

## **Instructors' and Administrators' Perspectives on Culturally Responsive Teaching in Rwandan Higher Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In Rwanda, the number of culturally minority students in higher education institutions has continued to increase in recent years, yet the role of instructors and school administrators in utilizing culturally responsive teaching (CRT) methods for those students remain unclear. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe instructors' and school administrators' views of their roles in utilizing CRT methods. The conceptual framework for this study included CRT best teaching practices and approaches; institutional, personal, and instructional dimensions of CRT; and components of the preparation for and practice of CRT. The study was conducted at a university with three campuses located in Rwanda's Southern, Eastern, and Kigali provinces. Participants included five instructors and seven administrators selected through purposive sampling. Face-to-face interviews and documents were used as data sources. Data analysis was performed using coding, categorization, and themes. The findings revealed that instructors viewed administrative assistance; classroom climate; the determination of curriculum strengths and weaknesses; and changes in school leadership, policy, and administrative practices as key factors in conducting CRT methods. Administrators viewed training and professional development; changes in school leadership, policy, and administrative practices; conflict prevention; a healthy learning and living environment; and changes in instructional programs and strategies as best practices. A recommendation as a result of this is to study minority students' views of instructors' and administrators' roles in conducting CRT. This study may potentially cause positive social change by increasing instructors' and administrators' knowledge of strategies to better meet minority students' needs.

**Key words:** Culturally Responsive Teaching, Culturally Responsive Leadership, Diversity, and Higher Education.

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## INTRODUCTION

In private Rwandan higher education, the student population is becoming more diverse than ever before. For the 2016-2017 academic year alone, private higher education institutions in Rwanda registered 1,131 foreign students. All Rwandan higher academic institutions combined had a total of 856 foreign students during the 2015-2016 academic year and 1,356 for the 2016-2017 academic year, which indicates a significant increase (Higher Education Council, 2016). This new trend has made classes and schools in Rwanda more ethnically and culturally diverse than ever before, causing minority students to undergo cultural inconsistencies and disagreements between the culture lived at home and the one found at school (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Although the numbers of a diverse student population are increasing among higher education institutions in the country (Higher Education Council, 2016; Snowball & McKenna, 2017), the role of instructors and school leaders in conducting CRT methods with diversified student populations remains unclear (Mayfield & Garrison-Wade, 2015; Porter, 2018; Toppel, 2015). The purpose of this study was to describe instructors' and school leaders' views of their roles in conducting CRT methods in a Rwandan higher education classroom or institution with a diverse or nonmainstream student population. The conceptual framework for this study included CRT best teaching practices and approaches; institutional, personal, and instructional dimensions of CRT; and components of the preparation for and practice of CRT. The findings from this study may contribute to educators' efforts to help minority students in Rwandan higher education succeed through use of their cultural backgrounds in the learning process. The findings from this study may also be expected to contribute to existing research works and add new knowledge about CRT.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to describe instructors' and school leaders' views of their roles in conducting CRT methods in a Rwandan higher education classroom or institution with a diverse or nonmainstream student population. The study focused on a university with three campuses located in Rwanda's Southern, Eastern, and Kigali provinces.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How do instructors in a Rwandan higher education institution view their roles in conducting CRT methods in a Rwandan higher education classroom or institution with a diversified or nonmainstream student population?

RQ2: How do school leaders in a Rwandan higher education institution view their roles in conducting CRT methods in a higher education classroom or institution with a diversified or nonmainstream student population?

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Culturally Responsive Teaching

CRT is defined as the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of references of diverse students to meet their academic needs (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Debnam et al., 2015; Samuels et al., 2017). Researchers have reported that CRT serves as a means of improving diverse students' academic achievement through teachers and administrators' roles and practices (Gay 2013, 2015; Long, 2018; Mayfield, 2015). To make diverse students successful, some teaching practices should be applied (Martin, 2016): take into consideration and value the teaching and learning cultural contexts, focus on academics, focus on minority students' learning outcomes, strive for the promotion of equity and excellence in education, and apply constructivism principles when dealing with diverse students. Teaching through CRT, according to Aronson (2016) and Aronson and Laughter (2016), should rely on the following main dimensions: students' high expectation set by a professional teacher; validation of every student's culture; education of the whole learner by a socially, emotionally, and politically well-trained teacher; transformation of the society by a teacher committed to using existing strengths of students to drive instruction, assessment, and a curriculum; and design of emancipatory and liberating teaching by a culturally responsive teacher.

### **Culturally Responsive Leadership**

Culturally responsive leadership (CRL) encompasses all practices and influential relationships that a school leader uses to create or promote an inclusive schooling environment (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2016). As diversity in education increases, the pressure on school leaders to address diversity issues has become significant (Avci, 2015; Lopez, 2015). Educational leaders are expected to play a key role in the kinds of needed and anticipated changes, and thus have become a major focus of educational inquiry (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Dell'Angelo, 2016; Long, 2018; Tillery, 2018; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Productive schools largely depend not only on strong teachers, but also on a strong leadership as teachers' commitment, teachers' beliefs, and teachers' perceptions of efficacy are the results of the sound organization and practices put in place by effective school leaders (Kraft, Paypay, Moore-Johnson, Charner-Laird & Reinhorn, 2015). Culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL), in fact, is a recommended strategy as it allows for educational leaders to ensure equity, diversity, and social justice are well handled (Dell'Angelo, 2016; Gaymon, 2017; Kraft et al., 2015; Lopez, 2015). When CRSL is applied, achievement gaps among students who have failed for an extended time can easily be closed (Dutta & Sahey, 2016). There are some culturally sensitive practices and methods to be used by academic professional school leaders in culturally diverse schools to promote CRT (Evans Lane, 2016): the hiring of diverse staff (both academic and nonacademic), professional development, culturally responsive and positive environment support, curriculum and instructional design improvement, mentoring opportunity, and, search for role models among academic and administrative staff, as well as caring and compassionate staff. Khalifa et al. (2016) concluded with four recommended CRSL behaviors to apply: (1) inclusion; (2) equity; (3) advocacy, and (4) social justice in school.

## **Diversity in Higher Education**

Diverse students are valuable assets to education (Kotok & DeMatthews, 2018). Although immigrant students are often seen through a deficit lens, when they join a school, they bring their intellect and rich new frames of cultural and linguistic reference (Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018). Diversity is also a beneficial source of different levels of knowledge, identities, and experiences (DeCapua, 2016). Hoover (2017) identified two benefits from diversity: benefits accruing to the institution and benefits stemming from the interactions between individual, diverse students. Wu et al. (2015) asserted that diversity exerts its influence on three primary levels: academic prestige, cultural exchange, and financial revenue. International or minority students enrich the academic institutions they attend with their home culture and ethnic experiences. They also enrich and expand the experience of higher education institution staff and local students by giving them the opportunity to work with people from different cultural backgrounds (Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018).

## **Culturally Responsive Teaching in Higher Education**

International students face many challenges, primarily related to unfamiliar food, difficult living conditions, finance, work and study schedules, unfamiliar learning styles, language, and culture issues, as well as other personal barriers (Wu et al., 2015). These challenges faced by international students have been reported to lead to a potential clash between school culture and different home contexts (Snowball & McKenna, 2017). To solve different issues faced by diverse and international higher education students, educational leaders should be equipped with the knowledge and skills enabling them to recognize, honor, and incorporate the abilities of diverse students (Cox, 2017). Teachers, on the other hand, are exhorted to be more culturally diverse and to apply CRT (Long, 2018). These measures are reported to have a directly positive impact as they increase the minority students' academic achievement (Bassey, 2016; Dickson et al., 2016). The application of CRT by both teachers and school administrators equips minority higher education students with skills needed to break free of the oppression imposed by mainstream culture (Long, 2018). CRT in higher education is also known for creating a positive learning environment, which makes nonmainstream students more comfortable, regardless of their cultural and language differences (Warren & Hotchkins, 2015).

## **Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Rwandan Higher Education System**

As the study was conducted in Rwanda, it was important to understand the Rwandan higher educational context. The researcher made a summary of Rwandan higher education. The researcher also shared a general overview of the CRT in the Rwandan higher education.

### ***Higher Education in Rwanda***

While before 1994, Rwanda counted only two higher education institutions, it reached 31 by the academic year 2015-2016. In fact, the total number of private higher education institutions reached 29, while all public higher education institutions merged under the University of

Rwanda by the academic year 2015-2016. An Institute of Legal Practice and Development (ILPD) was also created. This higher education institution was assigned a special mission of implementing judicial reforms the country needs to meet the demands for a legal workforce. Given this remarkable increase in the number of higher education intuitions, the number of students has dramatically increased. Public as well as private higher learning institutions have also opened doors to international students (Higher Education Council, 2016; see Appendix A).

### *Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Rwandan Higher Education System*

While African higher education institutions are increasingly attracting students with diverse backgrounds, studies dealing with higher education in Africa, especially studies concerning with cultural minority students are an emerging field of inquiry (Major, & Mangope, 2014). Only a few studies addressing support and development for diverse students in African higher education have been conducted, which constitutes a gap in both the African and Rwandan educational systems. As the required knowledge remains absent from the literature, African professionals in higher education must probe and discover for themselves whether and how their institutions are fully supporting the diverse needs of their students (Major, & Mangope, 2014). In other words, in the twenty-first century, a few examples of research exist concerning the academic lives of minority students in both Africa and Rwanda, as one of 54 African countries (Rasmussen, 2015). Existing studies on CRT provide no details relating to how teachers and school administrators in Rwanda help diverse students meet their academic needs. Thus, a growing need for more research exists with the aim of knowing how teachers and educational administrators in Rwandan private higher education facilitate the learning process for students from CLD environments.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH**

### **Research Design**

To conduct this study, a qualitative case study was implemented. This approach enabled the exploration of contextual aspects related to the use of CRT in a Rwandan private higher education and assessment of the perspectives of University X instructors and administrators. A qualitative approach was incorporated to study CRT in its natural setting (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The use of a qualitative approach was also an opportunity to see how a phenomenon (CRT) was occurring and establish the meaning that University X instructors and administrators brought to it (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

### **Conceptual Framework**

In developing the conceptual framework for this study, three models of CRT. The first part of the conceptual framework drew from research by Gay (2002). It included five components: teachers should have both pedagogical skills and content knowledge regarding cultural diversity (Hill, 2018); an effective teacher should be able to convert the knowledge into culturally relevant curricula and instructional strategies (Macgregor & Folinazzo, 2018; Norman, 2020); an effective teacher should promote a climate that is conducive to learning, especially for



ethnically diverse students (Grace & Harrington, 2015; Griffin et al., 2016; Hilliard, 2019). Cross-cultural communication is another pivotal element when applying CRT. This element must be of the highest level to serve and teach ethnically diverse students more effectively (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). Gay (2012) asserted that preparation for CRT should involve building cultural congruity into classroom instruction, which implies a firm understanding of the internal structures of cultural minority students' learning styles.

The second part of the conceptual framework was developed from the research work by Aceves and Orosco (2014). They conceived of four CRT practices that can help a teacher of culturally diverse students to be effective: collaborative-based instruction; responsive feedback; teacher modeling; and instructional scaffolding. In this model, the researchers, Aceves and Orosco, also recommended two teaching approaches to use in a culturally diverse classroom (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). The first approach involves problem-solving, which encourages teachers to investigate real and open-ended problems. The second approach concerns child-centered instruction. This approach insists on contributions from students (Samuels et al., 2017). For these two approaches to lead to success, teachers are encouraged to assess their diverse students. This assessment should focus on minority students' linguistic and cultural identities since all teachers' activities should build on students' knowledge and strengths from home and communities (Banks & Obiakor, 2015). Teaching material, according to Aceves and Orosco (2014), should also reflect students' cultural, linguistic, and racial identities, as these factors promote learning in diverse students (Ellis et al., 2017).

The third part of the conceptual framework was developed from the research work by Richards et al. (2007), which consisted of three dimensions: institutional, personal, and instructional. The institutional dimension involves the school's implementing appropriate physical and political structures. The personal dimension concerns a teacher's beliefs and practices. The instructional level concerns the compatibility of instructional material, such as available books, teaching strategies, teaching methods, and any other activity with students' cultural experiences.

### **Setting, Population/Participants**

Purposive sampling was used to select instructors and administrators with long-term experience teaching or working with diverse students and knowledge of the topic (Palys, 2008; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Suri, 2011). Purposive sampling was chosen over other sampling techniques as it aims at understanding the meaning of a situation or phenomenon being covered from the perspectives of participants with more experience than the rest (Ngozwana, 2018). Merriam (2002) warned a researcher to select a setting and sample from which the most can be learned. Based on these principles, University X, one of Rwanda's private higher education institutions with a significant number of nonmainstream students, was selected as a setting for a case study (Higher Education Council, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). As for the number of participants to be included, the researcher was guided by the principle that in a qualitative study, with an interview as a data collection technique, Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011) insisted on the quality, richness, and depth of the collected information rather than the size of the sample. To that end, this study started with ten participants, comprising five instructors and five administrators. Depending on the progress of the inquiry, as suggested by Abokor, 2016; Boyce, & Neale, 2006; Braun and Clarke, 2013; Gyamfi, 2016, the researcher kept interviewing until saturation was reached at twelve participants.

## Data Collection, Coding, and Analysis

For data collection, the research relied on primary sources including interviews and documents. The entire data collection process was expected to take 3 weeks. Each respondent was interviewed once. During this individual unstructured face-to-face interview, the researcher collected data from both instructors and University X administrators.

From two existing major analysis strategies, one with a focus on reducing large data sets and one data set with a focus on description, analysis, and explanation of the meaning of an original text (Flick, 2014), the researcher utilized the first strategy, which reduces large sets of data. After deciding on the approach to data analysis, the researcher began the coding process. The coding activity was performed in two phases: the first cycle and the second cycle (Saldana, 2016). During the first cycle coding, data segments summary (Saldana, 2016), the researcher opted for four coding methods. First, a descriptive coding method was used to summarize interview paragraphs or interview segments, while the in vivo coding method allowed the researcher to use codes directly drawn from a participant's transcript. Attribute coding was used to code demographic information, while a sub-content-coding method allowed the researcher to code document content (Saldana, 2016). During second cycle coding, the researcher sought to reorganize and reanalyze every piece of data coded through the first cycle coding method to create and organize categories and themes (Saldana, 2016). All categories documented emerged from three primary sources: participants' words, personal reflections of the researcher, and a literature viewpoint and conceptual framework (Merriam, 1998).

## RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to describe instructors' and school leaders' views of their roles in conducting CRT methods in a Rwandan higher education classroom or institution with a diverse or nonmainstream student population.

### Research Question 1

Research question one was: How do instructors in a Rwandan higher education institution view their roles in conducting CRT methods in a Rwandan higher education classroom or institution with a diversified or nonmainstream student population? The following four themes emerged from interview with instructors:

- Promotion of a positive classmate
- Need for administrative assistance
- Determination of a curriculum strengthens and weaknesses
- Teaching practices and strategies change

### Theme #1: Promotion of a positive classroom climate

Instructors believed that minority students' positive learning experience and academic success remain impossible as long as a positive classroom climate is not created and promoted. Instructors viewed a positive classroom climate promotion as the primary teachers' responsibility in a diverse classroom. UAS2 shared, "I take a little time to talk to them, know where they are from, and know some difficulties that they have." UAS3 explained that she also promoted the

classroom climate. “I mixed those foreign students with local students. I encouraged them to cooperate with them because before local students considered foreign students as strange.” UTS1 reported promoting a friendly classroom by preventing loneliness and bringing all students together.

To promote a positive classroom, instructors shared two pedagogical practices applied in a diverse classroom. A diagrammatic representation of two pedagogical practices applied by instructors to promote a positive classroom in a diverse classroom is contained in Fig 1.

### **Theme #2: Need for administrative assistance**

Instructors viewed administrative assistance or support as important tools in a diverse classroom management. Instructors expressed reliance on sharing information concerning minority students and training and professional development to enhance minority students’ learning. Participants UTS2 and UTS4 reported on the information concerning new minority students that they needed to better manage a diverse classroom. UTS1 insisted on sharing information about minority students by the administration by expressing, “They should always inform teachers that students from different cultural backgrounds are registered so that while teaching they should consider it. UTS3, on the other hand, being an instructor and academic administrator indicated, “The University X administration makes us aware that there are foreign students so that we can make a research about their cultures.”

In this study, the researcher also found that instructors wanted to see school administrators involved in more training regarding what to do and how to do it. Though adequate training was not provided to them, UTS1, UTS2, and UTS4 considered knowledge from training related to minority students’ management or teaching as a key in managing a diverse classroom. UTS5 claimed that University X allowed instructors to take any language training such as French and Swahili to be able to adapt to different students from different countries, while UTS3 was confident in the help, which included trainings, from University X. A diagrammatic representation of two main desired practices that instructors expected from their administrators regarding the need for administrative assistance is contained in Fig 1.

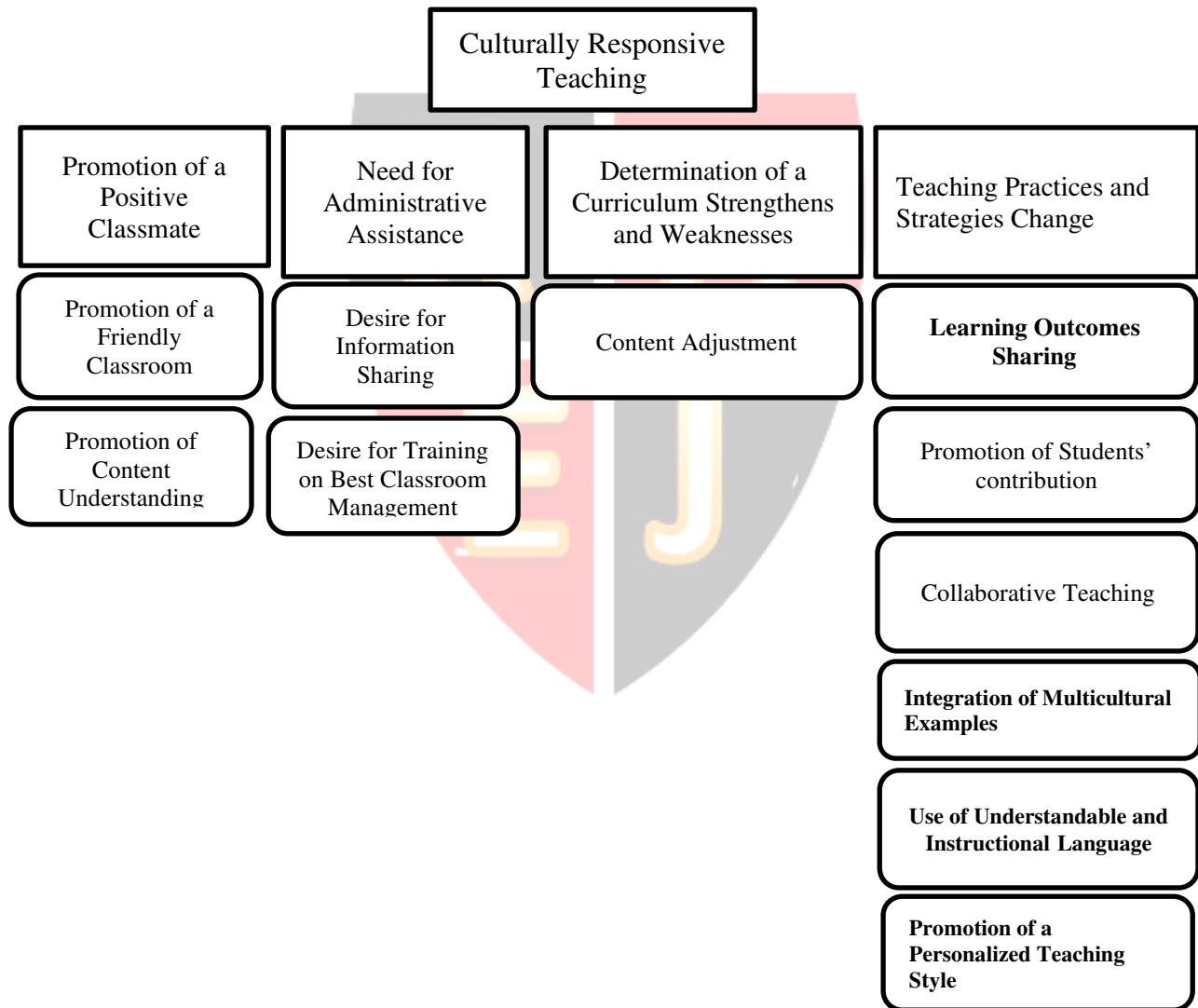
### **Theme #3: Determination of a curriculum strengths and weaknesses**

Instructors had the belief that an adjustment to teaching curriculum was key in a diverse classroom as it helps to create an inclusive classroom. All instructors (UTS1, UTS2, UTS3, UTS4, and UTS5) interviewed reported that they have adjusted the teaching curriculum to better teach minority students. UAS5 pointed out, “Because sometimes books are prepared focusing on local students... we try to adjust our content so that all students can find themselves in the course.” Participant UTS4 added, “If the example that has been given in the book does not match the situation we have in the class, we can make some modifications within examples.” A diagrammatic representation of one teaching practice applied by instructors to help minority students succeed through curriculum strengths and weaknesses determination in a diverse classroom is contained in Fig 1.



**Theme #4: Teaching practices and strategies change**

To meet minority students’ academic needs, instructors UTS1, UTS2, UTS3, UTS4, and UTS5 all believed in the change of teaching practices and strategies. They all reported that as of the day they became aware of the presence of minority students in the classroom, they made efforts to make themselves more understandable than before by using the language that all students can understand. UTS1, UTS2, UTS4, and UTS5 claimed that they applied personalized teaching to adequately respond to minority students’ academic needs. The researcher was able to identify six new teaching practices and strategies that have been used at University X to better teach minority students. A diagrammatic representation of the six teaching practices and strategies applied by instructors in a diverse classroom is contained in Fig



**Figure 1: Teaching Practices and Strategies Applied by Instructors in a Diverse Classroom**

## Research Question 2

RQ2-Qualitative: How do school leaders in a Rwandan higher education institution view their roles in conducting CRT methods in a higher education classroom or institution with a diversified or nonmainstream student population? The following six themes were identified:

- Positive relationship building and promotion
- Training and professional development
- School leadership, policy, and administrative practices change
- Conflicts prevention strategies
- Promotion of a modern learning and healthy living environment
- Changes in school instructional programs and strategies

**Theme #1: Positive relationship building and promotion**

University X administrators expressed reliance on positive relationship with minority students to promote learning within a diverse school. All school administrators described their relationship with minority students as either strong or good and explained what they did to build and promote that positive relationship. Participant UAS7 said, “I have a very strong relationship with international students.” Participant UAS4 stated that the relationship was good. UAS7 reported, “I can say that the relationship is good.” UAS1 and UAS3 described this relationship as good as well. UAS2 described this relationship as a family one, “Living with them, working with them daily, and involving them creates a family environment.”

Regarding the promotion of that positive relationship, all respondents expressed that they ensured to build positive relationship with minority students by providing a hospitable environment. UAS2 said, “We have to welcome everybody to give them more guidance and protect their interests by being an advocate of their problems.” UAS3 said, “We have been trying to make them feel peaceful and developed into responsible citizens.” UAS4 stated, “When it is the first time, I accompany them until the class. Then I tell students that this is a foreign student.” The researcher identified two primary ways school administrators used to help minority students succeed through positive relationship building promotion. A diagrammatic representation of two administrative practices applied by University X administrators in a diverse school is contained in Fig 1.

**Theme #2: Training and professional development**

University X administrators believed that training and professional development were important in implementing CRT methods. Six participants shared that University X offered training to help minority students meet their needs. UAS1 stated, “They are learning Kinyarwanda.” UAS6 said, “There was Kinyarwanda training at the university level.” UAS5 expressed, “We have started teaching Kinyarwanda to all students, even to those minorities. Participants also shared that training to instructors and administrators was highly needed to advance and lead to teacher empowerment. Participants UAS2, UAS5, UAS6, and UAS7 mentioned that there was also English training offered to lecturers, staff, and students (local and international). The researcher identified three primary means by which school leaders helped

minority students succeed through training and professional development. A diagrammatic representation of three administrative practices applied by University X administrators in a diverse school is contained in Fig 2.

### **Theme#3: School leadership, policy, and administrative practices change**

To better meet minority students' needs, University X administrators UAS1, UAS2, UAS3, UAS4, UAS5, UAS6, and UAS7 all interviewed affirmed that it was necessary to make changes to school leadership, policy, and administrative practices. UAS3 maintained that at the minority students' arrival, he asked them, "...to come to the office and discuss how best to help them." UAS6 explained that when dealing with minority students, "They have their style of living to be taken into consideration." UAS2 stressed that his leadership style now varies according to their (minority students) needs. UAS1 shared, "The boarding policy has changed because we have included other components for special students who cannot eat the same food as others." The researcher was able to identify five different ways the presence of minority students has influenced the way University X was led. A diagrammatic representation of five administrative practices or changes applied by University X administrators in a diverse school is contained in Fig 2.

### **Theme # 4: Conflicts prevention strategies**

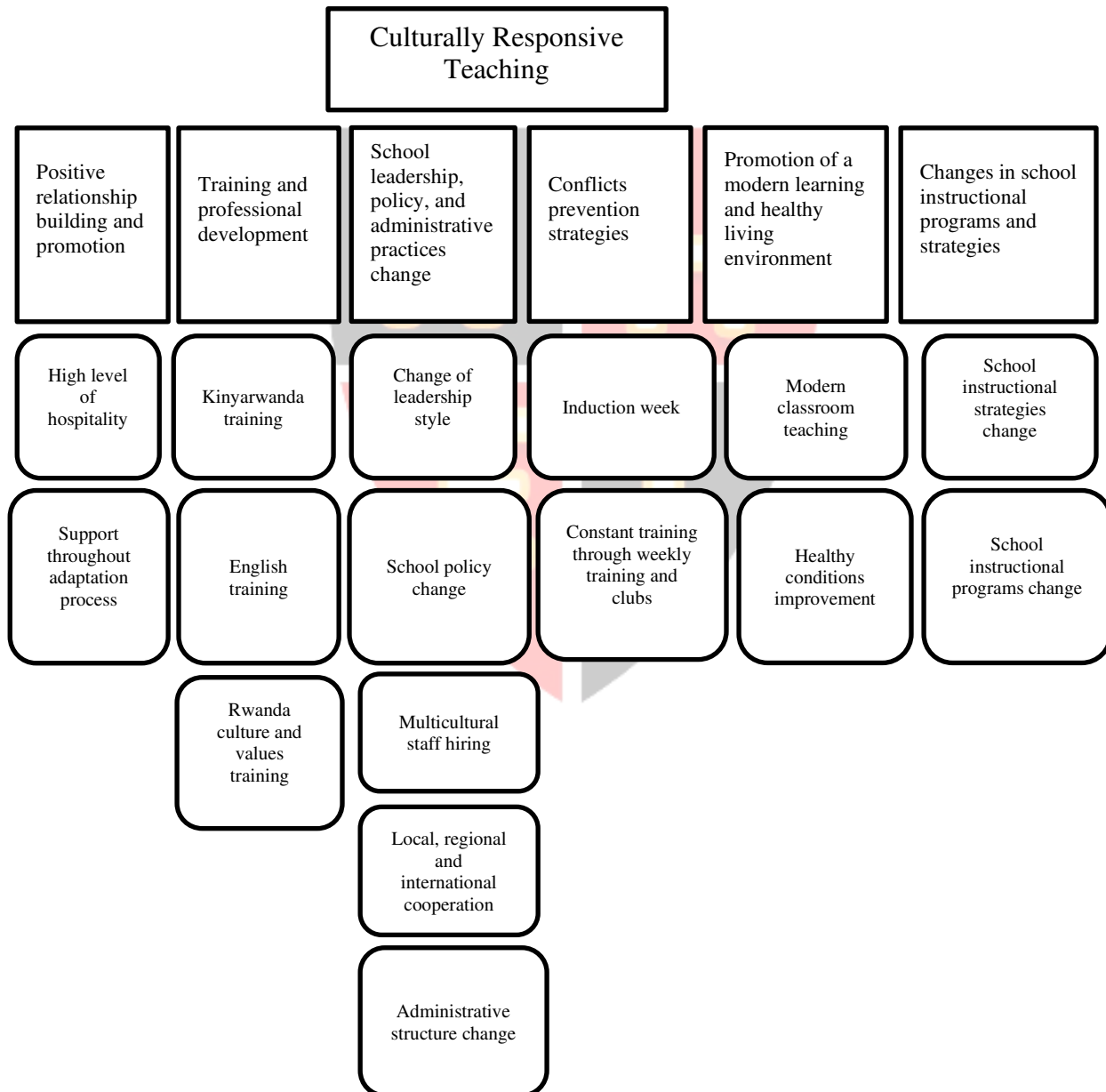
Administrators believed in conflict prevention among University X community. University X administrators shared some strategies they believed worked best for conflicts prevention. UAS1, UAS2, UAS4, UAS5, UAS6, and UAS7 talked about induction week at the beginning of each academic year to introduce new students to the country's life and culture. Participants UAS2, UAS 3, UAS5, and UAS6 discussed training through weekly conferences and clubs to educate students about national values, which was another way to prevent conflicts. A diagrammatic representation of those two administrative practices applied to make University X more culturally responsive through conflict handling strategies is contained in Fig 2.

### **Theme#5: Promotion of a modern learning and healthy living environment**

Participants viewed the improvement of both learning and living conditions as critical to meeting minority students' needs. UAS2, UAS3, and UAS7 talked about e-learning teaching in place, which allows students to learn from any location and use some materials from their countries of origin felt that University X has introduced e-learning use. UAS5 reported that University X was using a universal technique teaching by embracing electronic books. In effort to promote healthy living conditions, UAS1, UAS2, UAS4, UAS5, UAS6, and UAS7 maintained that a hostel and meal choice has allowed minority students to be outside their countries of origin but live and eat according to their individual choice. The researcher identified two ways the school leaders used to make University X more culturally responsive. A diagrammatic representation of two administrative practices applied to make University X more culturally responsive through school environment promotion in a diverse school is contained in Fig 2.

**Theme# 6: Changes in school instructional programs and strategies**

For administrators, instructional programs and strategies must change if a school is to serve all students. UAS1, UAS2, UAS4, UAS6, and UAS7 highlighted the necessity of change to the medium of instruction by reinforcing the use of English. Participants UAS1, UAS2, UAS3, UAS4, UAS5, UAS6, and UAS7 all together also felt that teaching programs were revised to meet minority students’ needs. The researcher identified two primary methods school administrators have used to make the University X more culturally responsive. A diagrammatic representation of those two primary methods applied by University X administrators in a diverse school is contained in Fig 2.



**Figure 2:** Administrative Practices applied by University X Administrators in a Diverse School.

## Interpretation of Findings

The conceptual framework for this study included CRT best teaching practices and approaches (Gay, 2002); institutional, personal, and instructional dimensions of CRT (Richards et al., 2007); and components of the preparation for and practice of CRT (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). The confirmation of knowledge was validated by major study findings from both RQ1 and RQ2.

Regarding RQ1, instructors expressed reliance on sharing information concerning minority students and training and professional development to enhance minority students' learning. This study finding corroborates the ideas of Aceves and Orosco (2014) and Mester (2016) who found that training and professional development for instructors and other employees in a diverse school are essential and should be varied to better promote empowerment. The second key finding from RQ1 was promotion of a positive classroom climate. This finding validates the view of Griffin et al. (2016) that an effective teacher must promote a climate that is conducive to learning, especially for ethnically diverse students, as school climate is linked to students' success (Gay, 2002; Hilliard, 2019; O'Malley et al., 2015). The study's third major theme was adjustments in the teaching curriculum. This finding confirms other conclusions from the literature such as Aceves and Orosco (2014) and Norman (2020) who found that teachers should adjust the curriculum to ensure minority students' inclusion. The study's fourth theme relates to teaching practices and strategies including (a) learning outcome sharing, (b) students' contribution promotion, (c) multicultural example, (d) understandable instructional language (e) personalized teaching, and (f) collaborative teaching. Previous researchers' findings on both CRT best practices (Bassey, 2016; Dickson et al., 2016) and adapted teaching strategies (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Lambeth, 2016; Long, 2018) agreed with the present study finding.

Regarding RQ2, there were six key findings. The first key finding was positive relationship promotion. The positive relationship study outcome is consistent with the claim of Aceves and Orosco (2014) that for any diverse school to be successful, it is important to promote positive and respectful working relationships (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Christian, 2017; Hilaski, 2018; Evans Lane, 2016; Samuels et al., 2017; Warren & Hotchkins, 2015; Zhang & Wang, 2016). The second key finding concerned school administrators' belief that training and professional development were important in implementing CRT methods. This study finding is consistent with Mester's (2016) claimed that CRSL should offer varied kinds of training and development any schools need to advance and lead to teacher empowerment. The third key finding from this study concerned with change to school leadership, policy, and administrative practices. This third key finding confirms Macgregor and Folinazzo's (2018) findings regarding the accommodations and admission standards-related policies revision. The change to school leadership, policy, and administrative practices finding was also consistent with Bonner et al. (2017) and Johnson-Wells (2016) who shared that educational leaders should reform and transform all aspects of an educational system including policymaking and administration if a school is to serve all students, no matter their backgrounds. From RQ2, the researcher also found that administrators believed in conflict prevention through Induction Week organization and ongoing training through weekly conferences and clubs. This study finding confirms Wu et al. (2015) whose findings emphasized that universities are required to organize orientation sessions for international students and seminars concerning the local culture and the overall academic culture. Regarding conflicts prevention finding again, this study is consistent with Wu et al. (2015) who found that a higher learning institution should promote services such as students'



associations, recreational activities, and various student organizations that help students to be prepared academically, socially, and culturally. The fifth study outcome was modern learning and healthy living environment promotion. This finding is in agreement with the idea of Dell'Angelo (2016); Whipp and Geronime (2017); Dell'Angelo (2016); Savvides and Pashiardis (2016), and Mester (2016). They all indicated that a productive classroom environment is a requirement for the academic success of any minority student. In the same vein, a healthy and respectful classroom environment in which minority students can freely express their opinions is key to their success (Macgregor & Folinazzo, 2018). The last key finding from the RQ2 concerned with school instructional programs and strategy change. This study outcome confirmed Macgregor and Folinazzo's (2018) finding that special attention, in a diverse school, should be given to best practices including, but are not limited to, implementation of sound pedagogical strategies and academic program change (Macgregor & Folinazzo, 2018).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that a similar study be conducted to describe minority students' views of instructors' and administrators' roles in conducting CRT methods in a Rwandan higher education classroom or institution with the diversified or nonmainstream student population. When this study was conducted, instructors and school administrators shared some of their roles in conducting CRT methods in a diverse classroom and struggles they faced while trying to meet minority students' needs. The description of what they did created in the researcher's mind the curiosity to hear from minority students as well. This recommendation is consistent with the existing literature as Wu et al. (2015) shared that a great need exists to know minority students' personal stories, challenges they face, and strategies used to overcome these challenges, which can be helpful to other international students. Macgregor and Folinazzo once again shared that through continued research, a need exists to know steps to be taken to ensure international students' success. Postsecondary institutions administrators and educators want to know from researchers' approaches to take to better accommodate international or minority students both on campus and in the classroom (Macgregor & Folinazzo, 2018). Macgregor and Folinazzo also shared that school administrators and instructors want to offer assistance based on empirical evidence.

As this study was conducted in one Rwandan private higher learning institution, a second recommendation is to replicate this study in Rwandan public universities. While Rwandan public universities are known for receiving an important number of international students (University X academic report, 2017), little is known about minority students' teaching and management in a Rwandan public higher education institution, as was the case for Rwandan private higher learning institutions. The literature is supportive of this recommendation. In the 21st century, scant research exists concerning the academic lives or experiences of minority students in both Africa, in general, and Rwanda as one of 54 African countries (Rasmussen, 2015). Studies on higher education in Africa, especially studies addressing cultural minority students, are an emerging field of inquiry (Major & Mangope, 2014).

The third recommendation deals with instructors' preparation for CRT. While conducting this study, the researcher found that the University X teaching staff raised a concern about the

lack of training and professional development regarding minority students' teaching and management. Staff expressed that when it comes to teaching and managing a diverse classroom, each teacher must manage alone. Given that context, there is an interest in knowing how instructors are prepared for a cultural classroom and environment. The literature is supportive of this recommendation. Khalifa et al. (2016) advocated the professional development for teachers and administrative staff to make sure they are all responsive to minority students. Mester (2016) argued that school leadership should offer all kinds of training and development to its employees to advance.

## **Implications**

This qualitative case study may contribute to social change in different ways. At the individual level, this study may contribute to social change by increasing both University X instructors' and school administrators' knowledge on how to better teach, serve, and meet minority students' needs. Once the best teaching and administrative strategies from this study, as shared by participants and supported by existing literature, are applied, minority students may feel more motivated to learn than before and experience academic success, as a result.

At the individual level, this study of CRT may benefit minority students by helping them overcome obstacles that hinder the implementation of principles known to improve their academic performance. The application of CRT best practices, as presented in this study, may help overcome those obstacles and consequently promote academic success.

At the organizational level, this study may contribute to positive social change by creating and promoting a positive learning environment at University X and positive social relationships within the University X community (students, instructors, and administrators). By referring to this study's findings, University X leadership may realize that the administrative and teaching staff preparation geared toward diversity, as explained in this study may lead to a positive learning and social environment (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Wu et al., 2015). Creation of this positive learning and social environment, may in turn lead to academic success as a healthy and respectful classroom environment may allow minority students to freely express their opinion, which is a key to their success (Macgregor & Folinazzo, 2018).

At the societal level, this study may contribute to social change by promoting content quality understanding, which leads to quality knowledge. Once minority students have been taught using CRT best practices, as shared in this study, they may better understand the content (Samuels et al., 2017). They may consequently receive quality education needed to positively change a community and a society at the large, as a successful university graduate is expected to act as a catalyst for change in the society.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to describe instructors' and school leaders' views of their roles in conducting CRT methods in a Rwandan higher education classroom or institution with the diversified student population. This study was conducted because little is known about instructors' and school leaders' role in conducting CRT methods in diversified student

population's learning in Rwandan Higher Education. Hence, the finding from this study added to the existing literature of CRT concerning instructors' and administrators' views of their role in CRT methods implementation in a private higher learning institution. This study used a qualitative case study design to describe instructors' and administrators' views concerning CRT incorporation in daily teaching or administrative best practices. Additionally, this study findings from instructors revealed that instructors viewed administrative assistance; positive classroom climate promotion; curriculum strengths and weaknesses determination; and school leadership, policy, and administrative practices change as key roles in implementing CRT methods. On the other hand, study findings from administrator perspectives revealed that a culturally responsive administrator (CRA) engaged in promoting positive relationship and organized training and professional development for the University X community is critical. Findings from the same study also revealed that CRAs changed or adapted school leadership, policy, and administrative practices to better meet minority students' needs. In a multicultural school, according to the same study, a CRA used appropriate strategies to prevent conflicts from occurring while promoting modern learning environment and healthy living environment promotion. A CRA continually adjusts school instructional programs and strategies to better serve minority students.

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