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Original Article

Students' Perceptions of Local and Foreign History Teachers in the Seychelles from the Perspective of National Identity

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ABSTRACT

As globalisation enhances the international mobility of teachers, Seychelles has experienced a notable rise in the number of foreign teachers in its state secondary schools, with foreign nationals comprising 59% of national history teachers in 2023. The study investigated students' perspectives on local and foreign history teachers in Seychelles' secondary schools, examining firstly, students' preference for local or foreign history teachers and secondly, students' perception of local and foreign teachers' effective teaching in terms of emotional, behavioural, and instructional support and national identity building. A mixed-methods approach was applied using a questionnaire survey involving 785 students from 8 state secondary schools, followed by focus group discussions with selected survey participants. The results indicate that students with a local teacher prefer a local teacher, while those with a foreign history teacher are open to accepting either nationality. There are significant differences in the emotional, behavioural, and instructional support between the two groups of teachers. However, no notable difference in fostering national identity between the two groups. Local teachers were perceived as more emotionally engaged, culturally aware, and adept at using local language and contextually relevant strategies. While temporarily fostering national attachment through shared symbols and history, foreign teachers were seen as being able to enrich students' understanding by providing diverse perspectives and comparative insights into Seychelles' history. A balanced approach, utilising the strengths of both foreign and local teachers, coupled with professional development to address existing weaknesses, can enrich students' learning experiences and contribute to a sense of global citizenship without compromising the element of national identity building.

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INTRODUCTION

Seychelles' state secondary schools have a rich history of cultural diversity; in 2023, for example, 22 out of a total of 37 history teachers were non-Seychellois nationals, mostly coming from African countries (Kenya 7, Uganda 6, Zambia 4, Botswana 1, Ghana 1, India 1, Mauritius 1, and Tanzania 1). Seychelles is a small island state with around 100,000 inhabitants, making up 59% of the country's national history teachers. Between 2014 and 2022, the total number of foreign teachers teaching various subjects in all state secondary schools nearly doubled, increasing from 101 to 232 (Education Statistics, 2015–2023). During that time, the number of local teachers decreased from 387 to 333. The nature of the teacher workforce in state secondary schools is quite unusual due to teacher diversity. In addition to retirement, many state-school-trained primary teachers (159) and secondary teachers (145) left the field between 2012 and 2016 to work in other economic sectors (Teacher Management &Development Policy, 2020b). According to a 2014 United Nations Human Rights Council report by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Seychelles' economy has become more diverse, offering university graduates and secondary school leavers more profitable employment options than teaching. Additionally, the number of teachers declined due to administrative burdens, disciplinary issues, and increasingly challenging teaching conditions, among other factors. The authorities recognised the need to acquire foreign teachers to fill the gap left by the declining number of Seychellois teachers, aiming to meet the demand and compensate for the severe shortage of qualified local teachers (Singh, 2014).

The present study is motivated by a long-standing, notable research gap concerning foreign teachers teaching national history in the local context. To date, no empirical research has been conducted to assess the impact of foreign teachers teaching national history. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining students' perspectives of foreign history teachers. The paper addresses the following research questions: What is the student's preference regarding the nationality of the teacher teaching them national history? How do students perceive the emotional, behavioural, and instructional support they receive, as well as national identity-building, in relation to their Seychellois and foreign national history teachers? Exploring the contributions and limitations of foreign teachers of various nationalities who teach national history in local contexts can provide insight into their practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Effective Teaching

In their definition of high-quality teaching, researchers identified the teacher's capacity to plan and direct the classroom, to engage socially and emotionally with students, and to provide instructional supports for the delivery of information. The Teaching through Interaction Framework (Hafen et al., 2015; Hamre et al., 2013) identifies three main dimensions for effective classroom teaching. It outlines the teachers' emotional support practices that support students' social and emotional development (Pianta & Hamre, 2009), teachers' capacity to control

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students' behavior and focus on the classroom (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Lei et al., 2018; Li, 2023; Mahnaz & Amirhamid, 2021; Spilt et al.,2012), and the instructional aspects that improve students' learning (Allen et al., 2013). As the framework centres on students' perceptions, these perceptions are a valuable instrument, as they influence learning behaviours based on students' insights. What students truly perceive may even be more significant than what other observers notice (Maulana & Helms-Lorenz, 2016). Although student raters are fundamentally different from trained adult observers, students, as observers, have innately acquired knowledge from their regular classroom experiences.

National Identity Building in History Education

History education plays a significant role in the formation and building of national identity and forming an individual's connection to their national identity (Alesina et al., 2021; Durrani et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2012; Ortega-Sánchez et al., 2020; Shvets, 2020). Ortega-Sánchez et al. (2020) point out that schools play a crucial role in shaping the nation's shared values, positioning them as key tools in nation-building. History education has a significant influence on national identity, shaping individuals' perceptions of their nation's past, values, and global position (Karayianni & Foster, 2018).

Previous Studies on Foreign Teachers

As pointed out by Ospina and Medina (2020), foreign teachers bring a unique perspective to the classroom, influenced by their background, experience, and perspective. As such, they help students develop intercultural awareness, become more adaptable, and cultivate attitudes of tolerance and respect. Ospina and Medina (2020) further showed how cross-national experiences present various challenges, which may include problems with teacher-student relationships, communication gaps, unfamiliar organisational arrangements, and culture shock. Halicioglu (2015) noted that many of the past studies on foreign teachers have focused on how many national schools, both public and private, employ foreign teachers to teach in their native language or to supplement bilingual, trilingual, or multilingual instruction. Furthermore, most research on foreign teachers has been conducted within national borders or on English language teachers in foreign countries (André et al.,2020; König & Pflanzl, 2016; Sánchez et al.,2020), while little attention has been paid to the teaching of national history. Additionally, these studies have primarily focused on south-to-north teacher migration, overlooking the trend of south-to-south teacher migration (Benson, 2016; Sharma, 2013)

In South Africa and Botswana, foreign teachers were hired to address shortages in the education sector (Appleton Sives & Morgan, 2006; Makonye, 2017). South Africa faces significant obstacles for these teachers, including immigration issues, a lack of identity documents limiting access to financial services and family reunification, and difficulty connecting with students' cultural backgrounds. They also encounter xenophobia, discrimination, and resistance from local teachers and students, complicating classroom management. Insufficient institutional support results in inadequate mentoring and exclusion from decision-making. Language barriers further hinder engagement with parents. Weda and de Villiers (2019) identified additional migrant obstacles in South Africa, such as job insecurity, unreliable contracts, challenges securing loans, exploitation, and insufficient induction. Furthermore, foreign teachers earn lower salaries than their South African counterparts (Tarisayi & Manik, 2021).

Regarding the movement of teachers abroad and past research, little is known about the experiences of foreign teachers teaching national history (Sahlberg, 2004). As noted by Sharma (2013), efforts should now focus on providing more differentiated and detailed accounts of foreign teachers' situations by examining their specific

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circumstances. In this research, we shall concentrate on the history classroom.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-methods research approach with a sequential explanatory design. The questionnaire survey and focus group discussion were used to obtain insight into the practices of teachers of various nationalities who are teaching one country's national history. This paper presents the views of the students, who narrate their perceptions of their teachers.

Data Collection

Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire survey was adapted from the Tripod Survey (Ferguson & Charlotte, 2014) to look at teacher emotional, behavioural and instructional support and the Relevance of History Measurement Scale (Van Straaten et al., 2018) to examine national identity building. Survey answers were provided on a Likert scale, where 1 = totally untrue, 2 = untrue, 3 = somewhat true, 4 = true, and 5 = totally true.

Focused Group Discussion

FGD was used to gain a deeper understanding of students' thoughts, feelings, and opinions that influenced their survey responses, eliciting additional insights from participants (Tracy, 2020) and examining the feelings that emerged, particularly through group interaction (Ary et al., 2010). The discussions were guided by a semi-structured set of questions focusing on their preference for a local or foreign history teacher, teacher emotional, instructional, and behavioural support, as well as national identity building.

Sample

Questionnaire Survey. The total survey sample consisted of 785 junior high school students (756 local and 29 foreign) from 40 classrooms in eight secondary schools located on the three main inhabited islands of Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue in Seychelles. Schools in Seychelles are divided into five zones, and samples were selected from all five zones. Students were selected from the second and third grades of junior high school, as these are the grades in which national history topics are taught. Proportional stratified sampling was employed to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the distribution of strata within the population (Johnson & Christensen, 2020), that is, equal numbers of respondents with a Seychellois teacher and respondents with a foreign national teacher were selected. Three hundred and eighty-nine (49.55%) students had Seychellois teachers, and 396 (50.44%) students had foreign national teachers from Uganda (18.73%), Kenya (17.83%), Zambia (10.19%), and Tanzania (3.69%). The survey participants included 406 (51.71%) Grade 2 junior high school students (242 males and 164 females) and 379 Grade 3 (48.28%) junior high school students (223 males and 156 females). One hundred and seventy-eight (43.84%) of the Grade 2 students had a Seychellois teacher, and 228 (56.16%) students had a foreign teacher. Of the Grade 3 students, 211 (55.67%) had a Seychellois teacher, and 168 (44.33%) had a foreign teacher.

Focus Group Discussion. A total of 13 focus group discussions were conducted, which included 8 to 12 participants from seven of the eight schools that participated in the questionnaire survey. Each group of participants was selected based on their current grade, their history teachers' nationalities, and their preference for either a Seychellois teacher or a foreign teacher. Data saturation in qualitative research is a validation method that ensures sufficient information has been gathered until no new insights emerge. By reaching data saturation, researchers can confidently conclude their study, thereby enhancing the robustness and reliability of their findings through comprehensive coverage of the topic (Fusch et al., 2015). When participants share the same information, it suggests that saturation has been achieved. Since each focus group consists of multiple individuals, the likelihood of reaching saturation sooner than in

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interviews is generally greater (Mwita, 2022). Based on a systematic review of empirical tests by Hennink and Kaiser (2022), saturation in qualitative research is typically achieved with sample sizes ranging from 4 to 8 focus groups in order to identify the optimal sample size for saturation.

Data Analysis

In the quantitative data analysis, SPSS (Version 29) was used to calculate descriptive statistics, specifically to summarise the data on the students' preferences for a foreign or Seychellois teacher. Then, a *t*-test was used to test for statistically significant differences in perceptions between the students who currently have a foreign history teacher and those who currently have a Seychellois history teacher. Principal component factor analysis was run with rotation and oblimin with Kaiser normalisation, and the items were reduced to 22 items, loading onto four factors. Factor 1 (Emotional Support) consisted of 10 items (items 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, and 19; Cronbach's alpha = .864). Factor 2 (Instructional Support) consisted of 3 items (items 21, 23, and 24; Cronbach's alpha = .687). Factor 3 (Behavioural Support) comprised 5 items (25, 27, 28, 29, and 30; Cronbach's alpha = .825). Lastly, Factor 4 (Building National Identity) consisted of 5 items (31, 33, 34, 35, and 36), with a Cronbach's alpha of .758. The focus group discussion, conducted in the local language, was recorded, translated, transcribed, and analysed using a thematic approach.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents findings and analysis based on the research questions: (1) What is the students' preference regarding the nationality of the teacher teaching them national history? and (2) How do students perceive the emotional, behavioural, and instructional support they receive, as well as national identity-building, in relation to their Seychellois and foreign national history teachers? By using data from the questionnaire survey supported by findings from the focus group discussion, we can gain a deeper understanding of participants' preferences for and perceptions of teachers based on national identity, teacher-student relationships, behavioural support strategies, the language used in instruction, the use of the mother tongue, the role of teachers in shaping national identity, and the benefits of teachers from diverse backgrounds in the teaching of national history.

Students' Preference for Teachers Based on Teachers' National Identity

To address the first research question, we used crosstabulation to investigate students' preferences for either local or foreign teachers (Table 1). Out of the total sample, 46.88% of students preferred a Seychellois teacher, 41.15% were open to both groups, and 11.97% preferred a foreign teacher. Of the students with a Seychellois teacher, 72.2% preferred a Seychellois teacher. Those who had a foreign teacher, 56.6%, were open to both groups.

Interestingly, the data show that students with a Seychellois teacher were more likely to prefer a Seychellois teacher. In contrast, those who already had a foreign teacher were more open to accepting either of the two groups of teachers. This suggests that as students are exposed to more foreign teachers, their acceptance of foreigners increases. From this perspective, students' preferences are not solely based on the teacher's national identity. As a student mentioned during the focus group discussion, the teacher's nationality "*is not the focus of the students*"; rather, "*the personality of the teacher is more important*."

A growing body of research explores various aspects of teacher personality, suggesting that distinct personality qualities are crucial for effective teaching and learning (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2016; Göncz, 2017; Mulyani, 2023; Njoku, 2020). Thus, national identity may be less important than personality. This aligns with the research conducted by Vendeya (2020), which indicated that, over time, students in South Africa began to recognise the advantages of being taught by foreign teachers due

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to the consistent interactions that enabled them to appreciate the teachers more.

Table 1: Students' Preference for Teacher Nationality (*n* = 785)

	Prefer a Seychellois teacher.	Prefer a foreign teacher	Prefer either
Students who have a Seychellois history teacher	281 72.24%	9 2.31%	99 25.45%
Students who have a foreign history teacher	87 21.97%	85 21.47%	224 56.57%

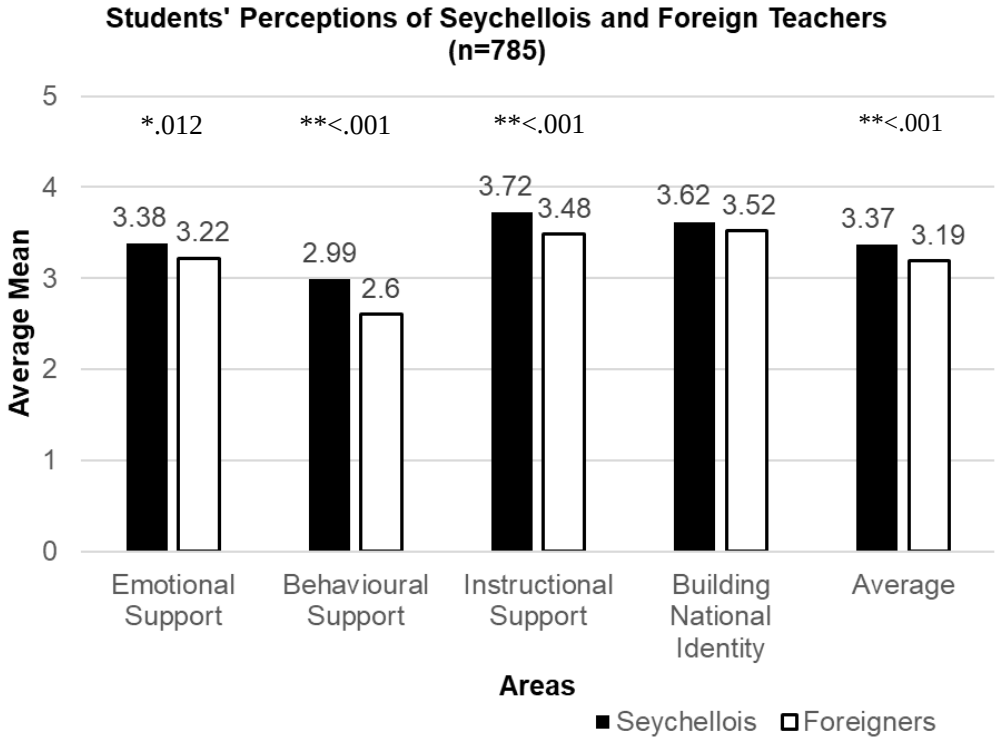
Students' Perceptions of Seychellois and Foreign Teachers

To address the second research question, we examined the students' perceptions, which offer insights into their learning experiences, their relationships with their teachers, and the teaching strategies they find most effective during national history lessons. Both groups scored a high mean on the item "*Studying the history of Seychelles helps me to be proud to be a citizen of Seychelles*" (mean = 3.78, 3.79).

There was a significant difference between the two groups, where Seychellois teachers scored a significantly higher average than foreign teachers for emotional support (3.38, 3.22), behavioural support (2.99, 2.62), and instructional support (3.72, 3.48).

There was no significant difference in national identity-building.

Figure 1: Students' Perceptions of Seychellois and Foreign Teachers



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Teacher-Student Relationship between Foreign Teachers and Students

Teachers' national identity may impact the emotional support that they provide through the teacher-student relationship. Students expressed that foreign teachers are not strongly engaged with the students. As one student said, "*They do not want to attach themselves to the students emotionally because they know they are leaving soon*", implying that because foreign teachers' stay is temporary, they prefer to avoid establishing close relationships with their students. Another student stated, "*They are worried about whether they might offend the students*."

On the other hand, a student mentioned that "*a few foreign teachers also try to talk with the students*", indicating that some foreign teachers attempt to connect with the students to provide emotional support. The student pointed out that this behaviour depended not only on the teachers' competence but also on their willingness to engage.

According to Brown (2008), migrant teachers can leave their country of residence at any moment, particularly if they feel that the economic or non-economic reasons that initially attracted them to the country are no longer applicable. However, this liberty to move back differs from the situation in South Africa, where the current dissatisfaction many migrant Zimbabwean teachers feel regarding their home country has led some to reconsider returning home or settling permanently in South Africa (Ranga, 2015). Due to cultural differences, foreign teachers may be less sensitive to the needs of students from a different cultural background because they are not fully aware of those differences, or they may hold stereotypes that can affect their feelings towards and perceptions of their students (Thijs et al., 2012).

Seychellois teachers, like their South African counterparts, have a familiar relationship with their students, which results in a closer social connection. In contrast, Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa find it challenging to establish emotional bonds, as students in Zimbabwe typically maintain a distance from their teachers (de Villiers & Weda, 2018). This separation may also impact foreign teachers in Seychelles, who often have a distant relationship with their students. In a study by the OECD (2020), teachers not meeting individual student's needs and providing individualised attention was the only behaviour that was more frequently named as a hindrance to learning.

Teacher-Student Relationship between Seychellois Teachers and Students

Seychellois teachers were perceived as more engaged with the students because they were more willing to counsel them on non-academic matters. A student who had Seychellois teachers pointed out that Seychellois teachers can "*understand students' feelings better if we have a problem or issue*."

One possible explanation for this perception is that local teachers are more likely to be familiar with the students' cultural norms and expectations, which can foster communication and understanding between local teachers and students. Ulbricht et al.(2022) discussed that teachers' familiarity with their students' cultural norms and expectations can enhance communication and understanding. These findings demonstrate that positive teacher-student interactions facilitated by emotional support can enhance student learning.

Foreign Teachers' Behavioural Support Strategies

Compared to local teachers, they are often at a disadvantage when dealing with student behavioural issues. As pointed out by one student, they sometimes "*use some terms that we are not familiar with*." Another mentioned that they are unable to use the proper intonation or voice variation. A student also mentioned that foreign teachers are "*afraid to raise their voices with students out of fear of what might happen*". One student mentioned, "*Give the students too many chances, and they do not take any action*." Another

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student reported that some foreigners "*do not do anything about it*", referring to students' misbehaviour. Another student who has a foreign teacher pointed out that the teacher is more likely to be "*too lenient and give the students too many chances and not take any* [disciplinary] *action towards misbehavior*", hence contributing to poor classroom behavior, as inaction allows students to repeat the same misbehavior without prevention or intervention. Another student with a foreign history teacher mentioned that since the teachers are in a different environment, they feel the need to show a certain level of restraint towards the students, given that foreign teachers do not know how a student might react towards them and fear that students might "*fight with them or report them to their parents or school management*." Consequently, as pointed out by the students, in some cases, "*students use foul language or say bad things knowing that the* [foreign] *teachers will not really understand*", potentially causing classroom disorganisation.

Various reports dating back to the early 2000s have discussed the behavioural situation in Seychelles' state schools (Leste & Benstrong, 2011; Leste et al., 2005; Singh, 2014). According to these reports, both local and foreign teachers face disciplinary problems, such as classroom disturbances and the use of abusive language, some of which are related to the language skills and cultural sensitivities of internationally recruited teachers. There has been very little improvement in reducing the frequency of these behavioural problems. The lack of Creole language skills among foreign teachers is said to contribute to disciplinary problems with some students.

This is similar to the challenges faced by Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa, who struggle with the local languages, which impacts not only their classroom management but also their integration into the community (Weda & de Villiers, 2019). As Weinstein et al. (2003) put it, definitions and expectations of appropriate behaviours are culturally influenced, and conflicts are likely to occur when teachers and students come from different cultural backgrounds. In cross-cultural interaction, body language, gestures, facial expressions, and language itself all play a crucial role in communication (Byram et al., 2009). Therefore, if cross-cultural interaction is not considered, misunderstandings can occur in the classroom.

Similarly, de Villiers and Weda (2018) and Vandeyar and Vandeyar (2014) describe that classroom management and discipline challenges are a major concern for migrant teachers in South Africa. These teachers advised prospective migrant teachers that learner discipline differs across South Africa and Zimbabwe, and characterised South African students as challenging to manage. According to research conducted in the United States, approximately one-third of teachers who ultimately leave the profession permanently do so due to issues with student discipline (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

In Ospina and Medina (2020), foreign teachers, despite having years of experience teaching in their native countries, cited classroom management as one of the most challenging components of their new school systems because it was difficult to address behavioural problems in their classes appropriately. Because of their cultural backgrounds, foreign teachers must be aware of how their ideas and practices may impact their ability to provide effective behavioural support. Carpendale (2020) further supports the notion that receiving respect from others is crucial for normal psychological development and that a lack thereof weakens one's identity and sense of self.

Local Teachers' Behavioural Support Strategies

Local teachers' higher average on both emotional and behavioural support compared to foreign teachers indicates that local teachers understand how to maintain authority while still being emotionally supportive of their students. A student mentioned that "*the Seychellois teachers know most*

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of our parents personally", implying that parental involvement makes it easier to collaborate on effective classroom behaviour management. While the students agreed that Seychellois teachers also face behavioural challenges in their classrooms, they explained that these teachers' approaches to these challenges are different. Students stated that they are "*stricter*" when dealing with students, and they "*have more experience managing certain behaviours*." Another student reported that they speak with "*more authority*" and have a "*bigger voice*." It was also mentioned that Seychellois teachers could use the local language to "*exert some form of authority over the students*" and "*step up and stand their ground*", showing that in Seychelles, the use of a firm tone is common and is what students are accustomed to when teachers address behavioural issues.

This result aligns with the findings of Göktürk et al. (2021), who stated that students' definitions and expectations of discipline vary according to their cultural backgrounds.

English as a Medium of Instruction by Foreign Teachers

Students raised the issue of the foreign teachers' English accents. As one student pointed out, "*English is not the foreign teachers' first language, so they sometimes have a strong accent that is completely different from ours*", implying that it can sometimes be difficult for students to understand foreign teachers. Students also showed some empathy for students with low English proficiency. In addition to the lesson content, which may be challenging for them, the foreign teacher's accent is also perceived as an obstacle.

However, some students who had foreign teachers expressed that with time, they were able to understand the foreign teachers because they gradually grew accustomed to them. Another expressed that they liked speaking and studying in English, and one student observed that learning English would "*help* [them] *get ready for the future because there are a lot of foreign workers in the country*." In a way, studying under foreign teachers helps students hone their interpersonal skills, which will be useful when they collaborate with foreigners in the future. As such, studying under foreign teachers may help foster students' global citizenship. Another student also stated that "*At the end of the term, the examination will be in English*." Since assessments and exams are typically set in English, understanding the content in English is essential.

Similarly to South Africa, migrant teachers are criticised for their distinct accents and are considered incompetent (Sibanda & Seyama-Mokhaneli, 2024; Vandeyar, 2020). This finding is similar to that of Weda and de Villiers (2019), who conducted a study in which Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa taught in English-medium schools, where the learners were not always fluent in English, resulting in communication barriers. According to Savva (2017), language was the most fundamental practical challenge faced by educators in the overseas setting, and Seychelles is not dissimilar. Khan et al. (2017) support this by stating that a teacher's ability to communicate with students effectively is crucial to the delivery of instruction, as ineffective communication can hinder teaching and learning, with, in this case, the teacher's accent being a hindrance.

It is important to note that, as part of a push for nation-building, English is one of Seychelles' three national languages, along with Creole and French (2017). Additionally, after education reforms in 1996, English became the sole medium of instruction for all subjects, except French Language and Creole Language subjects, from elementary Grade 3 onwards.

Seychellois Teachers' Use of Mother Tongue in Reinforcing Instructions

Often, Creole is used to reinforce the teacher's initial explanation during a lesson. One student who had a local teacher mentioned that "*we understand*

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better when the teachers use Creole to explain further." Creole is used to generate discussion, as teachers use it to explore topics more deeply by "*asking [students] lots of challenging questions that make [them] talk more*." The local teachers also use Creole to translate difficult words and concepts for the students; as another student pointed out, "*Seychellois teachers can translate difficult words into Creole, and it is easy for us to understand them, something that the foreign teachers cannot do*." One student who had a local teacher expressed that "*learning our history in our maternal language is better, and we will know it better*."

This supports the idea that when local teachers use the local language to reinforce content presented in English, it positively affects the students. Even if the national education policy does not allow code-switching in secondary school, based on the students' responses, it is a frequent practice amongst Seychellois history teachers. Yakovleva (2020) found that students are likely to learn more from local teachers than foreign teachers because they share a common cultural understanding and local teachers can explain concepts in the students' native language, thus facilitating comprehension and aiding in exam preparation.

The national language also emerged as an important signifier of national identity. This finding is consistent with the results of Byram et al. (2009), who suggested that people often identify with the language they speak. In certain instances, this identification precisely matches their nationality. In a survey conducted across more than 20 countries, a median of 91% of respondents said that being able to speak their country's most common language is important for being considered a true national (Huang et al., 2024).

The Role of Seychellois Teachers in Shaping National Identity

Students may feel a stronger connection to a local teacher who shares their cultural identity. As one student pointed out, the Seychellois teacher is "*one of our own*." Another said that they "*understand who we are*", and another conveyed that "*they are more of our own kind*." Another student mentioned that "*they* [Seychellois teachers] *know the history of Seychelles better, as they were born here*", implying that they possess greater knowledge and experience of the history and can explain it in greater depth than foreign teachers can. As another student commented, they not only "*know our history*", but they "*know our culture*."

This is in line with the Social Identity Theory idea of in-group bias, which refers to the preference for members of one's own group, stemming from a sense of group identification and ethnic favouritism (Lutmar & Reingewertz, 2021). Hence, students who had a Seychellois teacher primarily used their national identity identification to support their preference for local teachers. This implies that teaching national history requires an understanding of cultural nuances and sensitivities, which a foreign teacher may lack (Remer, 2007). Furthermore, a foreign teacher may not have the same emotional connection to the host country's history as a local teacher, again indicating why foreign teachers may not be able to effectively connect the national history with students' daily lives.

As Phillips (1996) states, there is a complex link between history, culture, and national identity. Cultural and national identities often overlap and are inextricably linked, as culture inherently refers to the past (Byram et al., 2009). Education plays a significant role in the formation and building of national identity and the shaping of values (Alesina et al., 2021; Durrani et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2012; Ortega-Sánchez et al., 2020; Shvets, 2020). It is important to note that, in addition to the school curriculum, Seychelles utilises various tools to support national identity-building, which has a profound influence on society. These include the media, numerous public nationalist holidays, the display of flags, youth clubs, and weeklong cultural festivals and celebrations that include art, music, dance, and cuisine. Similar to the US, children's first

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exposure to history in Seychelles often comes from seeing images associated with significant national holidays and learning about figures and events through television shows, advertisements, and other popular media they encounter. Their education reinforces this exposure (Barton, 2001).

The Benefits of Diverse Teachers' National Identity in Teaching National History

As previously seen, foreign teachers also scored a high average for the national identity-building factor. A student who had a foreign teacher expressed that foreign teachers are "*teaching the same syllabus, so it makes no difference*." Additionally, students who had a foreign teacher commented they were not concerned about teachers' nationality, "*as long as the teachers can teach*", and "*as long as they are competent and have the experience*." Meanwhile, another expressed that "*both groups of teachers are trained*", thus expressing their openness to either nationality. Finally, one student mentioned that a foreign teacher "*gives us information about the history of their country while teaching ours*", and another student noted that "*we can know more about the history of other countries*".

Foreign teachers' unique perspectives and diverse backgrounds can enrich classroom discussions and broaden students' understanding of historical and global events. Foreign teachers also improve students' understanding of historical and global events with their diverse backgrounds and unique perspectives, helping students compare Seychelles' national history with that of the foreign teachers' own countries. They have the potential to introduce an outsider's viewpoint into the classroom and help students draw comparisons between their own national history and the teacher's by using a comparative approach, which can enrich students' understanding and lead to new insights. A study conducted by Byker and Putman (2019) on preservice foreign teachers in South Africa showed that their presence in schools promotes cultural exchange and diversity, thus enhancing the student learning experience. The diverse backgrounds of these teachers help cultivate global competencies and intercultural awareness in students. Just as Fru (2015) suggests, history teaching methods should help students understand the cultures of others. They can also emphasise the global impact of historical events, connecting them to broader trends and international relations. Exposure to different perspectives enriches students' understanding of their own history.

CONCLUSION

This study found that when students have a foreign history teacher, they are more likely to be open to accepting a foreign teacher as compared to students who are only exposed to teachers of the same nationality as them. Additionally, by examining local and foreign history teachers' support for students' emotional, behavioural, and instructional needs and their role in promoting national identity, the study facilitates an understanding of the roles they play, as well as the challenges and benefits they encounter. The study contributes to our understanding of the opportunities for national identity building and global citizenship education within the teaching of national history, particularly when led by a foreign teacher. This study offers a fresh perspective on the importance of enhancing teacher training and development, as well as developing a well-rounded curriculum that promotes global citizenship education without compromising national identity. Limitations include potential recall bias in students' recollections of interactions with teachers and possible implicit prejudices towards teachers' nationalities. Recent emotional experiences with specific teachers may influence perceptions. Conducting a longitudinal study or observations could help mitigate memory loss and facilitate further investigation.

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