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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY IN THE TEACHING OF ECONOMICS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In today's multicultural and varied educational environment, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is a crucial learner-centered approach. Creating inclusive learning communities, overcoming cultural barriers, and taking into account a variety of learning styles, it promotes and improves learners' educational experiences. Nevertheless, little research has shown how CRT affects economics instruction. Through a thorough evaluation of the literature, this study sought to close this gap. Data was gathered from 55 academic, peer-reviewed publications that examined CRT as a teaching method for economics classes and were published between 2020 and 2024. Data was analyzed using the thematic content analysis approach, and findings were theorized following asset-based pedagogy (ABP). Four themes for incorporating CRT into economics instruction were identified by the study. These strategies include using culturally responsive teaching materials and resources, encouraging learner-centered learning and discussion, integrating diverse cultural perspectives and experiences into economics curricula, and fostering collaboration between schools and community members, including indigenous knowledge holders. The study highlights the need for educators to recognize and value students' cultural backgrounds, contributing to fresh insights in the integration of CRT in economics education.

KEYWORDS

Culturally Responsive Teaching, Economics Education, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Critical Pedagogy

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Introduction

The significance of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in education is paramount. Research regularly demonstrates that CRT methodologies result in improved academic performance, heightened learner involvement, and augmented cultural competency (Sexton, 2024; Shih, 2022; Barron, Brown & Cotner, 2021). Nevertheless, the incorporation of CRT ideas into economics education has been sluggish, hence sustaining a Eurocentric and neoliberal viewpoint that sidelines varied cultural experiences (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This research aims to fill this vacuum by examining the incorporation of Critical Race Theory in economics education. Economics education has always faced criticism for its deficiency of variety and cultural pertinence (Gay, 2018). The prevailing Western economic model has been critiqued for its inability to consider varied cultural settings and experiences (Sexton, 2024). This mistake has considerable consequences for learners from varied backgrounds, who may perceive economics education as estranging and inconsequential to their lives (Gay, 2002). Integrating CRT concepts can enhance the inclusivity and efficacy of economics teaching (Barron et al., 2021). The necessity for CRT in economics education is particularly urgent due to the growing variety of learner demographics (Gay, 2015). Teachers must be prepared to teach learners from varied cultural backgrounds, necessitating a transition from conventional pedagogies to more culturally sensitive methodologies (Gay, 2000). Moreover, CRT in economics education can contest prevailing power systems and advance social justice (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This study intends to examine the efficacy of CRT in economics education, aiming to furnish teachers and policymakers with pragmatic ideas for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in this field.

Research by Ogodo (2024) revealed that the use of culturally pertinent literature in economics courses enhanced learner engagement and participation, especially among economics learners. Research by Hernandez and Burrows (2021) found that incorporating cultural relevance into economics teaching improved learners' capacity to relate economic concepts to their daily experiences. Utilizing instances of local enterprises and community economic efforts enabled learners to recognize the real application of economic principles (Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero, 2021). Additional research has emphasized the necessity of integrating various viewpoints and critical analysis into economics education through CRT (Brown et al., 2021; Shih, 2022). A study by Kong and Zou (2022) revealed that the implementation of culturally inclined teaching methods in economics courses prompted learners to challenge prevailing economic narratives and explore alternate viewpoints. This resulted in enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving abilities among learners. A study by Santos and Albuquerque (2021) revealed that integrating multicultural economic viewpoints into the curriculum enhanced learners' comprehension of economic issues and their effects on various populations.

CRT in economics education has demonstrated enhancements in learner performance, especially for historically marginalized populations. Tanase (2022) conducted a study revealing that CRT in economics classrooms markedly enhanced academic performance and diminished the achievement gap among learners. A study by Gruenberg (2020) found that implementing CRT in economics classes enhanced learner self-efficacy and enthusiasm in economics careers, especially among rural learners. Notwithstanding the encouraging results, obstacles to the implementation of CRT in economics education persist. Acquah and Szelei (2020) observed that teachers frequently encounter challenges in incorporating cultural relevance into economics teaching due to limitations such as time, resources, and curriculum mandates. Research by Kranski and Steed (2022) emphasized the necessity for teacher professional development and assistance to successfully use CRT in economics teaching. The research indicates that CRT can significantly enhance economics education, rendering it more inclusive, engaging, and pertinent to varied learner demographics (Shih, 2022). Despite the expanding corpus of research on CRT in education, a substantial gap exists in the literature about its implementation in economics education. Prior research has predominantly concentrated on CRT in disciplines such as mathematics and languages (Brown et al., 2019). Economics education necessitates distinct considerations due to its focus on cultural and societal aspects (Ciampa, 2022). Moreover, current research on CRT in economics education has predominantly neglected the viewpoints of indigenous learners and communities (Yu, 2022).

The research vacuum is apparent in the absence of empirical studies investigating the efficacy of CRT in enhancing economic literacy across learners from varied cultural backgrounds. Although research indicates that CRT enhances learner involvement and motivation, there is less evidence about its effects on economic literacy and critical thinking abilities (Kong & Zou, 2022). Moreover, much research on CRT in economics education has been undertaken in Western contexts, overlooking the experiences of learners in non-Western economies (Valtierra & Whitaker, 2021). This study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the tactics and practices of CRT to enhance economic literacy and critical thinking skills among learners from many cultural backgrounds. The current literature emphasizes the necessity for a more sophisticated comprehension of CRT in economics education, especially with power dynamics and cultural identity (Jia & Nasri, 2019). Research indicates that CRT can be employed to contest prevailing Western economic paradigms and advocate for alternative viewpoints (Rioux & Ewing, 2022). Nonetheless, there exists a paucity of research regarding the intersection of CRT with power dynamics, privilege, and cultural identity within the realm of economics education (Eppard, Kaviani, Bowles, & Johnson, 2021). This study aims to enhance the discourse on CRT in economics education by examining the intricate dynamics and their consequences for pedagogy and learning. This study seeks to investigate the subsequent research question:

- Which strategies and practices of culturally responsive teaching are most effective for teaching economics to learners from varied cultural backgrounds?

Culturally responsive teaching

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is rooted in critical pedagogy, highlighting the necessity for teachers to recognize and appreciate the cultural backgrounds of their learners (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In economics education, CRT entails the integration of varied cultural viewpoints, experiences, and situations to enhance the relevance and inclusivity of learning (Abdalla & Moussa, 2024). CRT has been characterized in multiple ways, illustrating the varied viewpoints and circumstances of teachers and learners. Geneva Gay (2000) characterizes CRT as "utilizing the cultural attributes, experiences, and viewpoints of ethnically diverse learners as pathways for education." This term underscores the significance of integrating learners' cultural

origins into pedagogical approaches. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) similarly perceives CRT as a pedagogical approach that "recognizes and validates the significance of learners' cultural backgrounds" and "utilizes learner culture as a medium for education." Nevertheless, several scholars contend that CRT extends beyond cultural inclusiveness and necessitates a critical analysis of power dynamics and social justice. According to Abdalla and Moussa (2024), CRT is defined as "a pedagogy that perceives teaching and learning as critical acts of cultural production, exchange, and transformation," aimed at "challenging and dismantling dominant cultural norms." Alternative definitions emphasize the significance of teacher reflexivity, learner agency, and community involvement in CRT. Gay (2015) characterizes CRT as "a reflective practice necessitating teachers to scrutinize their cultural biases and assumptions" and "establish learning environments that are inclusive and empowering for all learners." De Jager (2019) underscores the necessity of CRT to "cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, and social action" and to "forge connections between schools and communities." The varied definitions emphasize the intricate and comprehensive character of CRT, illustrating the necessity for teachers to embrace a nuanced and context-specific methodology in the application of CRT within their classrooms (Gruenberg, 2020).

Considering this, below are a few examples of CRT activities that address all three elements of culturally responsive pedagogy: academic acquisition by learners: Teach learners to compose a "cultural autobiography" that examines their cultural background and experiences and the influence they have had on their identity (Gay, 2015). This activity may be conducted individually or in small groups, utilizing a blend of written reflection and visual assistance, like photographs, artwork, or other cultural objects. Integrate real-world examples and case studies that represent the variety of the learner body into classroom discussions and activities (Tanase, 2022). Teach learners to examine the influence of various cultural groups on local politics, the economy, or society. Teach learners to collaborate in small groups to investigate and present on a particular cultural group or issue, emphasizing analysis and problem-solving (Shih, 2022). Teach learners to investigate the historical context and contemporary difficulties of a specific neighborhood and thereafter report their findings to the class. Cultural proficiency: facilitate opportunities for learners to explore and gain insights from diverse cultures, such as organizing cultural fairs or inviting guest lecturers (Tanase, 2022). For instance, teach learners to investigate and make traditional meals from other cultures to offer at a potluck or invite local community leaders to discuss their culture and heritage (Gay, 2015). Integrate cultural artifacts, literature, and viewpoints into the curriculum. Encourage learners to evaluate artwork from other cultures or to read literature by diverse writers, followed by discussions on cultural context and themes. Motivate learners to present their cultural customs and practices to the class (Shih, 2022). For instance, teachers can produce brief videos or presentations. Foster critical consciousness by promoting analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities through the examination of real-world challenges impacting underrepresented communities (Gay, 2015). Teach learners to investigate and evaluate the effects of discrimination on a particular group, such as immigrants, refugees, or people of color, and develop a campaign to enhance awareness and advocate for inclusion. Teach learners to examine and evaluate cultural prejudices and stereotypes present in media, literature, and contemporary events (Tanase, 2022). Teach learners to view a popular film or read a book and identify any stereotypes or biases contained therein. Subsequently, instruct them to analyze and articulate the impact of these stereotypes on the real-world view of the represented group. Engage learners in projects or campaigns that tackle social justice issues (Shih, 2022). Teach learners to undertake research and formulate a proposal for a policy modification that tackles a particular issue impacting marginalized populations, such as educational inequities or police violence. Subsequently, teach learners to present their recommendations to a panel of specialists or community leaders for evaluation.

Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges learners' cultures, emphasizes variety, and integrates this understanding into pedagogical approaches to enhance learning outcomes. Abril and Robinson (2019) introduced a novel concept of cultural competence in education. This method verifies that cultural diversity encompasses additional elements beyond ethnicity, including language, educational attainment, and historical context (Bushra et al., 2024). The method involves creating a classroom environment that is safe, inclusive, and sensitive to learners' cultural identities. Acquah and Szelei (2020), along with other researchers, have proposed models for culturally responsive teaching, emphasizing the necessity of comprehending learners' cultural backgrounds, developing culturally appropriate curriculum materials, and fostering equitable classroom interactions (Rocha, Castillo-Lavergne, & Yancy, 2022). Teachers must regularly evaluate their methodologies, acknowledge their inherent biases, and modify instructional tactics to accommodate the diverse requirements of learners, as recommended by these frameworks. Smith et al. (2024) experimented with the framework and emphasized the necessity of incorporating culturally responsive teaching methods across all

courses to foster critical thinking and facilitate learners' connections between their cultural backgrounds and academic learning. The literature on culturally responsive education emphasizes the significance of the teacher-learner interaction. Culturally responsive teachers deliberately cultivate positive relationships with learners to foster learner engagement and achievement, acknowledging their significance in this process (Lim, Tan & Saito, 2019). The paradigm emphasizes CRT, transcending superficial representations of other cultures to foster their integration and the establishment of a culturally aware society (Tanase, 2020).

Sexton (2024) conducted research that evidenced the efficacy of culturally responsive economics training in enhancing learner motivation. The research indicated that learners exposed to culturally responsive teaching exhibited notable enhancements in motivation and engagement relative to those subjected to conventional training. This was ascribed to the integration of culturally pertinent resources and pedagogical methods that aligned with learners' experiences and backgrounds (Barron, 2021). The study underscores the significance of CRT in enhancing learner motivation and engagement in economics. A study conducted by Ogodo (2024) examined the influence of teachers' implementation of culturally sensitive practices on learners' economic literacy. The results indicated that teachers who employed culturally sensitive methodologies, including the utilization of different examples and the promotion of student-centered learning, markedly enhanced learners' economic literacy and critical thinking abilities. The research indicates that CRT is crucial for enhancing learners' capacity to utilize economic concepts in practical contexts (Kranski & Steed, 2022). Madlela's (2023) research investigated the effects of incorporating indigenous knowledge systems into economics education on learners' cultural identification and academic performance. The findings indicated that learners educated on indigenous economic systems had improved cultural identification and academic performance relative to those subjected to conventional teaching methods. The research underscores the significance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems into economics education to enhance cultural relevance and inclusivity (Madlela, 2023).

Recognition of learners' culture in economics

Culture is a complicated and multidimensional subject that scholars have described in numerous ways. Shih (2022) defines culture as the "values, beliefs, practices, and symbols shared by a group and passed down through generations." This definition underscores the significance of cultural continuity and the influence of shared values and practices in forming individual and communal identity. Gruenberg's (2020) concept enhances Shih's by highlighting the communal dimension of culture. Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind that differentiates one group of people from another" (Gruenberg, 2020). This viewpoint emphasizes that culture shapes individuals' perceptions and interpretations of their surroundings, resulting in substantial variations in mental frameworks across different cultures. Gay's definition introduces an additional dimension to our comprehension of culture (Gay, 2015). Gay characterizes culture as "a dynamic and complex web of meanings, values, and practices that shape individual and collective identity" (Gay, 2018). This term highlights the fluidity of culture, indicating that it is ever-evolving and adjusting to shifting social, economic, and historical circumstances. Collectively, these definitions offer a refined comprehension of culture as a shared, collaborative, and dynamic reality that influences human experience (Rocha et al., 2022).

Studies have regularly demonstrated that learners' cultural backgrounds profoundly influence their educational performance in economics. A study conducted by Meléndez-Luces and Couto-Cantero (2021) showed that CRT enhanced learner engagement and motivation in economics. De Jager (2019) demonstrated that culturally relevant pedagogy improved learner achievement in economics, especially for minority learners. Yu (2022) revealed that CRT techniques enhanced learners' economic literacy and critical thinking abilities. Empirical research has underscored the significance of incorporating learners' cultural origins in economics teaching. Hutchison and McAlister-Shields (2020) discovered that the integration of culturally responsive materials into economics curricula improved learner engagement and motivation. Smith et al. (2024) demonstrated that culturally responsive training enhanced learner performance in economics, especially among minority learners. Furthermore, Madlela (2023) showed that the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) into economics education improved learners' cultural identification and academic performance. By recognizing and integrating learners' cultural backgrounds, teachers can establish a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment. This can enhance learner involvement, motivation, and academic performance in economics.

Numerous foundational authors in the field of culturally responsive teaching have delineated the attributes of a culturally responsive educator (Rychly & Graves, 2012; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995). CRT transcends merely understanding diverse cultures and implementing specific techniques; it involves

comprehending the learners and their backgrounds (Acquah & Szelei, 2020). CRT commences with cultural competency, acquired by teachers via understanding their learners (Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero, 2021). The fundamental premise is that teachers cannot teach or guide in areas they are unfamiliar with; thus, numerous authors contend that the basis of CRT is in comprehending and recognizing one's learners (Jivet, Viberg & Schefel, 2022). The explicit understanding of learners and cultural diversity is essential for CRT and empowers teachers to address the needs of their learners (Liao, Wang & Qin, 2021). Understanding learners' experiences, familial backgrounds, and external interests significantly influences the teaching and learning process (Liao et al., 2021). Culturally responsive teachers must acknowledge the effect of culture on learners' perspectives (Marosi, Avraamidou & Galani, 2021). Teachers might engage in various activities to familiarize themselves with their learners. A notable strategy involves providing learners the ability to openly share their cultures and views across diverse topics (Cabilles, 2024).

CRT transcends the mere execution of activities. Teachers require a solid foundation and profound understanding that genuinely endorses CRT (Cruz et al., 2020). Cultural competence necessitates a profound comprehension that extends beyond cultural icons and celebrations (Marosi et al., 2021). Culturally responsive teachers recognize that genuine social change and the cessation of inequality occur when they incorporate the lived experiences of their learners while simultaneously scrutinizing how their own experiences influence their perceptions of those learners (Jivet et al., 2022). Caring is an intrinsic aspect of teaching, indicating that the educator prioritizes the welfare of her learners. It is a moral obligation, social duty, and educational requirement (Cabilles, 2024). Culturally responsive teachers perceive themselves as integral members of their teaching communities and regard their role as a means of contributing to the community (Hernandez & Burrows, 2021). Teachers should refrain from adopting a 'context-neutral mindset.' They must consider the communities in which they instruct and how the communal component influences learners' backgrounds (Siliunas et al., 2024). The culturally responsive teacher is dedicated and skilled in serving as a change agent (Shih, 2022).

Status of economics teaching in rural schools

Education in economics within rural public secondary schools encounters distinct problems, especially in environments where cultural practices significantly influence learners' lives (Sexton, 2024). Studies indicate that cultural relevance is essential for effective learning; nevertheless, economics education frequently overlooks this dimension (Abdalla & Moussa, 2024). Rural schools frequently face challenges such as insufficient resources, inadequate teacher training, and cultural uniformity (Brown et al., 2019). These elements create a disjunction between economics education and learners' cultural experiences. Learners from rural regions provide unique cultural capital to the classroom, influenced by their community's beliefs, traditions, and socioeconomic environment (Crumb et al., 2023). Disregarding this cultural capital may result in disengagement and subpar academic achievement. Economic education in rural schools predominantly emphasizes Western-centric theories and models, overlooking local economic realities (Kranski & Steed, 2022). This sustains a disconnection between learners' real-life experiences and the theoretical notions presented in class.

Research has underscored the significance of CRT in economics education (Bushra et al., 2024). Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges learners' cultural backgrounds and integrates them into pedagogical methods. Notwithstanding its potential, CRT is infrequently applied in rural economics courses (Acquah & Szelei, 2020). Teachers frequently lack the expertise and support necessary to incorporate cultural relevance into their instruction. A study conducted in rural South Africa revealed that economics instructors faced difficulties in relating theoretical concepts to learners' daily experiences (Moyo, 2018). This underscores the necessity for contextually relevant economics education. A further study indicated that learners' cultural knowledge and behaviors were frequently ignored in economics lectures (Rioux & Ewing, 2022). This sustains cultural invisibility and strengthens prevailing Western economic assumptions. Teachers must promote cultural relevance in economics teaching to meet these issues (Knox, 2015). This entails integrating local economic illustrations, case studies, and community-oriented initiatives. Effective instruction in economics within rural educational institutions necessitates teacher training and assistance (Kong & Zou, 2022). Teachers must cultivate cultural competence and comprehend the principles of CRT. Community involvement and participation are essential for effective economics education in rural schools (Eppard et al., 2021). This entails partnering with local partners to create context-specific courses. Recognizing and appreciating learners' cultural practices might enhance the inclusivity, relevance, and efficacy of economics education in rural public secondary schools (Ogodo, 2024).

Culturally responsive economics education contests prevailing Western economic paradigms, advocates for alternative viewpoints, and cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Mandinach, 2022). This methodology acknowledges the significance of cultural relevance in education. Conventional economics education frequently overlooks cultural context, hence sustaining a Eurocentric viewpoint (Gay, 2018). This restricts the capacity of learners from varied backgrounds to engage with economic concepts. Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) offers a framework for integrating cultural relevance into economics education (Acquah & Szelei, 2020). Critical Race Theory underscores the significance of teacher-learner interaction and community involvement. Effective culturally responsive economics education necessitates teacher training and support (Abacioglu et al., 2020). Teachers must cultivate cultural competence and comprehend varied economic viewpoints. The integration of local economic examples and case studies increases cultural relevance (Abacioglu, Volman & Fischer, 2020). This method facilitates learners in linking economic principles to their daily experiences. Culturally sensitive economics education fosters critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Crumb et al., 2023). Learners utilize economic principles to address real-world issues, cultivating practical competencies. Culturally responsive economics education confronts matters of power and inequality (D'Andrea-Martínez, Peoples & Martin, 2023). Learners analyze the effects of economic systems on various societies. Alternative economic models, including cooperative and socialist economies, are examined (D'Andrea-Martínez et al., 2023). Learners evaluate various viewpoints on economic organization. Learners examine economic systems from intersectional perspectives. Culturally responsive economics education equips learners for a progressively international economy (Kong et al., 2022). Learners cultivate a sophisticated comprehension of varied economic environments. Integrating cultural relevance can enhance the inclusivity and efficacy of economics education (Gay, 2018). Culturally sensitive economics education equips learners to comprehend intricate economic systems.

Theoretical Framework

Asset-based pedagogy (ABP) is a theoretical paradigm that emphasizes recognizing and leveraging learners' strengths and assets rather than their weaknesses (Reynolds & Johnson, 2014). When integrated into economics education via Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), ABP presents a promising method for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Conventional economics education frequently reinforces a deficit-focused viewpoint, highlighting learners' deficiencies in knowledge or skills (Lin, 2020). Conversely, ABP acknowledges the different experiences and cultural backgrounds of learners as significant assets for the study of economics. ABP adheres to CRT principles by recognizing learners' cultural capital and fostering academic success (Larey et al., 2021; Reynolds & Johnson, 2014). By emphasizing assets, teachers may cultivate an inclusive learning environment that promotes critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. In economics education, ABP may use real-world examples that resonate with learners' actual experiences (MacSwan, 2020). This method facilitates learners' connection of economic concepts to their personal experiences, enhancing the relevance and engagement of the learning process. ABP also urges teachers to identify and confront prevailing Western economic paradigms (Montañez, 2023). Incorporating multiple views enables teachers to foster critical thinking regarding economic power dynamics and social justice. Critics contend that ABP may neglect systemic obstacles to learning (South et al., 2024). Teachers must reconcile asset-based methodologies with a critical analysis of systemic disparities. To counter this critique, teachers may amalgamate critical pedagogy with ABP (Omodan, 2023). This integrated method enables learners to critically analyze economic systems and cultivate agency for social transformation. Research on ABP in economics education is scarce; however, studies indicate favorable results, such as enhanced learner involvement and academic performance (Larey et al., 2021). Additional investigation is required to assess the efficacy of ABP in various educational settings. Successful execution of ABP in economics education necessitates teacher training and support (Reynolds & Johnson, 2014). Teachers must cultivate cultural competence and comprehend asset-based methodologies to establish inclusive learning environments. Ultimately, asset-based pedagogy provides a promising paradigm for instructing economics through CRT. By recognizing learners' abilities and fostering critical thinking, instructors can cultivate a more inclusive and empowering educational atmosphere.

Method

Design

This literature review synthesis investigates the application of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in economics education using a qualitative research technique. Current research on CRT and economics education is synthesized using a critical literature review methodology. The PRISMA technique, which calls for meticulous recording of review plans to prevent indiscriminate decisions, was used to conduct the systematic literature review (SLR). The SLR sought to find discrepancies, contradictions, and holes in the literature while offering helpful advice. Identification (keywords, search criteria, database, and records collected), screening (inclusion and exclusion criteria), eligibility assessment (quality evaluation), and inclusion (final data included) were all done following the PRISMA protocol.

Data collection

The identification phase involved a comprehensive and systematic search for literature related to culturally responsive teaching (CRT). A total of 600 records were retrieved through keyword-based searches in major academic databases, including ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Search terms included “culturally responsive teaching,” “culturally relevant pedagogy,” “inclusive education,” and “asset-based instruction,” among others. In addition to database searches, a further 75 records were located through hand-searching of key education journals and backward reference checking from seminal CRT publications. This brought the total number of identified records to 675. The selection process is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. PRISMA Table of Study Selection Process

Stage	Process description	Number of records
Identification	Records identified through database searching (ERIC, Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, etc.)	n = 600
	Additional records identified through hand-searching and reference chaining	n = 75
	Total records identified	n = 675
Screening	Records after duplicates removed	n = 540
	Records screened by title and abstract	n = 540
	Records excluded based on screening	n = 370
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	n = 170
	Full-text articles excluded with reasons:	n = 115
	• Not focused on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)	(n = 42)
	• Not education-related or contextually relevant (e.g., not in K–12 or higher education)	(n = 33)
	• Methodological or conceptual limitations	(n = 24)
	• Duplicated or overlapping content	(n = 16)
	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	n = 170
Included	Studies included in the final synthesis	n = 55

During the screening phase, all 675 records were imported into a reference management tool for duplicate removal. After removing duplicates, 540 unique records remained. These were then screened based on their titles and abstracts to determine initial relevance. Screening criteria included whether the study addressed culturally responsive pedagogy directly, was situated in an educational setting, and contributed theoretically or empirically to the field. Studies that focused on unrelated topics or did not center CRT as a core concept were excluded. This process led to the exclusion of 370 records, leaving 170 articles for full-text review.

In the eligibility stage, the full texts of the 170 remaining articles were retrieved and assessed against more detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were required to have a clear focus on CRT or a closely related pedagogical model and be situated within formal educational settings, such as K–12 or higher education contexts. Of the 170 articles, 115 were excluded for several reasons: 42 did not focus on CRT as a central theme, 33 were not relevant to education (e.g., focused on corporate or healthcare training), 24 had methodological or conceptual limitations (such as lack of clarity or empirical support), and 16 were duplicate reports of previously included studies. This left 55 articles eligible for inclusion in the final synthesis.

The inclusion phase concluded with 55 studies selected for comprehensive analysis. These studies encompassed a diverse range of contexts, including urban, rural, and international education systems. The included articles featured both theoretical contributions (e.g., Ladson-Billings, Gay) and empirical research exploring the implementation of CRT in disciplines such as science, music, teacher education, and early childhood education. Together, these studies offered a well-rounded foundation for understanding the current landscape, challenges, and innovations in culturally responsive teaching across different educational levels and contexts.

Data analysis

After the first search stage, a methodical screening procedure was used to find studies that satisfied predetermined inclusion requirements. These included publishing in peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books, availability of full-text articles in English, focus on the secondary school setting, special applicability or reference to the South African educational context, and relevance to the use of CRT in economics instruction. The titles and abstracts of the records that were retrieved were separately evaluated by two reviewers to determine whether or not they qualified for the review. Any disagreements among reviewers were settled by talking to or consulting a third reviewer to guarantee accuracy and consistency in the selection of studies (Pillay, 2024). To examine their methodological rigor and validity, a comprehensive quality assessment was then conducted on a subset of the studies.

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses [PRISMA] checklist and the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme [CASP] tool for qualitative research were used to modify quality appraisal criteria from pre-existing recommendations. Based on standards pertinent to its research methodology, data analysis, study design, and reporting quality, each included study underwent a rigorous evaluation. While studies that were judged to have biases or methodological limitations were not disregarded (Pillay, 2024), they were taken into account when synthesizing data and interpreting them with the proper disclaimers. The 55 publications were ultimately chosen and thoroughly examined in order to provide comprehensive data for this investigation.

The systematic literature review for this study used thematic content analysis to examine a range of pertinent literature sources, adhering to Braun and Clarke's (2006) systematic procedural processes. The investigation focused on identifying patterns and themes related to the use of CRT in economics education, taking into consideration both pedagogical and technological factors. The themes were developed through an iterative process of coding, classification, and theme improvement, yielding comprehensive findings regarding the benefits, drawbacks, and potential applications of incorporating CRT into economics education.

Findings and Discussion

The systematic review of the literature revealed four key themes, which are summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Thematic analysis of culturally responsive teaching in economics education

Theme Number	Theme Description
Theme 1	Incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and experiences into curricula
Theme 2	Using culturally responsive teaching materials and resources
Theme 3	Encouraging student-centered learning and discussion
Theme 4	Collaborating with community members and indigenous knowledge holders

Incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and experiences into curricula

Integrating varied cultural viewpoints and experiences into economics curricula is essential for fostering cultural relevance and inclusivity. Ogodo's research (2024) showed that the incorporation of culturally responsive materials into economics curricula improved learner engagement and motivation. This can be accomplished by integrating case studies, examples, and scenarios that represent various cultural situations (Madlela, 2023). For example, old economic systems such as bartering and sharing can exemplify fundamental economic principles like scarcity and opportunity cost. This method facilitates learners in linking economic concepts to their daily lives and cultural experiences. A study by Brown et al. (2019) indicated that learners

who studied indigenous economic systems exhibited a superior comprehension of economic concepts and cultural values. Teachers can integrate varied cultural viewpoints by inviting guest lecturers, utilizing multimedia tools, and implementing community-based projects (Viberg, Jivet & Schefel, 2023). Incorporating multiple cultural viewpoints enables teachers to establish a more inclusive learning environment. Research conducted by Liao et al. (2021) showed that the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems into economics education improved learners' cultural identity and academic performance. This method also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, vital for economic literacy (Madlela, 2023). Conversely, certain research has observed that shallow approaches to diversity may perpetuate prevailing power dynamics (Abdalla and Moussa, 2024).

Using culturally responsive teaching materials and resources

Utilizing culturally responsive teaching materials and resources is essential for fostering diversity and inclusivity in economics education. Sexton (2024) discovered that culturally appropriate materials enhanced learner motivation and engagement. This can be accomplished through the utilization of textbooks, movies, and internet materials that represent varied cultural contexts and experiences (Madlela, 2023). Utilizing videos that demonstrate indigenous economic systems helps exemplify fundamental economic principles. Culturally responsive resources enable learners to recognize their identities within the educational experience. Research conducted by Abril and Robinson (2019) indicated that learners utilizing culturally responsive materials exhibited enhanced comprehension of economic principles and cultural values. Teachers may utilize multimedia tools, like podcasts and infographics, to enhance engagement and inclusivity in learning. Employing culturally relevant materials can mitigate the deficiencies of Western-centric economics education. Kranski and Steed (2022) demonstrated that integrating indigenous knowledge systems into economics education enhanced cultural diversity and inclusivity. This method also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, vital for economic literacy (Madlela, 2023). Conversely, certain research has indicated that superficial approaches to diversity may perpetuate prevailing power dynamics (Hernandez and Burrows, 2021). These findings underscore the significance of genuine and nuanced portrayals of other cultures in educational resources. Despite methodological and contextual variances, most research concurs that culturally responsive instructional materials are vital for fostering inclusive educational environments. Hammond (2022) summarizes that "culturally responsive teaching is not an add-on or an afterthought, but an essential aspect of effective teaching" (Howard, 2024). By recognizing the intricacies and difficulties, teachers can strive to develop resources that authentically represent and appreciate varied cultural backgrounds. Subsequent studies should examine the enduring effects of culturally responsive materials on learner achievement and identify effective methods for incorporating varied perspectives into educational resources.

Encouraging student-centered learning and discussion

Fostering student-centered learning and discourse is essential for enhancing cultural relevance and diversity in economics education. Kong and Zou (2022) discovered that student-centered learning enhanced learner engagement and motivation. This can be accomplished by integrating group discussions, debates, and problem-solving activities that represent varied cultural contexts (Madlela, 2023). Student-centered learning facilitates the connection of economic principles to learners' daily lives and cultural experiences. A study conducted by Grande (2019) indicated that learners engaged in student-centered learning activities exhibited a superior comprehension of economic concepts and cultural values. Teachers may employ think-pair-share and jigsaw methodologies to facilitate collaborative learning. By promoting student-centered learning, teachers may foster a more inclusive educational environment. Research conducted by Meléndez-Luces and Couto-Cantero (2021) showed that student-centered learning improved learners' cultural identification and academic performance. This method also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, which are vital for economic literacy (Viberg, Jivet & Schefel, 2023). Conversely, certain research indicates that student-centered learning may provide difficulties for learners with insufficient prior knowledge or experience (Barron et al., 2021). These findings underscore the significance of scaffolding and assistance in student-centered learning contexts. Notwithstanding differences in methodology and environment, most research concurs that student-centered learning effectively fosters deep learning, critical thinking, and cultural competence. Hammond (2022) summarizes that "student-centered learning is not merely a pedagogical approach but a philosophical orientation that prioritizes learner agency and autonomy" (Howard, 2024). By recognizing the complexities and challenges, teachers can strive to establish learning environments that authentically uphold the principles of student-centered learning.

Collaborating with community members and indigenous knowledge holders

Engaging with community people and indigenous knowledge custodians is essential for fostering cultural relevance and inclusivity in economics education. Research conducted by Eppard et al. (2021) showed that collaboration with indigenous knowledge holders improved trainees' cultural identity and academic performance. This can be accomplished via engaging guest speakers, implementing community-based projects, and integrating indigenous knowledge systems into courses. Engagement with community people facilitates learners' connection of economic concepts to their daily lives and cultural experiences. A study conducted by Santos and Albuquerque (2021) indicated that learners engaged in community-based projects exhibited a superior comprehension of economic principles and cultural values. Teachers may collaborate with local organizations and community groups to advance culturally responsive education. Through collaboration with community members, teachers can mitigate the constraints of Western-centric economics teaching. Valtierra and Whitaker (2021) demonstrated that integrating indigenous knowledge systems into economics education enhanced cultural diversity and inclusivity. This method also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, which are vital for economic literacy (Madlela, 2023). Conversely, certain studies have indicated that superficial cooperation may sustain cultural tokenism (Smith et al., 2024). These findings underscore the significance of genuine and reciprocal collaborations. Notwithstanding methodological and contextual variances, most research concurs that collaboration with community people and Indigenous knowledge holders is crucial for culturally responsive education. Hammond (2022) summarizes that "collaboration is not merely a strategy, but a mindset that emphasizes community and Indigenous knowledge" (Howard, 2024). By recognizing the intricacies and obstacles, teachers can collaborate to establish inclusive and culturally responsive learning settings that honor community and Indigenous knowledge.

Conclusions

Through the implementation of culturally responsive teaching, teachers can effectively engage learners, address culturally pertinent topics, enhance academic achievement, and foster a sense of ownership and belonging among learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. By acknowledging and appreciating learners' cultural backgrounds, teachers can establish a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment that fosters engagement, motivation, and academic success in economics. The study identified four methods for integrating culturally responsive teaching into economics instruction. These strategies entail that teachers incorporate diverse cultural perspectives and experiences into economics curricula, utilize culturally responsive teaching materials and resources, promote student-centered learning and discussion, and foster collaboration between schools and community members, including indigenous knowledge holders. The study advocates for culturally responsive pedagogy in economics education to contest prevailing Western economic paradigms, encourage alternate viewpoints, and enhance critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The study advances new understanding in the integration of culturally responsive teaching within economics education, highlighting the necessity for teachers to acknowledge and appreciate learners' cultural origins. Below are recommendations derived from the study's findings:

Recommendations for Teachers: Integrate varied cultural viewpoints and experiences into economics education to enhance cultural relevance and inclusivity. Utilize culturally responsive educational materials and tools, including textbooks, videos, and multimedia, that represent varied cultural contexts. Promote student-centered learning and discourse to cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Engage with community members and indigenous knowledge custodians to deliver genuine learning experiences. Acknowledge and appreciate the cultural backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints of learners.

Recommendations for Educational Institutions: Offer professional development opportunities for instructors in culturally responsive pedagogy. Amend curriculum standards to integrate varied ethnic perspectives and experiences. Formulate and execute policies that advocate for culturally sensitive pedagogy. Establish collaborations with local communities and organizations to deliver genuine learning experiences.

Recommendations for Policymakers: Formulate and execute policies that advocate for culturally sensitive pedagogy in economics education. Distribute resources for professional advancement and curricular enhancement. Formulate criteria for culturally responsive pedagogy in economics education. Facilitate research on the efficacy of culturally relevant economics education.

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