced the identity, attitudes and views of the dominant social groups.

Promoting CRT holds the potential to reduce cultural prejudice and stereotyping in that it acknowledges prevailing systematic inequities that are interconnected to disparities in the academic achievement of black learners in HWS's. This acknowledgement may serve as a reminder to teachers in HWS to refrain from grounding academic success on individual and generalised characteristics of learners and thus labelling them, without conceding the effect of race, class and language [25].

3.1.4. Assisting learners to explore ways to expand their contact with other cultural groups.

The criticality of assisting learners to enlarge their interaction with various cultural groupings cannot be over emphasises, especially in the case of learners in HWS. A possible way of facilitating such contact is for teachers to extend their engagement to the ethnic and cultural communities. The idea should be for the teacher to form relationships with learners and their families from these communities. In this way, the teacher may become accustomed with ethnic cultural knowledge and resources, which in turn could be brought to the multicultural classroom for informed, meaningful and respectful discussions [57]. Conversely, Arsal [3] warns that teachers should be averse towards learner diversity, they may be equally reluctant "to implement the multicultural curriculum". It is for this reason that Mavuso [44] insists that teachers should have a well-grounded understanding about culture and diversity issues in multicultural HWS's. The same scholar argues that there is an assumption that teachers possess an enhanced understanding of how to deal with cultural differences within the nationwide cultures and how such differences impact learners' learning in diverse school contexts.

Assisting learners to discover means to enlarge their interaction with many cultural groupings forms one of the fundamental tenets of CRT. In this respect, Gomez, et al. [25] posit that learners should be equipped with cultural competence. Similarly, this multicultural characteristic intersects with the imperatives of CRT in so far as it not only helps learners to enlarge their connection with additional cultural groupings, but it also allows learners to spot systemic oppression and comprehend their role in changing these patterns to [34]. This critical intersection of this multicultural characteristic with the fundamentals, CRT may further contribute to bridging the diversity divide in HWS and schools in general.

3.1.5. Strengthening social skills that will enable learners to become effective agents of change

Inculcating social skills in learners that based on acceptance, harmony and fairness, may lay a firm foundation for learners to develop into change agents within multicultural school settings. A good point of departures to facilitate change agency could be for teachers to establish sincere relationships with their learners. Furthermore, Mogashoa [46] asserts that teachers who elect a relationship-building approach to classroom management by focusing on developing their learners holistically, are more inclined to instill, socially appropriate behaviours in their learners. Therefore, teachers should strive to develop relationships, by unfolding the curriculum, as it relates to their (teacher) lived experiences and world views beyond the school. This benefits teachers share of their own personal experiences about adversity, victory and disappointment, notwithstanding the similarities or differences with the

learners' lives. When teachers, in particularly HWS, use the curriculum and learning content that shape personal meaning to them and accept their learners' diversity, bridges are more likely to be formed, thus enhancing relationship building and change agency [46].

Cruz et al. [17] are of the view that for teachers to effectively implement CRT, can act as change agents in their schools. It is therefore necessary to reinforce social abilities that will result in them developing into worthy change agents. The aforementioned is thus important, because in this way, black learners may enjoy more equitable cultural experiences in HWS's.

3.1.6. Eradicating underlying fear and suspicion

According to Setiyowati et al. [56], multicultural education is geared to nurture respect, honesty and acceptance for cultural diversity that is prevalent in a diverse society. The expectation is that it will instill mental plasticity that will empower learners in multicultural school spaces to deal with conflict in a socially acceptable manner, with in a pluralistic society. Therefore, HWS plays a cardinal role in fostering values, such as companionship, forbearance, love, harmony, respect for difference and even in dispelling underlying fear and suspicion. Thus, classroom settings that fail to acknowledge diversity may result in learners becoming frustrated, feel ignored and marginalised. Likewise, this may inhibit learners from developing ideally and their social relationships with others may be strained. Additionally, Sleeter [57] cautions that teachers should steer clear of implementing multicultural education in a superficial way and regarding it as an "add-on". The aforementioned normally takes on the form where certain days are reserved for learners to dress up in their traditional wear, or display their traditional cuisines. Such day can easily degenerate into situations where ethnic learners are subjected peer ridicule by the dominant (white) learners. Teachers in HWS consequently have an important role to play in facilitating amicable and equitable relationships in the multicultural classrooms.

CRT cannot take place in a schooling context where underlying fear and suspicion exists. It therefore becomes necessary to eliminate any form of fear and suspicion before implementing CRT in HWS's, since trust and cordial personal relationships with learners, according to Cruz, et al. [17] and Samuels [54], are of paramount importance. The latter author further claims that CRT nurtures cross-cultural understanding and inclusiveness, and encourages more diverse world views, especially in the absence of fear and suspicion.

4. Aim of the Paper

This paper reports on white teacher perceptions of the characteristics of multicultural education and their perceptions of multicultural classroom practices in

promoting CRT in HWS's of South Africa.

5. Research Methodology

The study made use of the quantitative research method. A quantitative approach involves the … "processes of collecting, analysing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study" [16]. A quantitative approach was appropriate, since the researchers sought to collect data from a large population to analyse and discuss white teacher perceptions of the characteristics of multicultural and their perception of multicultural classroom practices, in promoting CRT in HWS's of South Africa. According to the authors of this paper, the 11 identified items are crucial to the promotion of CRT in HWS of South Africa. Specifically, the study followed a quantitative survey design. According to Creswell [16] a survey design is used when one gathers facts about a society or its part about the quality of interaction among its people or institutions [53]. Since the study is to ascertain how CTR can possibly be promoted, noting the characteristics of multicultural education within the context of white teachers teaching at HWS, this survey design was therefore apt in providing the methodological direction. These questions were specifically chosen

5.1. Questionnaire

Following the quantitative approach, as the methodological paradigm, a self- designed 4- point Likert scale questionnaire was employed. The first component of the questionnaire (questions 1.1 to 1.6) sought to elicit information in respect of the perceptions of white teachers on the characteristics of multicultural education to promote CRT. The second component (questions 2.1 to 2.5) of the questionnaire was asked to determine the perceptions of the teachers about their classroom practices in promoting CRT.

For the purpose of this paper, the authors focus on the analysis and discussion of 11 key items drawn from questionnaire which had relevance to two components, namely: teacher perceptions on the characteristics of multicultural education and teacher perceptions regarding their multicultural classroom practices. The authors are of the view that these 11 items, drawn from the two components are cardinal to the promotion of CRT in HWS of South Africa.

5.2. Purposive Sampling

The researchers made use of purposive sampling and the research site of this study was limited to twenty-seven (27) HWS in five districts of the Northern Cape, South Africa. The number of schools per education district is depicted in table 1.

Table 1. Number of schools per education district

School District	Number of Schools
Frances Baard	10
Siyanda	6
Pixley Ka Seme	4
Namaqua	5
J.T.Gaetsewe	2
Total	27

The sample comprised of 457 white teachers teaching at HWS, consisting of at least 20 teachers from each of the selected school within a specific educational district. The demographic profile of the teachers is reflected in table 2. The selected schools all exclusively catered for white learners only, prior to attainment of democracy in 1994 in South Africa. The Northern Cape Education Department, school principals and teachers who formed part of the study, consented for the study to be undertaken. A pilot study was conducted on a smaller sample to test the feasibility of the questionnaire, as data collecting instrument. The data generated by the questionnaires was incorporated with the data developed from the literature study for analysis and interpretation.

For the purpose of this paper, the authors focus on the analysis and discussion of 11 key items drawn from the questionnaire. This paper reports on white teacher perceptions of the characteristics of multicultural and their perceptions of multicultural classroom practices in promoting CRT in HWS's of South Africa.

5.3. Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive and factor analysis methods, respectively. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling competence and Bartlett's test of sphericity, was employed to determine the factorability of the data.

The latter essentially implies that the P-value must be < than 0.05 for the variance to be statistically noteworthy [20]. The data acquired drawn from the 11 key items which were incorporated with the data obtained from the literature study to draw meaningful conclusions. The University of the Free State, South Africa computer centre assisted with the handling and understanding of the information.

Table 2. Demographic profile of teachers

Category	Percentage participation				
Race	White				
	100%				
Gender	Male	Female			
	33%	67%			
Age in years	>30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+
	17.1%	17,8%	28,3%	33,5%	3.3%
Teaching experience at HWS in years	0-10	11-20	21-30	31+	
	31,2%	25,6%	32,0%	11,2%	
Academic qualification	Grade 12	Bachelor's degree	Honours degree	Masters' degree	Doctors degree
	23,2%	56,8%	14,2%	4,7%	1,1%
Rank of teachers	Teacher	Head of Department	Deputy Principal	Principal	
	81,0%	11,0%	5.0%	3,0%	

5.4. Ethical Considerations

The Northern Cape Education Department, school principals and teachers, who formed part of the study consented for the study to take place.,

6. Results

Questions 1.1 to 1.6 pertain to the perceptions of white teachers on the characteristics of multicultural education. Please note that questions 2.1 to 2.5, representing subcategories of question 2, were posed to ascertain the perceptions of the teachers about their classroom practices. For the purpose of this paper, the authors focus on the analysis and discussion of 11 key items drawn from questionnaire (Table and figures 1-5). These specific questions relate to the following two components, namely: teachers' perceptions on the characteristics of multicultural education and teachers' perceptions regarding their multicultural classroom practices. The authors are of the view that these 11 items are cardinal to the promotion of CRT in HWS of South Africa. Presented in table 2, is a summary of teacher perceptions on characteristics of multicultural education in promoting CRT.

6.1. The Characteristics of Multicultural Education

Table 3 establishes that the importance of the p-values for the prominence of the characteristics of multicultural education in promoting CRT is greater than 0.05 and is consequently statistically insignificant.

A descriptive discussion now follows which relates to two components, namely: teacher perceptions on the characteristics of multicultural education and teacher perceptions regarding their multicultural classroom practices. The authors are of the view that these 11 items are cardinal to the promotion of CRT in HWS of South Africa.

6.2. Teacher perceptions on the characteristics of multicultural education in promoting CRT (Items 1-6 in table 1 which relates to questions 1.1-1.6 on the questionnaire)

In terms of item 1, the majority of teacher participants (97.8%) regarded the development of a positive attitude towards other cultural groups as important. The finding is significant in that it suggests the willingness of white teachers in HWS to consider adjusting their teaching strategies to accommodate diversity, instead of only advancing monoculturalism in their classrooms. This willingness by teachers may be the catalyst for the introduction of CRT in multicultural HWS. The results concur with the literature making the point that racial attitudes among learners tend to decline in schools where multicultural education is implemented effectively and where diverse learning content forms part of the curriculum [1], [3], [7].

Table 3. Teachers' perceptions on characteristics of multicultural education in promoting CRT

	χ^2 Value	p-value	Very important		Important		Of little importance		Unimportant	
			F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.1 Developing a positive attitude towards other cultural groups.	1	0.638	177	**65.8**	86	32	5	1.9	0	0
1.2 Understanding and appreciating the valuable contribution made to society by other cultural groups	1	0.67	147	**54.6**	108	40.1	13	4.8	0	0
1.3 Reducing cultural prejudice and stereotyping	1	0.669	156	**58**	100	37.2	11	4.1	1	0.4
1.4 Helping learners to explore ways to expand their contact with other cultural groups.	1	0.741	116	43.1	133	49.4	17	6.3	2	0.7
1.5 Strengthening social skills that will enable learners to become effective agents of change	1	0.651	123	45.7	127	47.2	16	5.9	2	0.7
1.6 Eradicating underlying fear and suspicion.	1	0.656	162	**60.2**	94	34.9	12	4.5	0	0

The difference is statistically significant if P < 0.05

Pertaining to item 2, a significantly high percentage of the teacher participants (94.7%) was of the opinion that an understanding and appreciation of the treasured contribution made to humanity by various cultural groupings, is imperative. The finding is noteworthy, because it reflects on teachers' realisation of the impracticality and unfairness of the assimilationist approach, initially adopted by when black learners were enrolled at HWS. Likewise, the latter realisation by teachers may also succeed in bridging the divide between the cultures of the learners' homes and that of the school, thus moving in the direction of CRT [11]. The teachers' responses agree with the literature positing including the contributions of ethnic leaders, as well as equity pedagogy, will contribute to a sense of worth and belonging among black learners at HWS [27], [43], [44].

Relating to item 3, at least 95.2% of the teacher participants considered reducing cultural prejudice and stereotyping as a critical characteristic. This finding is inspiring, given the perceived racial and cultural prejudice that continues to exist in HWS, twenty-seven years after democracy in South Africa. The finding may also imply the readiness of teachers to consider alternative approaches, such as CRT, to engaging with their culturally diverse learners The teachers' responses are congruent with the literature impressing upon the important responsibility that teachers, particularly those teaching in HWS have to direct learners in developing democratic racial attitudes that are progressive [1]. This will enable all learners to be less prejudice and instead allows learners to appreciate diversity, that may in turn assist them to view the world through a broadminded lens [44].

According to item 4, a total of 92.5% of all teacher participants agreed that supporting learners to discover means to increase their interaction with various cultural groupings was essential. The latter is an indication of teachers' consciousness of just how much the classroom in the 21st century has transformed and that teaching and learning can no longer take place along racial and ethnic lines, especially in a democratic multicultural schooling context. This finding may further suggest teachers' inclination to reach out to non-mainstream learners and their families, in an attempt to acquire an informed understanding of their culture. This inclination to reach out is in line with the imperatives of CRT. This finding coincides with the literature that encourages social contact with ethnic learners and their communities by teachers, which will in turn enhance relationships between teachers and learners, alike [57], [3], [44].

Pertaining to item 5, the majority (92.9%) of teacher participants agreed that the strengthening of social skills that will empower learners to develop into meaningful change agents is key. The finding could be an indication that teachers in HWS understand their obligation to instil social skills, such as acceptance, harmony and fairness that have the potentially lay the foundations for learners to develop into change agents. More so, it will be incumbent upon these teachers to also model the mentioned social skills in their daily interactions with learners. Establishing sincere relationships and instilling accepting, harmonious and fair relationships between teachers and learners are of the imperatives promoted by CRT. To this end, the literature asserts that teachers who choose a relationship-building approach to classroom management by focusing on developing their learners holistically are more inclined to inspire socially appropriate behaviours in their learners [46].

Relating to item 6, the finding reveals that 95.1% of the teacher participants viewed the eradication underlying fear and suspicion as a cardinal characteristic. The finding is profound in the sense that the literature suggests that black learners are often viewed by their white teachers as hailing from academically and culturally deprived background. Concomitant to this, teachers in HWS also seem to have lower academic expectations from these learners and are at times erroneously identified as learners requiring special needs. The latter result in black learners being suspicious of their teachers or even mistrusting or fearing them [39], [47], [1]. It is therefore critical that teachers foster CRT values, such as camaraderie, tolerance, respect for difference, as well as making a resolute effort to dispel underlying fear and suspicion.

6.3. Teacher perceptions about their multicultural classroom practices in promoting of Cultural Responsive (items 7-11 which relates to questions 2.1-2.5 on the questionnaire)

In terms of items 7 in figure 1, most teacher participants (female 30% and male 11%) disagreed and (female 15% and male 2.5%) strongly disagreed that they were more content with teaching learners belonging to their particular culture. While this finding was positive, a considerable percentage indicated the contrary. The afore-mentioned may be that the majority of the teachers resort in the age groups (41-61 years) that were raised and schooled during the apartheid era. It would therefore seem that the need to provide white teachers with training in CRT does exist, given the vast disparities that still exist in the South Africa society. The majority of black learners still reside in townships that are that are characterised by race and ethnicity. Conversely, most which HWS teachers continue to reside in suburban middle class residential area, hence the racial and cultural divide remains. In terms of teachers not feeling uncomfortable to teach black learners, the literature reminds us of the racially segregated residential arrangements that have remained intact, even after the demise of apartheid [9], [61]. It therefore becomes imperative for these teachers to make a deliberate effort to take into account, the cultural diversity of learners and how this in turn how learner diversity impact learning and align this with teaching strategies [34].

Relating to item 8, in figure 2, the majority of both male (30%) and female (68%) teacher participants agreed that in

their schools, learners from different cultural circumstances were educated in the same as before integration. A possible reason for the latter state of affairs may be because these teachers had no training or exposure to CRT, one can therefore not expect them to teach what they do not know. The" business as usual" approach adopted by most HWS militates against the fundamental pillars of multicultural education and CRT. This implies that HWS schools failed to transform their teaching and learning practices to accommodate black learners. As an alternative, black learners had to adapt to the prevailing philosophy and atmosphere of the school. This concurs with the literature study, citing that the majority of HWS adopted an assimilation approach, based on a monocultural Euro-centric principles and that no provision is made for CRT [9].
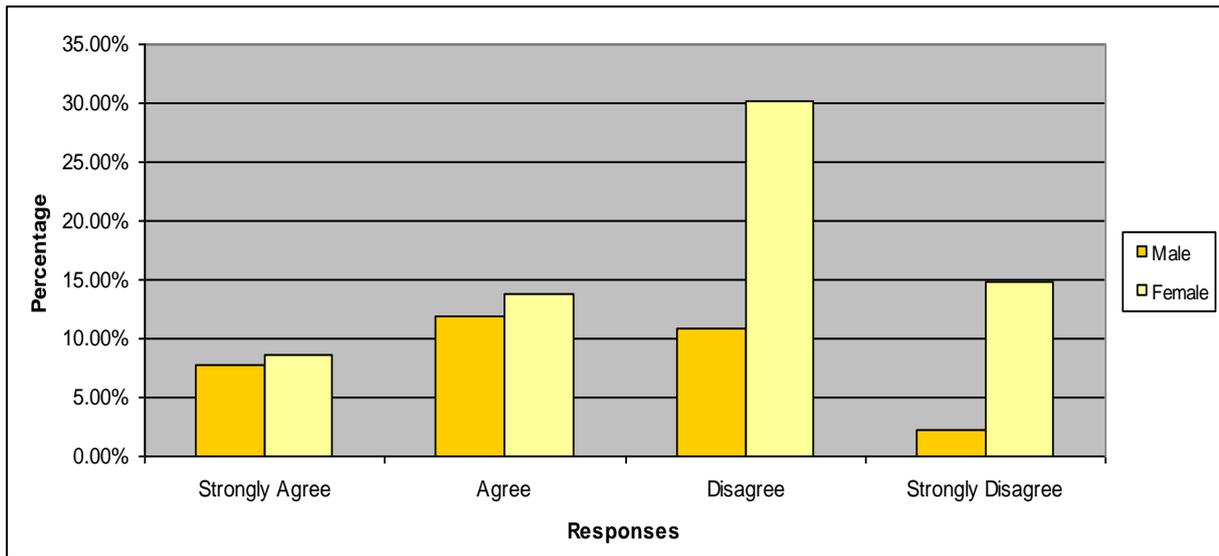

Figure 1. Distribution of teachers' responses to sub question 2.1: Do you find it more comfortable to teach learners from your own culture?
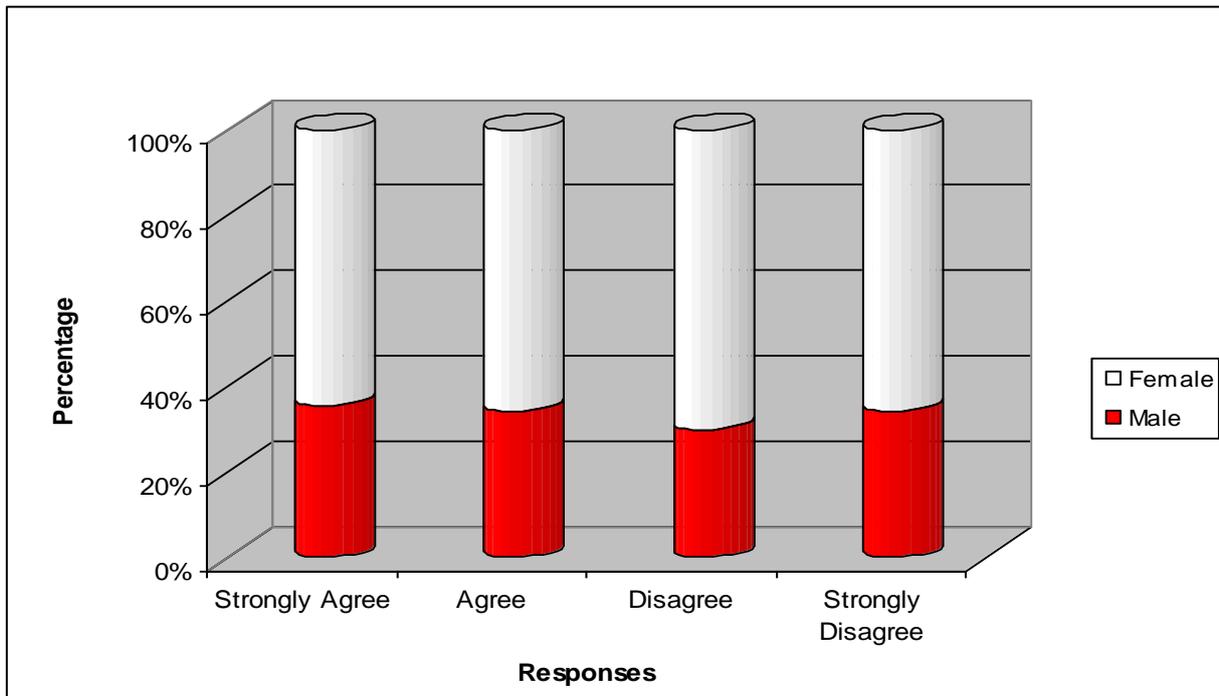

Figure 2. Distribution of teachers' responses to sub question 2.2: Are learners taught in the same manner in which they were taught before the school was integrated?
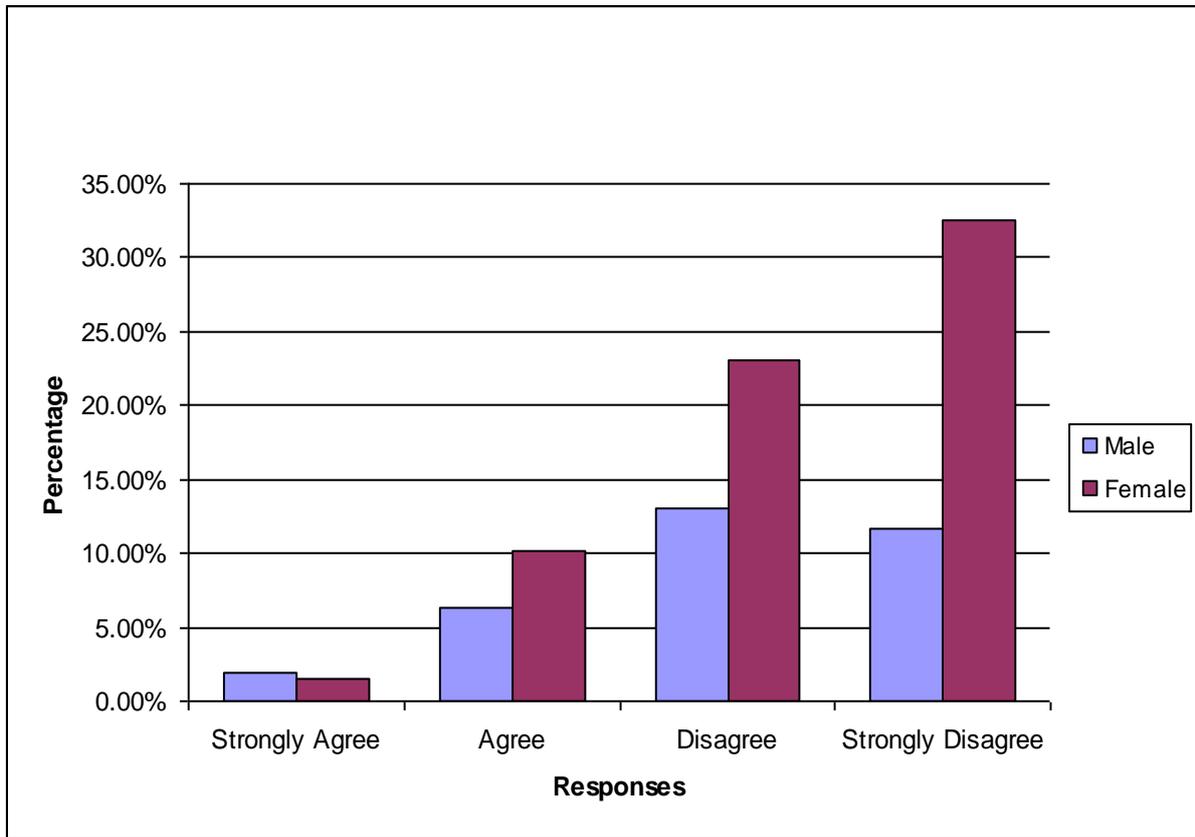
Figure 3. Distribution of teachers' responses to sub question 2.3: Do you have higher expectations from white learners than from black learners?
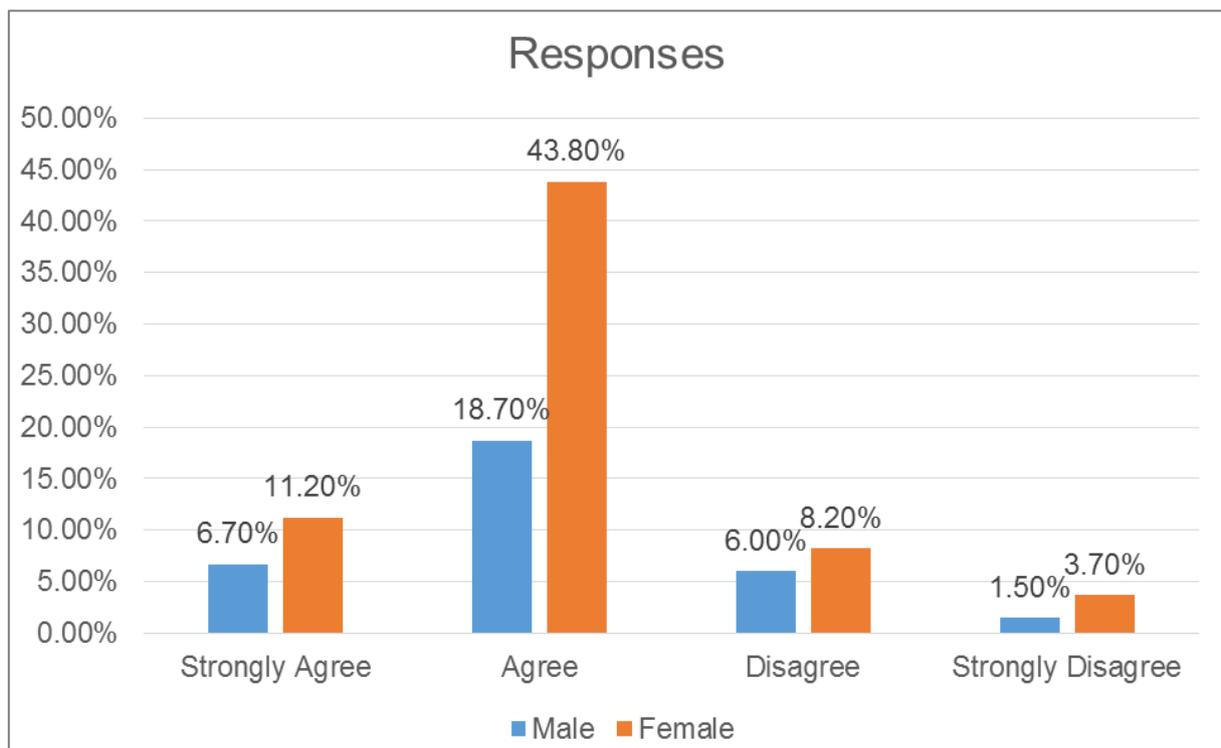

Figure 4. Distribution of teachers' replies to sub question sub question 2.4: Do you make use of the experiences of learners from different cultures are used as examples during lesson presentations by gender.

Pertaining to item 9, in figure 3, many teachers strongly disagreed (32.5% female and 11.6% male teacher participants) with the notion of displaying greater academic anticipations from white learners. The finding disputes that of the literature. While the latter may be true, it remains noteworthy to mention that teacher expectations indeed affect learner achievement, especially in a culturally diverse context, where CRT could be a possible answer. In keeping with the aforementioned notion, teachers who display low academic aspirations for learners are inclined to provide a smaller amount care. The finding disagrees with the findings of the literature, stating that white teachers hold higher academic expectations of white learners [1], [17], [39], [47].

Relating to item 10 in figure 4 a preponderance of male (18.7%) and female (43.8%) teacher participants concurred that diverse learner experiences featured in their lessons. The finding suggests that teachers made a concerted effort to accommodate black learners during lesson presentations. In order for real learning to transpire in a HWS multicultural schools, it is critical that teachers consider a framework of reference from the learner's perspective. The aforementioned is critical, because in keeping with the social constructivist theory, as well as CRT, learners' predominant beliefs are constructed during social interactions in their natural societal settings. The finding relates to the literature, again, indicating the importance of considering how learner differences impact learning and the alignment of this aspect with appropriate teaching strategies to successfully respond to these differences [34], [51].

In terms of item 11, in figure 5, that the enrolment of black learners in HWS resulted in lowered academic standards, provoked wide-ranging reactions. Most teachers (28.5% female and 13% male), disagreed, while less (16% female and 11.2% male) agreed with the perception. While the findings of the study contrast with that of the literature, there were however, still white teachers in HWS, that still had the overall view that enrolling black learners had triggered a drop in excellence of education in these schools. This perception could be linked to their (teachers) separatist socialization and schooling and may be problematic for the academic achievement of black learners, since their academic underperformance is conflated with cultural or linguistic reasons. CRT, on the other hand encourages teachers to plan lessons from the viewpoint of learners' diversity as assets rather than deficits. This coincides with the literature suggesting that whites have the chance of succeeding academically [1], [17], [34]. Although the latter pertains to the United States of America, the similar parallels could be drawn with regards to the South African multicultural schooling context.
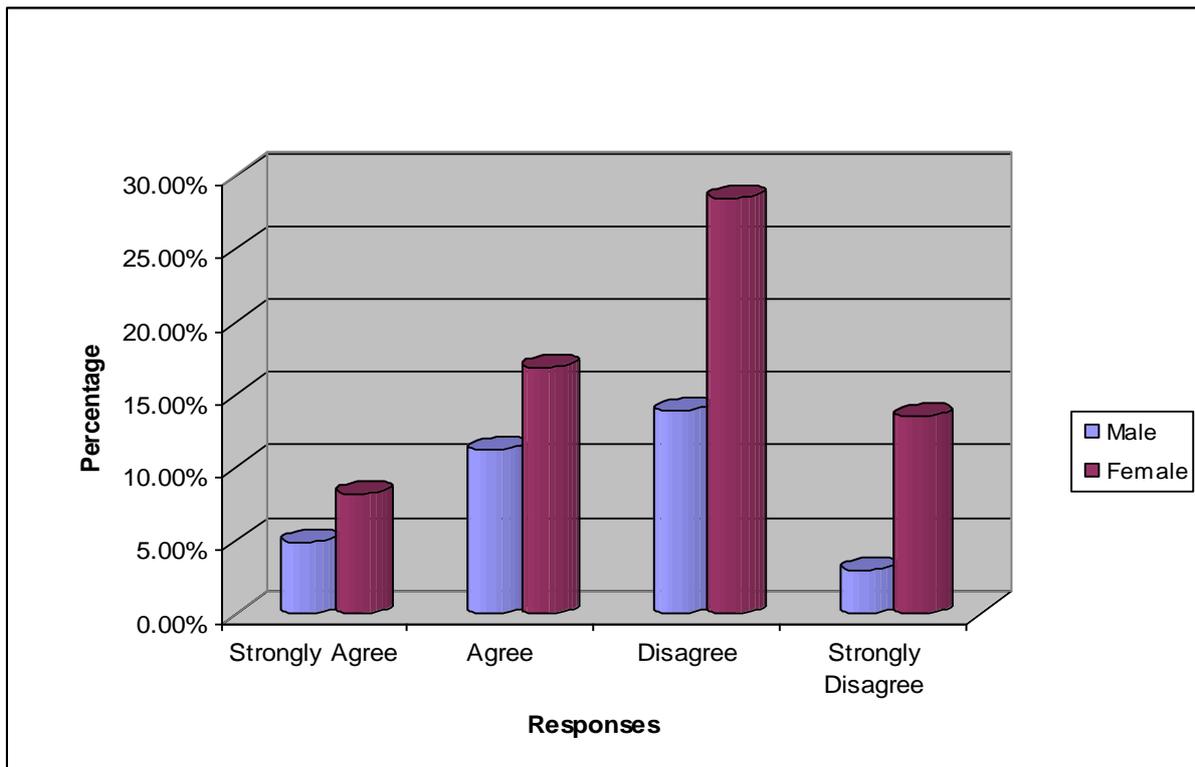

Figure 5. Distribution of teachers' responses to sub question to sub question 2.5: Whether enrolling black learners in historically white schools has led to a drop in standards?

7. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to report on white teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of multicultural education, as well as, their perceptions of multicultural classroom practices in promoting CRT in HWS in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. The then South African democratic government inherited a country that mirrored a past that was severely divided according to race, where the excellence of educational delivery attributed to race groups, essentially echoed this division. The attainment of democracy, however made it possible for black learners to enroll at HWS. These schools in turn, responded by adopting an assimilationist approach, culminating in plentiful of challenges for HWS's. The authors, using the empirical findings of the study, argue that some of these challenges emanated from the perceived diversity divide that existed between white teachers and their black learners. This diversity divides, we argue, may be the remnants of the many years of separate existence of blacks and whites, due to the policy of apartheid. The study managed to establish the critical nexus between the characteristics of multicultural education, as well as, multicultural classroom practices, on the one hand and CRT on the other. The findings concomitantly revealed that teachers viewed the particular characteristic of multicultural education as significant, to bridge the perceived diversity divide. This finding suggests that white teachers are aware of the potential benefits of drawing on multicultural education characteristic when implementing CRT in their classrooms. The findings further revealed that most of the teachers' responses on their classroom practices were generally congruent with the imperatives of CRT. The study did however uncover, that the majority of teacher have neglected to adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate their diverse learners, but instead continued with a business as usual approach, as they did when their classes were still monoculturally constituted. This finding militates against the CRT imperatives and could result in perpetuating the perceived cultural divide. The insights gained from white teachers' perceptions on characteristics of multicultural education and multicultural classroom practices in promoting CRT in HWS are significant for the discourse, as it may serve to inform future policy and practice on the implementation of CRT. A future study is envisaged where the guidelines, based on the characteristics of multicultural education and multicultural classroom practices, for the implementation of CRT programme, will be explored.

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