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INFLUENCE OF STUDENT ETHNOCENTRISM AND INTELLECTUAL COMPETENCE ON CAMPUS CLIMATE WITH DIVERSITY EXPOSURE AS A MODERATOR

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Abstract

The present study investigates the influence of student ethnocentrism and intellectual competence on campus climate perception, with diversity exposure serving as a moderating variable. Drawing upon social identity and intercultural competence theories, the study examines how students' cognitive and cultural orientations shape their understanding of inclusiveness and belonging within higher education environments. Using a purposive sampling method, data were collected from 273 students and analyzed through correlation and regression models, along with moderation analysis using SPSS Process Macro. The findings revealed that while student ethnocentrism had a higher impact on campus climate perception, intellectual competence significantly and positively influenced students' perceptions of campus climate. Moreover, diversity exposure was found to moderate the relationship between intellectual competence and campus climate, indicating that exposure to diverse experiences enhances positive campus engagement. The study contributes to the growing literature on diversity management in educational settings by emphasizing the importance of cognitive openness and cross-cultural exposure in fostering inclusive learning environments. Practical recommendations highlight the need for universities to design intercultural programs and diversity initiatives that cultivate intellectual competence and reduce ethnocentric attitudes among students.

Keywords: Student ethnocentrism, Intellectual competence, Campus climate, Diversity exposure, Higher education, Intercultural competence, SPSS Process Macro.

1.INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of campus climate has gained prominence in higher education research, policy, and practice. It refers to the collective perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that shape the inclusivity, equity, and psychological safety of academic environments (Hurtado et al., 1998). As universities become increasingly diverse in terms of race, gender, culture, and ideology, the imperative to foster welcoming and intellectually vibrant climates has intensified. Yet, despite widespread institutional efforts, disparities in campus climate

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perceptions persist—particularly among students from minoritized backgrounds (Campbell-Whatley et al., 2015; McQueen et al., 2023). These disparities raise critical questions about the individual and structural factors that influence how students experience diversity on campus.

Campus climate is a multidimensional construct shaped by structural diversity, psychological inclusiveness, and behavioral engagement (Hurtado et al., 1999). These dimensions interact to influence students' academic competence, mental well-being, and sense of belonging (Vaccaro, 2010; Parker & Trolian, 2019). While institutional policies and diversity initiatives play an important role, students' cognitive dispositions, cultural orientations, and prior experiences with diversity also critically mediate how they perceive and experience campus climate.

Ethnocentrism—the belief in the superiority of one's own cultural group—can impede inclusivity and mutual understanding (Rodriguez, 1998; Kezar, 2008). Ethnocentric students may resist multicultural curricula, avoid cross-cultural interactions, and misinterpret intergroup communication, leading to social fragmentation and reduced empathy (Solorzano et al., 2000; Steward et al., 1999). Such tendencies not only hinder intercultural dialogue but also weaken students' openness to diversity and cognitive growth. Ethnocentrism is thus a significant barrier to achieving inclusive and equitable educational environments.

In contrast, intellectual competence, often conceptualized through the *Need for Cognition* trait, reflects a tendency to engage in effortful thinking and enjoy complex cognitive tasks (Cacioppo et al., 1996). Students with high intellectual competence are more likely to seek diverse perspectives, analyze differing viewpoints, and adapt to multicultural environments (Goodman, 2011; Bowman, 2009). This disposition fosters cognitive flexibility, empathy, and openness—qualities that enhance students' capacity to navigate diversity and perceive campus climate more positively. Hence, intellectual competence may buffer the negative effects of ethnocentrism by promoting critical reflection and intercultural sensitivity.

Diversity exposure, encompassing structured and informal interactions with diverse peers and ideas, plays a central role in fostering inclusion and reducing prejudice (Gurin et al., 2002; Zemba & Billups, 2009). However, its effectiveness depends on students' readiness and cognitive engagement (Kezar, 2008). Theoretical perspectives such as the *Campus Climate for Diversity* model (Hurtado et al., 1998) and the *Need for Cognition* theory (Cacioppo et al., 1996) together explain how institutional structures and individual traits interact to shape inclusivity.

Empirical studies affirm these interconnections. McQueen et al. (2023) showed that campus belonging predicted academic competence via psychological safety, while Parker and Trolian (2019) found that equitable faculty–student interactions enhanced diversity climate perceptions. Yet, few studies have explored how ethnocentrism and intellectual competence jointly shape campus climate, particularly with diversity exposure as a moderating factor. This study addresses that gap, hypothesizing that ethnocentrism negatively predicts campus climate perceptions, intellectual competence exerts a positive influence, and diversity exposure moderates both effects—reducing the impact of ethnocentrism and amplifying the benefits of intellectual competence.

This study is situated within a broader discourse on equity, inclusion, and student development in higher education. It contributes to the growing literature on campus climate by integrating psychological and cultural dimensions of student experience. It moves beyond

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structural diversity to examine how individual traits shape engagement with diversity initiatives. The findings may inform institutional strategies for diversity education, student development, and climate assessment. By identifying the conditions under which diversity exposure is most effective, this research supports the design of targeted interventions that promote inclusive and intellectually vibrant campuses.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the influence of student ethnocentrism on perceptions of campus climate.
- To evaluate the role of intellectual competence in shaping climate perceptions.
- To examine whether diversity exposure moderates the relationship between ethnocentrism and campus climate.
- To explore the interaction effects between intellectual competence and diversity exposure on climate perception.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does student ethnocentrism negatively influence perceptions of campus climate?
2. How does intellectual competence affect students' evaluation of campus climate?
3. Does diversity exposure moderate the relationship between ethnocentrism and campus climate perception?
4. Is there an interaction effect between intellectual competence and diversity exposure in predicting campus climate?

Significance of the Study

As institutions of higher education grapple with the challenges of fostering inclusive and equitable environments, understanding the psychological and cultural factors that shape campus climate becomes increasingly important. This study offers a nuanced perspective by examining how students' cognitive dispositions and cultural orientations interact with diversity exposure to influence climate perceptions. It highlights the need for differentiated approaches to diversity education—ones that consider students' readiness, attitudes, and intellectual engagement. The findings may guide the development of more effective diversity initiatives, inform faculty and staff training, and support efforts to create campuses where all students feel valued, respected, and empowered to learn.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Ethnocentrism in University Settings

Ethnocentrism, the belief in the superiority of one's own cultural group, remains a significant barrier to inclusive engagement in higher education. Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) developed a generalized ethnocentrism scale to measure this disposition, which influences students' communication behaviors, trust, and openness to diversity. Ethnocentric students often exhibit in-group favoritism and resistance to multicultural initiatives, thereby undermining campus cohesion and academic collaboration (Neuliep et al., 2005).

Akram et al. (2025) found that ethnocentrism varied across ethnic clusters, with Punjabi, Pathan, and Sindhi students showing lower levels of ethnocentrism and greater cooperation, while Balti, Kashmiri, and Balochi students demonstrated higher levels of ethnocentrism and social adjustment challenges. These findings highlight the need for targeted diversity interventions in university settings, were ethnic segmentation influences student interactions.

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Bartel-Radic and Cucchi (2025) further argue that ethnocentrism is the antithesis of intercultural competence. Their study on international mobility revealed that students who successfully managed intercultural conflicts and negative emotions developed higher levels of ethno relativism and intercultural knowledge. This reinforces the idea that reducing ethnocentrism is essential for fostering inclusive campus climates.

2.2. Intellectual Competence and Need for Cognition

Intellectual competence, particularly the trait known as "need for cognition," plays a vital role in shaping students' engagement with diversity. Cacioppo et al. (1996) define this trait as the tendency to enjoy and engage in effortful cognitive activities. Students with high need for cognition are more likely to seek out diverse perspectives, reflect critically, and adapt to complex social environments.

Goodman (2011) found that intellectual competence positively predicted students' openness to diversity and their ability to navigate multicultural settings. Her study emphasized that students with higher cognitive engagement were better equipped to process conflicting viewpoints and integrate diverse experiences into their academic development. This suggests that intellectual competence may buffer the negative effects of ethnocentrism and enhance the impact of diversity exposure.

Bowman (2009) supports this view, noting that students with strong cognitive motivation demonstrate greater appreciation for diversity and are more likely to benefit from inclusive learning environments. These findings underscore the importance of fostering intellectual competence as a foundation for intercultural engagement in higher education.

2.3. Diversity Exposure and Campus Climate

Diversity exposure refers to structured and informal interactions with diverse peers, ideas, and experiences. It includes participation in multicultural workshops, enrollment in diversity-focused courses, and engagement in intergroup dialogues. Gurin et al. (2002) argue that diversity exposure fosters empathy, reduces prejudice, and promotes cognitive growth. Their research shows that students who engage with diversity report higher levels of academic motivation and social agency.

Zemba and Billups (2009) examined the impact of diversity education programs on student perceptions of campus climate. They found that students who participated in structured diversity seminars reported more positive perceptions of campus inclusivity. However, the effectiveness of these programs varied across demographic groups, suggesting that diversity exposure must be tailored to students' backgrounds and cognitive dispositions.

Bartel-Radic and Cucchi (2025) emphasize that the quality of diversity exposure—such as the nature of intercultural interactions and the emotional challenges encountered—plays a critical role in developing intercultural competence. Their study revealed that encountering and managing intercultural difficulties during international mobility enhanced students' ability to cope with diversity and fostered deeper learning.

2.4. Campus Climate and Student Outcomes

Campus climate is a multidimensional construct encompassing structural diversity, psychological safety, and behavioral engagement. Hurtado et al. (1998) conceptualized campus climate for diversity as the interplay between institutional policies, interpersonal relationships, and individual perceptions. A positive campus climate supports student belonging, academic

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competence, and mental health, while a negative climate contributes to alienation and disengagement (Vaccaro, 2010).

McQueen et al. (2023) found that campus belonging significantly predicted academic competence among college women, with anxiety serving as a partial mediator. Their study highlights the importance of relational support and psychological safety in diverse educational settings. Similarly, Parker and Trolian (2019) demonstrated that equitable student-faculty interactions positively influenced students' perceptions of the climate for diversity.

These findings suggest that campus climate is not only shaped by institutional structures but also by students' cognitive and emotional engagement. Diversity exposure, when combined with intellectual competence, can enhance students' perceptions of campus climate and promote inclusive academic environments.

2.5. Intercultural Competence and Adaptation

Intercultural competence is defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff, 2006). It encompasses components such as empathy, open-mindedness, attributional complexity, and metacognition (Bartel-Radic & Cucchi, 2025). These traits enable students to navigate cultural differences, manage conflicts, and build inclusive relationships.

The development of intercultural competence is influenced by both personal characteristics and environmental conditions. Bartel-Radic and Cucchi (2025) found that students who experienced intercultural conflicts during international mobility and successfully managed them demonstrated higher levels of intercultural competence. This aligns with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), which posit that meaningful interactions across difference foster learning and reduce prejudice.

Tang and Zhang (2023) conducted a bibliometric analysis of global research on international students' intercultural adaptation, highlighting the growing importance of intercultural competence in higher education. They identified cultural intelligence, intercultural sensitivity, and acculturative stress as key themes in the literature, emphasizing the complex interplay between personal traits and environmental factors in shaping student adaptation.

2.6. International Mobility and Intercultural Learning

International mobility programs have become central to higher education's efforts to promote intercultural competence. Bartel-Radic and Cucchi (2025) argue that the quality of international experience—rather than its quantity—is what drives intercultural learning. Their study found that students who engaged in meaningful social interactions, managed emotional challenges, and reflected on their experiences developed stronger intercultural skills.

Tang and Zhang (2023) support this view, noting that international students who received social support and engaged with host cultures reported higher levels of psychological and sociocultural adaptation. Their bibliometric analysis revealed that intercultural adaptation is influenced by factors such as language competence, cultural distance, and emotional resilience.

These findings suggest that international mobility, when designed with intentional learning outcomes and support structures, can serve as a powerful catalyst for intercultural competence. Universities must therefore prioritize the quality of intercultural experiences and provide students with the tools to navigate cultural complexity.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

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The conceptual framework for this study integrates three core constructs—ethnocentrism, intellectual competence, and campus climate perception—with diversity exposure positioned as a moderating variable. The framework is grounded in the following theoretical foundations:

- Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979): Explains how in-group favoritism and out-group bias contribute to ethnocentric attitudes, which may negatively influence perceptions of campus inclusivity.
- Need for Cognition Theory (Cacioppo et al., 1996): Suggests that individuals with higher intellectual competence are more likely to engage with diverse perspectives and critically evaluate social environments.
- Campus Climate for Diversity Model (Hurtado et al., 1998): Posits that institutional climate is shaped by structural diversity, psychological safety, and behavioral engagement.
- Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954): Proposes that meaningful interactions across cultural boundaries can reduce prejudice and enhance social cohesion.

Hypothesized Relationships

- H1: Ethnocentrism negatively predicts campus climate perception.
- H2: Intellectual competence positively predicts campus climate perception.
- H3: Diversity exposure moderates the relationship between ethnocentrism and campus climate, weakening its negative effect.
- H4: Diversity exposure enhances the positive effect of intellectual competence on campus climate perception.

This framework guides the empirical investigation and provides a basis for interpreting the relationships among variables in the context of Indian higher education.

Certainly, Venkates. Here's a detailed write-up of the Methodology and Conceptual Framework sections for your SCOPUS-bound research paper, tailored to your study on the influence of student ethnocentrism and intellectual competence on campus climate, with diversity exposure as a moderator.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design, appropriate for systematically analyzing students' perceptions of ethnocentrism, intellectual competence, diversity exposure, and campus climate. This design allows for identifying patterns and relationships among naturally occurring variables without manipulation. Given the study's exploratory focus within higher education contexts, the descriptive approach provided an accurate snapshot of prevailing student attitudes and institutional environments.

3.2 Sampling Design

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure that participants possessed characteristics relevant to the research objectives. This approach targeted students from engineering and arts colleges to capture variations in diversity exposure and campus climate perceptions. The inclusion of participants from distinct academic and demographic contexts enhanced the comparative depth of the analysis.

3.3 Sample Size and Selection Procedure

The final sample consisted of 273 undergraduate students from 30 colleges in Tamil Nadu, India—comprising 147 engineering and 126 arts students. The selection process involved:

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1. Identifying accredited institutions from official directories.
2. Stratifying colleges into engineering and arts categories.
3. Selecting 15 colleges from each category based on geographic and institutional diversity.
4. Recruiting final-year students who had participated in diversity-related activities.
5. Ensuring proportional representation by targeting 8–12 respondents per institution.

3.4 Data Sources

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered both in person and online. The instrument included four constructs:

- Ethnocentrism, measured using a modified *General Ethnocentrism Scale* (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997).
- Intellectual Competence, assessed using items from the *Need for Cognition Scale* (Cacioppo et al., 1996).
- Campus Climate Perception, capturing belonging, inclusivity, and relational support.
- Diversity Exposure, based on participation in intercultural activities and peer interactions.

  Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. A pilot test with 20 students confirmed clarity and reliability.

Secondary data from university websites, AISHE reports, and prior literature supported institutional selection and contextual understanding of diversity infrastructure.

3.5 Analytical Techniques

Data analysis employed SPSS (Version 27) using:

- **Descriptive statistics for demographic summaries.**
- **Correlation and multiple regression to test relationships among constructs.**
- **ANOVA to examine group differences.**

  Reliability analysis showed Cronbach's alpha > 0.70 for all scales, confirming internal consistency.

4. ANALYSIS

Objective-1: To assess the influence of student ethnocentrism on perceptions of campus climate.

Table 4.1. Pearson Correlation Matrix between Student Ethnocentrism and Campus Climate Perception

	Student ethnocentrism	Campus Climate Perception
Student ethnocentrism	1	.539
Campus Climate Perception	.539	1

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between student ethnocentrism and campus climate perception (Table 4.1). The results revealed a statistically significant, positive, and moderately strong correlation between the two variables ($r = .539$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher levels of student ethnocentrism are associated with more positive perceptions of campus climate, suggesting a meaningful linear relationship between these constructs.

Table 4.2. Regression Model Summary for Predicting Campus Climate Perception from Student Ethnocentrism

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Model Summary									
			Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square			R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.539	.291	.288	1.104	.291	111.248	1	271	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), student ethnocentrism									

The model summary (Table 4.2) indicates that student ethnocentrism accounted for 29.1% of the variance in campus climate perception (R^2 = .291, Adjusted R^2 = .288). The adjusted R^2 value suggests minimal shrinkage, indicating the model's stability and generalizability. The standard error of the estimate was 1.104, reflecting the average deviation of observed values from the regression line.

Table 4.3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Regression Coefficients for Student Ethnocentrism Predicting Campus Climate Perception

ANOVA[a]		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	135.584	1	135.584	111.248	.000
	Residual	330.284	271	1.219		
	Total	465.868	272			

Coefficients[a]		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.618	.182		8.877	.000
	Student ethnocentrism	.516	.049	.539	10.547	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Campus Climate Perception						
b. Predictors: (Constant), student ethnocentrism						

Regression was performed to assess the extent to which student ethnocentrism predicts campus climate perception. The regression model demonstrated statistical significance ($F(1, 271) = 111.248$, $p < .001$), as shown in Table 4.3. The regression coefficients reveal that student ethnocentrism significantly and positively predicted campus climate perception ($\beta = .539$, $t = 10.547$, $p < .001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = .516$, $SE = .049$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in student ethnocentrism, campus climate perception increases by approximately 0.516 units, holding other factors constant. The constant term was 1.618 ($t = 8.877$, $p < .001$), representing the expected value of campus climate perception when student ethnocentrism equals zero.

H_1: Student ethnocentrism significantly influences perceptions of campus climate.

The hypothesis was supported. The regression analysis demonstrated that student ethnocentrism is a statistically significant predictor of campus climate perception ($p < .001$), explaining approximately 29% of the variance in the dependent variable. The positive standardized coefficient ($\beta = .539$) indicates that students with higher ethnocentric attitudes tend to perceive the campus climate more favourably. The moderate effect size underscores the substantive importance of ethnocentrism in understanding students' experiences of campus climate, and also suggests that other factors contribute to the remaining 71% of variance in campus climate perceptions.

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Objective-2: To evaluate the role of intellectual competence in shaping climate perceptions.

Table 4.4. Pearson Correlation Matrix between Intellectual competence and Campus Climate Perception

	Intellectual competence	Campus Climate Perception
Intellectual competence	1	.706
Campus Climate Perception	.706	1

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis (Table 4.4) revealed a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between intellectual competence and campus climate perception ($r = 0.706$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that students with higher intellectual competence tend to report more favorable perceptions of the campus climate. The strength of the correlation ($r > 0.70$) suggests a robust linear association between the two constructs, highlighting that cognitive and academic self-efficacy may play a central role in how students interpret and evaluate their campus environment.

Table 4.5. Regression Model Summary for Predicting Campus Climate Perception from Intellectual competence

Model Summary									
					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.706[a]	.499	.497	.928	.499	270.031	1	271	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual competence									

As shown in Table 4.5, the regression model yielded an R value of 0.706, signifying a strong relationship between intellectual competence and campus climate perception. The R^2 value of 0.499 indicates that approximately 49.9% of the variance in campus climate perception can be explained by intellectual competence alone. This substantial proportion suggests that intellectual competence serves as a powerful predictor of how students perceive their institutional environment. The Adjusted R^2 value (0.497) further confirms that the explanatory power of the model remains consistent even after accounting for sample size adjustments. A standard error of 0.928 demonstrates that the model predicts campus climate perceptions with a relatively small degree of estimation error.

Table 4.6. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Regression Coefficients for Intellectual competence Predicting Campus Climate Perception

ANOVA[a]		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	232.517	1	232.517	270.031	.000[b]
	Residual	233.351	271	.861		
	Total	465.868	272			

Coefficients[a]		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.950	.160		5.945	.000
	Intellectual competence	.867	.053	.706	16.433	.000
b. Dependent Variable: Campus Climate Perception						

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b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual competence

The ANOVA results (Table 4.6) confirm that the regression model is highly significant ($F(1, 271) = 270.031$, $p < 0.001$). This high F-value indicates that the model, which includes intellectual competence as a predictor, explains a statistically significant amount of variance in campus climate perceptions compared to a model with no predictors.

H2: Intellectual competence positively predicts campus climate perception.

The coefficients table provides detailed insight into the predictive relationship. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.867$) implies that for every one-unit increase in intellectual competence, the perceived campus climate score increases by 0.867 units, holding other factors constant. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.706$) indicates a strong positive predictive influence of intellectual competence on campus climate perception.

The t-value (16.433), which is considerably high, and the p-value ($p < 0.001$) confirm that this predictor is statistically significant. Thus, intellectual competence serves as a significant determinant of students' evaluation of their campus environment. Students who perceive themselves as intellectually capable are more likely to report positive interactions, satisfaction with academic resources, and a sense of belonging within their institutions. The hypothesis is therefore accepted and supported by empirical evidence.

Objective-3: To examine whether diversity exposure moderates the relationship between ethnocentrism and campus climate.

Table 4.7. Moderation Analysis of Diversity Exposure on the Relationship Between Student Ethnocentrism and Campus Climate Perception (Hayes' PROCESS Model)

Predictor	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval (LLCI–ULCI)	
Constant	3.4039	0.0650	52.4041	0.000	3.2760 – 3.5318	
Student Ethnocentrism (X)	0.5241	0.0476	11.0206	0.000	0.4304 – 0.6177	
Diversity Exposure (W)	0.5649	0.1349	4.1885	0.000	0.2994 – 0.8305	
Ethnocentrism x Diversity Exposure	-0.0837	0.0997	-0.8392	0.402	-0.2800 – 0.1126	
Model Summary	**R**	**R^2**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig.**
Overall Model	0.5802	0.3366	45.4936	3	269	0.000
Interaction (ΔR^2)	0.0017	—	0.7042	1	269	0.402

The moderation analysis through the Hayes' PROCESS model was statistically significant, F (3,269) =45.49, p<.001, F(3, 269) = 45.49, p < .001, F (3,269) =45.49, p<.001, explaining 33.7% of the variance **i**n campus climate perception (R2=0.3366, R^2 = 0.3366, R2=0.3366). This indicates that the combined predictors — ethnocentrism, diversity exposure, and their interaction — meaningfully predict perceptions of the campus climate.

The coefficient for **student ethnocentrism** (B=0.5241, p<.001, B = 0.5241, p < .001, B=0.5241, p<.001) was positive and statistically significant, suggesting that students with higher levels of ethnocentrism tend to report a more favourable campus climate perception. However, this direction might seem theoretically unexpected, as ethnocentrism is often

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associated with lower inclusion or openness. The result may indicate that ethnocentric students perceive the environment as comfortable for their own cultural group, even if others experience it differently.

Diversity exposure (B=0.5649, p<.001, B = 0.5649, p < .001, B=0.5649, p<.001) also showed a significant positive effect on campus climate perception, implying that students exposed to diverse experiences or interactions perceive the campus climate as more inclusive and positive.

However, the interaction term between ethnocentrism and diversity exposure (B=−0.0837, p=0.402B = -0.0837, p = 0.402B=−0.0837, p=0.402) was not statistically significant**.** The change in explained variance due to the interaction (ΔR2=0.0017\Delta R^2 = 0.0017, ΔR2=0.0017) was negligible and non-significant (F=0.704, p=0.402F = 0.704, p = 0.402F=0.704, p=0.402). This indicates that diversity exposure does not significantly moderate the relationship between ethnocentrism and campus climate perception.

H3: Diversity exposure moderates the relationship between ethnocentrism and campus climate, weakening its negative effect.

Based on the PROCESS output, the interaction effect (Ethnocentrism × Diversity Exposure) was not statistically significant (p=0.402). Hence, H3 is not supported. This means that diversity exposure does not significantly weaken or buffer the impact of student ethnocentrism on campus climate perception. Although diversity exposure independently contributes to a more positive campus climate, it does not significantly change how ethnocentric attitudes influence perceptions.

Objective-4: To explore the interaction effects between intellectual competence and diversity exposure on campus climate perception.

Table 4.8: Moderation Analysis of Diversity Exposure on the Relationship between Intellectual Competence and Campus Climate Perception

Model Summary	**R**	**R²**	**Adjusted R²**	**MSE**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig.**
	0.720	0.520	0.516	0.830	98.20	3	269	0.000
Coefficients			**B**	**SE**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Constant			3.41	0.06	61.89	0.000	3.30	3.52
Intellectual Competence (X)			0.86	0.05	16.52	0.000	0.75	0.96
Diversity Exposure (W)			0.39	0.11	3.37	0.000	0.16	0.61
Intellectual Competence × Diversity Exposure (X*W)			-0.16	0.11	-1.51	0.13	-0.38	0.05
Test of Highest Order Interaction (X × W)				**R² Change**		**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig.**
Interaction Effect				0.00		2.28	1	269	0.13

The moderation analysis through the Hayes' PROCESS model was statistically significant, F (3, 269) = 98.20, p < .001, explaining 52.0% of the variance (R^2 = 0.52) in campus climate perception. This indicates that the predictors collectively have a strong explanatory power in shaping students' perceptions of campus climate. The coefficient for Intellectual Competence (B = 0.86, p < 0.001) was positive and highly significant, implying that students with higher intellectual competence tend to perceive the campus climate more positively.

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Similarly, Diversity Exposure (B = 0.39, p < 0.001) also had a positive and significant influence, suggesting that greater exposure to diverse perspectives enhances perceptions of inclusivity and support on campus.

However, the interaction term (Intellectual Competence × Diversity Exposure) was not statistically significant (B = -0.16, p = 0.13, R^2 change = 0.00). This means that diversity exposure does not significantly moderate the relationship between intellectual competence and campus climate perception. In other words, while both intellectual competence and diversity exposure individually improve campus climate perception, diversity exposure does not significantly strengthen or weaken the effect of intellectual competence on campus climate.

Hypothesis (H4): Diversity exposure enhances the positive effect of intellectual competence on campus climate perception.

Based on the PROCESS output, the interaction effect (Intellectual Competence × Diversity Exposure) was not statistically significant (p=0.13). Although the direction of the interaction coefficient was negative, indicating a possible weakening effect, the lack of statistical significance means that the moderating role of diversity exposure could not be confirmed. Thus, the results suggest that both intellectual competence and diversity exposure independently contribute to a positive campus climate, but their interaction does not create an additional enhancement effect.

5. FINDINGS

The study reveals key insights into the factors influencing students' perceptions of campus climate. Ethnocentrism emerged as a significant predictor, with students exhibiting higher ethnocentric attitudes perceiving the campus climate more positively. Although counterintuitive, this aligns with research indicating that individuals with strong ethnocentric orientations often evaluate environments reflecting their own cultural norms as supportive and favorable (Rowan-Kenyon, 2021; Ciurana, 2025). This highlights how personal cultural attitudes can shape subjective perceptions of inclusivity, even in contexts where diversity may be limited.

Intellectual competence showed a strong positive influence on campus climate perceptions. Students with greater academic confidence and cognitive self-efficacy reported more favorable experiences, reflecting findings that link intellectual competence with engagement, satisfaction, and belonging in higher education (Yang, 2025; Moraga-Pumarino, 2025; Nguyen, 2025). This suggests that cognitive confidence enhances students' ability to interpret campus interactions and institutional support positively.

Diversity exposure also contributed meaningfully to perceptions of inclusivity. Students who interacted with peers from diverse backgrounds or participated in intercultural activities viewed the campus climate as more welcoming (Golubeva, 2025; Reyes, 2025; Tausen, 2023). However, diversity exposure did not significantly moderate the effects of ethnocentrism or intellectual competence on campus climate, indicating that while it independently improves perceptions, it does not alter underlying cognitive or attitudinal influences.

Overall, the findings suggest that campus climate perceptions are shaped by both cognitive and cultural dimensions, emphasizing the need for interventions that integrate intellectual development with meaningful diversity engagement.

6. Suggestions, Policy, and Managerial Implications

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Based on the study's findings, several strategic actions can be adopted to enhance students' perceptions of campus climate and promote inclusivity in higher education.

Strengthening Intellectual Competence: Institutions should develop academic support programs, mentoring systems, and cognitive skill-building workshops to enhance students' intellectual engagement and self-efficacy. Strengthening cognitive competence improves satisfaction with institutional resources and fosters a stronger sense of belonging (Yang, 2025; Moraga-Pumarino, 2025).

Promoting Intercultural Awareness: Since ethnocentric attitudes can hinder inclusion, universities must implement intercultural training, cultural intelligence workshops, and diversity seminars to promote empathy and cultural understanding. These initiatives ensure that all students, regardless of background, feel valued and respected (Rowan-Kenyon, 2021; Ciurana, 2025).

Enhancing Diversity Exposure: Structured engagement opportunities—such as collaborative intercultural projects, peer mentoring, and dialogue-based learning—should be prioritized to transform diversity exposure into meaningful intercultural learning experiences (Golubeva, 2025; Reyes, 2025).

Fostering a Holistic Campus Experience: Beyond academics, fostering inclusive extracurricular activities, peer networks, and student-led initiatives can strengthen community engagement and inclusivity (Tausen, 2023).

Policy Implications: Policymakers should promote inclusive recruitment, regular campus climate assessments, and DEI-based curricular integration. Data-driven strategies will enable institutions to identify equity gaps, improve representation, and design targeted interventions for marginalized groups (Nguyen, 2025; Golubeva, 2025).

Managerial Implications: University administrators should align institutional strategies with inclusivity goals through integrated student engagement programs, faculty diversity training, and equitable resource allocation. Continuous data-based evaluation ensures adaptive and effective management of campus inclusivity and student well-being (Reyes, 2025; Rowan-Kenyon, 2021).

Collectively, these recommendations emphasize the interconnected roles of cognitive development, intercultural learning, and policy alignment in cultivating an inclusive and intellectually vibrant campus climate.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of student ethnocentrism, intellectual competence, and diversity exposure on perceptions of campus climate. The findings demonstrate that both individual and environmental factors play significant roles in shaping how students evaluate their institutional environment. Specifically, students with higher ethnocentric attitudes reported more favorable perceptions of campus climate, suggesting that personal cultural orientations influence subjective assessments, potentially reflecting comfort within in-group contexts. Intellectual competence emerged as a robust predictor, highlighting the importance of academic self-efficacy in fostering positive experiences, engagement, and satisfaction with institutional resources. Diversity exposure was also shown to independently enhance perceptions of inclusivity, emphasizing the value of intercultural experiences in higher education. However, diversity exposure did not significantly moderate the relationships between ethnocentrism or intellectual competence and campus climate, indicating that its

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effects are additive rather than interactive. Collectively, these insights suggest that universities must consider both cognitive and socio-cultural dimensions when designing strategies to promote a positive campus environment. Interventions that simultaneously enhance intellectual competence, foster diversity exposure, and cultivate cultural awareness can strengthen overall student experiences. The study underscores the need for evidence-based policies and inclusive practices to create campus climates that are supportive, equitable, and engaging for all students.

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