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Reframing Intercultural Education in Edu-business:

A Decolonising Approach

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Abstract

The ever-evolving global context has brought an increased focus on nonformal learning organisations such as edu-business which provides learning services as a 'for-profit' enterprise (Ball, 2012). However, edu-business is shaped by the neoliberal environment in which it is embedded. Its underlying economic drivers comprise the core challenges for learning developers in this sector. Moreover, there is a remarkable absence of research specific to edu-business which has raised questions on its capability in a globally diverse learning context. This study aimed to close that research gap slightly by concentrating on the specific learning area of intercultural education and the possibilities of a decolonising approach to curriculum and pedagogy. Specifically, the focus was on how knowledge is validated, how it is disseminated and by whom in edu-business. The overall study aim was not to provide a decolonising solution or set of guidelines for edu-business but to initiate a dialogue on decolonising intercultural education for edu-business. This study interrogated the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe by exploring issues related to 'quality of content' (Krishna, 2009) for curriculum and pedagogy.

Using a qualitative research design, the data was collected from semi-structured interviews with learning developers in European-based edu-businesses. A framework analysis drew from concepts delineated by Shahjahan, Estera, Surla and Edwards' (2022) decolonising curriculum and pedagogy (DCP) framework for higher education which provided a relevant comparison for exploring a decolonising approach to intercultural curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business. The research findings highlighted issues related to the contextual challenges, interrelated interpretations and the actualisation of decolonising pedagogy which have implications for how learning developers recognise conditions and relations of power in which intercultural learning is embedded. It requires their capacity to acknowledge their complicity, subjectivity and pedagogical agency in the propagation of dominant Eurocentric approaches which sanction power relations and have an impact on the quality of intercultural programmes in edu-business. The learning developers' unique positionality has the potential to transform intercultural knowledge production into a more critically relevant and human-centric pedagogical practice as part of the greater decolonising project.

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"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

Judith L. Lee

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Chapter One: Introduction

The global environment has intensified educational concerns for attending to the evolving needs of an increasingly diverse global context confronted with progressive learning challenges. It is accelerated by the pursuit of innovation and information exchange in the knowledge economy. Manzon (2011) claimed it creates "a hierarchical structure in the field of knowledge production, wherein some countries occupy a central 'paradigmatic' position for other countries located at the periphery" (p. 45). This is important because it produces a system that is further inflated by Western knowledge gatekeepers who are primarily located in English-speaking contexts. They constrain what knowledge is validated, how it is disseminated and by whom.

For modern learning institutions including those in the private sector, this has raised issues of quality for programmes (De Boer & Collins, 2005) in nonformal education defined as "an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning of individuals" that are "institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider" (Eurostat, 2016, p.15). Within the scope of the nonformal education sector are edu-businesses which are understood as the for-profit organisations involved in the "buying and selling of education services, and materials" (Ball, 2012, p.116). Edu-businesses range in structure from multinational corporations to smaller entrepreneurs who offer educational solutions, products and services to diverse client markets including government, business and civil society (Hogan, Sellar & Lingard, 2016). Edu-businesses are profiting from the increasingly unclear commercialisation between public and private education purposes, access and governance (Hogan, Thompson, Sellar and Lingard, 2018). For this research, commercialisation refers to "the creation, marketing and sale of education goods and services... by for-profit providers and often includes (but is not limited to) the provision of curriculum content, assessment services, data infrastructures, digital learning, remedial instruction, and professional development" (Hogan, Thompson, Sellar & Lingard 2018, p.141). A more detailed mapping of the edu-business context is provided under the Edu-business Context section 1.2.

However, education in the nonformal private sector is increasingly scrutinised for the quality of its educational solutions and programme content in nonformal environments (De Boer & Collins, 2005). For learning developers, this is a salient point because their roles are defined by their responsibilities to enhance learners' skills, knowledge, behaviours and competencies that improve performance across diverse contexts (Lievens, 2020). There are issues linked to programme relevance in edu-business which concern quality and content specific to the learning needs of learners. This research concentration is placed on the private entrepreneurial edu-business sector whose educational models have increasingly shifted concern towards meeting the economic priorities of scope and scale (Hogan et al., 2018). The research study problem springs from the assumption that edu-business is embedded in its neoliberal environment. This context frames the extended research questions that underpin this study as the following sections describe.

1.0 Statement of Research Problem

This research identifies edu-business as a specific segment of nonformal learning which is distinct from formal education. As a non-credited and unregulated learning context, this research relates to knowledge production and focuses on 'quality' control of intercultural education programmes for edu-business. For the purposes of this study, the 'quality of content' is defined as 'fit for purpose' (Krishna, 2009), and refers to intercultural education programmes that are developed and disseminated in the Western context of edu-business although they may be indicative of other related possible perspectives and approaches (Guilherme, 2019). It raises questions of quality surrounding intercultural education that involve curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business.

Initially, my research issue questioned if intercultural learning needs were being met by intercultural education programs in edu-business. From a post-structuralist approach, the learners' needs are considered to be ever-evolving. In other words, intercultural knowledge is constantly under construction, deconstucted and reconstructed through the sociocultural exchanges between diverse people, groups and the flows of information (Derrida, 1997). The poststructuralist approach to knowledge construction is viewed as temporal and meaning is constantly re-evaluated with new information that re-contextualises the individual context and

experience. Educators may capture a specific moment in a learner's intercultural journey that identifies a specific moment of confusion and clarity, but that learning need is subject to re-evaluation and reconstruction shaped by its changing contextual conditions. The poststructuralism approach to knowledge is explained in more detail under the theoretical approaches section. From the poststructuralist lens, the primary research issue is appropriately framed around the fluid global context of edu-business and how it impacts intercultural learning approaches for European based edu-businesses and asks: What are the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-business in Europe? Here the reference to the European Global North refers to the European countries with comparative wealth and relations of power rather than geographical location (Braff & Nelson (2024).

As a result of global movements, edu-businesses in the global north are experiencing increased population diversity, particularly in former coloniser countries. This has implications for edu-business which is underpinned by colonial remnants or what the literature refers to as *post-colonial effects* that frame not only education, but aspects of business, sociocultural, and political organisation. The concept of *colonial effects* refers to the elements that embody 'coloniality' and sustain the idea of persistent domination through the conditions and "modes of exploitation and domination between peoples" (Quijano, 2007, p. 170). This meaning differs from colonialism which refers to the specific historical periods of colonial occupation. It is coloniality that I reference in this research study which is considered to be an embedded part of formal and nonformal education systems today.

Global environments also merge culturally diverse contexts which have different sociocultural, historical and political research implications for edu-business and its pedagogical environments. It follows from Dei (2000) that "knowledge is operationalized differently given local histories, environments and contexts" (p. 4). This raises extended questions connected to intercultural pedagogical approaches for European-based edu-business and to the efficacy in confronting the diverse challenges in a multifaceted global context (Ryan & Tilburg, 2013). Thus, a deeper inquiry into the circumstances surrounding knowledge production and for examining the quality of intercultural programmes is needed for edu-business in the global North. I advance additional extended research questions:

- What pedagogical challenges frame intercultural education in edu-business?
- How are cultural content decisions realised in edu-business and by whom?
- Whose interests are served in edu-business of the European Global North?
- Are there contextual conditions that influence content decisions in edu-businesses of the European Global North?

Based on these pedagogical considerations, this study examines how learning developers in the context of edu-business attend to the conditions of learning. It explores the possibility of a decolonising approach edu-business and explores the conditions surrounding intercultural curriculum and pedagogy.

1.1 Research Purpose

Previous research has indicated that globalisation has accelerated the "spread of a free-market–based, capitalist style of production" (Krishna, 2009, p.2). For the purposes of this study, globalisation refers to "the worldwide diffusion of practices, expansion of relations across continents, organization of social life on a global scale, and growth of a shared global consciousness (Ritzer, 2004, p. 160), but it is dominated by Western paradigms and hegemonic structures that have sociocultural and historical implications rooted in coloniality.

Mamdani (2016) claimed that the concept of decolonisation was thus meant to mitigate the contextualised elements of politics, economics, culture and epistemological concerns generated by the effects of globalisation. These concerns have distinct but interrelated considerations for understanding knowledge production (Shahjahan, Estera, Surla, and Edwards, 2022). According to Faul (2021), a decolonisation approach to research inquiry requires the recognition of specific historically located power relations and their continuing impact on current systems, organisational processes, and the institutions that embody them. Therefore, this study extends the definition of decolonisation to a "process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them" (Tiffin, 1995, p.95).

Additionally, decolonising research has focused primarily on the context of higher education research from its political, economic, and epistemological dimensions (Mamdani, 2016). As the literature review will show, research for edu-business is

strikingly absent compared to previous decolonising research studies in higher education. Therefore, this research explores a decolonising approach in the nonformal education context of edu-business specific to intercultural education. The aim of this research is not to set down a decolonising structure of guidelines but to enrich the greater body of decolonisation research and to initiate a dialogue that includes edu-business as part of a continually expansive field.

1.2 The Edu-business Global Context

In the global education industry (GEI), there has been a structural shift that according to Verger, Steiner-Khamsi & Lubienski (2017) "refers to a broad range of pro-market transformations that many education systems have recently experienced" (p. 326). Three of the main driving forces behind these global transformations are the increased demand for and provision of educational services, the development of information technology in education and decentralisation of education standardisation and governance merging to intensify demand that directly benefit edu-businesses (Verger et al, 2016). Furthermore, what is unique about this shift in the GEI is the rise of global businesses such as edu-business that offer transnational education services and products and related marketization (Verger et al., 2016).

This has resulted in the emergence of new GEI market niches that stray outside of state run control but are promoted by the globalising economic and private interests of its political actors (Verger, Lubienski, & Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). Actors in the education and training sector can actively and legitimately promote their industry as part of the knowledge economy (Hayward, 2004) where education is strategically viewed as an economic asset. The GEI occupies an evolving social and economic space comprised of "specific institutions, forms of agency, hierarchies and interacting market sectors" (Verger et al., 2017, p. 336). Robertson & Komljenovic (2016) agree that various actors with different power positions, unstable practices and forces at play work to structure the markets that form the global education industry. These "markets are both made and remade, as new products and services, frontiers and spaces, are imagined, invented, implemented, inventoried, vetted and vetoed" (Robertson & Komlyjenovic, 2016, p.211).

However, edu-business actors do not work alone. What is important is how they interact with other GEI actors to understand the interconnected power relations. These GEI relations involve political, social and/or economic actors, their related networks, their socio-political and economic agendas and their institutional contexts who work to constitute their economic activities and interests, and "shape the conditions of competition in which business actors intervene" (Verger et al., 2017, p.327). They form educational markets with connected influences that contribute to the GEI dynamics of the global educational context.

These markets may include GEI actors of both for-profit educational organisations, public private partnerships (PPPs) and for-profit education management organisations (EMOs). Underpinning these actors is also the role of the state which is key to providing the space for promoting and maintaining sector competition. Such state strategies include the use of regulation, de-regulation, funding and policy contracts which support the competitiveness and creation of education markets at different scales (Verger et al., 2017). Ball (2012) highlighted that "to different extents in different countries the private sector now occupies a range or roles and relationships within the educational state, in particular as sponsors and benefactors, as well as working as contractors consultants, advisers, researchers, service providers" (p. 112). Edu-businesses as actors in the GEI strategically position themselves to impact social forces through their network connections, institutional influences and education directions which form the social statifcation and competitive landscape relative to the socio-political conditions (Verger et al., 2017).

Due to the scope of actors at the global level, this research study focuses on the for-profit actors of edu-business corporations in Europe as part of the GEI. Notably, the GEI actors in Europe may also have strategic interests that cross borders motivated by economies of scale (Ball, 2016). For example, their business models may stretch to interests in the Global South which can include low-income private sector education organisations that "set up and are owned by an individual or group of individuals for the purpose of making a profit" (Verger et al., 2017 p. 333). It speaks to how educational global initiatives are becoming transnational networks. In the following subsections, I provide general overview of the

developing sector models followed by the range of possible education foci for the main edu-business actors.

1.2.1 Edu-business Organisational Models

Specific to the edu-business sector, there are a range of actors that reflect diverse for-profit operational structures and interests from private, corporation and public-private collaborations at the local, national or global scale. The level of influence and the interrelations between different actors reflect their underlying financial and educational objectives which constitute the "processes, systems of rules, and social forces, which interact in the production, offer and demand of educational services and goods"(Verger et al., 2016, p.4). However, business education operational models are constantly reacting and transforming to reflect the supply and demand of the evolving GEI. In what follows, I review the main types of organisations that fall under the for-profit edu-business sector: individual proprietorships, corporate entities and public-private partnership models.

Individual edu-business proprietorships often operate on a smaller scale servicing both local and international markets. Depending on the learning products or services, they combine in-person nonformal learning services with digital learning experiences to reach their expanding learner audiences. However, the in-person services are limited by the scale of employee operations. An example of this type of small proprietorship are privately-owned language schools or tutoring agencies. The recent advances in learning technology have allowed these smaller scale proprietorships to cross borders and accept international clients. I have direct work experience working for this type of smaller scale operation both in language schools as well as corporate learning edu-businesses that provide a range of learning product and services to remain attractive to a wider client base and economically viable. For the small proprietor, the company branding and networking plays a crucial role in building trust and attracting international clients against its larger global edu-business competitors.

The edu-businesses that operate as larger corporate entities describe a specific form of global actor. These educational organisations primarily take a for-profit model that have greater resources to meet the demands of scale. They have a greater capacity to expand their reach and access through digital means and

learning tools using remote learning and artificial intelligence (AI) to upscale and enhance learning methods. Fully online learning providers such as LinkedIn Learning and Cornerstone promote online and learning services with a focus on upskilling or reskilling for adult learners with 24/7 online access to learning and tech service teams to address technology issues.

Included under this corporate entity form of edu-business are education publishing houses like Pearson or McGraw Hill who publish learning materials to expand global access by catering to both nonformal and formal learning content publishing demands. The publishing of education materials has provided a means for corporations to profit from policy formulation conditions like testing and development of resources for the formal education sector which responds to the demands of standardisation of curriculum and testing. Moreover, this niche market has leveraged the political weight of larger edu-businesses by catering to these specific market context conditions and networks through increased corporate consolidations (Verger et al., 2017).

Public-private partnerships (PPPs), in contrast, offer opportunities to merge the competences of multiple actors. These public-private partnerships are often structured to work as collaborations between private sector and government for providing educational services. They can also assume a partially subsidised or not-for-profit educational structure or social enterprise which is subject to a more regulated organisational structure. This type of education service provider operates to maintain a self-governing structure that is legally accountable for its stakeholders related to its educational activities (ETF, 2024).

A good example of this model is the European Training Foundation (ETF) that operates with multidimensional areas of development in cooperation with the private sector for education-business collaboration. They have linked "the institutional development, governance, management, and financing of centres of vocational excellence" (ETF, 2024, online). Its three main areas of self-governance includes its human resources, finance and pedagogical foci. Specifically, ETF has streamlined their educational services to vocational excellence, curriculum development, work-based learning and research and development (ETF, 2024). These alternative arrangements between state and the private sector require

further exploration to understand their impact as actors on the global front. Verger et al.,(2017) agree that "the role of the state in education market-making and, on the other hand, how (and to what extent) different education markets reinforce each other in the constitution of the GEI" (p.337) is still unclear.

This overview of the for-profit edu-business sector illustrates how different market sectors with their varied models, interests and actors conflate in the evolution of emerging knowledge sectors. Although edu-business is a distinct market and operational structure, it is subject to the multitude of forces at play as part of the larger developing global education industry. According to Hogan et al., (2016), the knowledge economy indicates that publicly funded academic institutions can no longer set aside the potential impact both on learning and revenue channels that have recast nonformal learning organisations like edu-businesses as legitimate players in the knowledge-producing industry. However, the operational model for private providers, such as edu-business, rests on their adaptability and effective response to contextual changes which support their operational efficiency in the changing global context (Krishna, 2009). This must be balanced against the pressures of the knowledge economy and the capacity to meet learners' evolving needs.

1.2.2 Edu-business Products and Services: Intercultural Education

As described int the previous section, the different types of edu-business operational models offer nonformal learning programmes often across a range of products and services for development and dissemination. Some operational models also narrow their product and service focus to a single learning specialisation such as information technology. This may include educational technology, support and test preparation, private educational management, vocational training, educational consultation or content and curriculum development. These services can be further delineated into content areas that may include but are not limited to courses such as communications, customer service, data analytics, human resources, leadership, project management, problem-solving, sales, teamwork and intercultural education.

Intercultural education services, in particular, will vary depending on that area of focus and the target audience or market. In the learning industry, intercultural

education programs are more commonly referred to as diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) programs. In the workplace setting, DEI refers to the values and governance that lay a foundation to support learning for an equitable workplace (Pappenheimer, 2024). Whereas diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) refers to a deeper level of learning engagement.

The addition of 'belonging' into the fold of DEI focuses on the feeling of belonging to a community. This shift occurred with organisations acquiring a deeper understanding of inclusive workplace environments. "They recognized the need to address the emotional and psychological aspects of workplace culture. This realization led to the addition of "Belonging" to the equation, transforming DEI into DEIB" (BPM, 2024, p.5). It is more than just inclusive workplace practices but involves the nurturing of genuine connection and interaction with that community (Pappenheimer, 2024). As a working approach, DEIB aims for transformation of the entire organisation- a comprehensive practice that strives for diversity and inclusion to engender a thriving workplace (AIHR, 2024).

DEI and DEIB programs can be delivered face-to-face, blended or completely online modes of transfer but the notion of belonging implicates a sense of continuous engagement through discussion and practice in daily interaction (BPM, 2024). This aligns with recent insights in the 2024 CultureAmp report which revealed that a DEI strategy integrated into a company's ongoing operations is more effective than one-off actions (CultureAmp, 2024, p. 6) and receives a 7% higher rating of diversity by employees.

The individual proprietorship lends a level of flexibility to their education services including DEIB strategies that can be adjusted to the clients' organisational structure and needs. Unless that edu-business is 'in the business' of DEI education, the larger corporate entities focused on a single education service or product such as the production of digitised SaaS tools, DEI may be integrated into the learning programmes through increased levels of communication, recognition and knowledge exchange. More often it is a part of the edu-business's internal approach to foster an organisational culture with increased employee engagement through training initiatives such as unconscious bias training, cultural competency training, inclusive leadership training, and allyship training (BPM, 2024).

Generally, these nonformal learning programme approaches are not accredited as part of the formal national education system and therefore not recognised by national regulatory boards or their equivalent authoritative bodies (Euro-stat, 2016). However, the non-accredited status of edu-business programmes does not imply a lesser learning impact or a smaller share of the private education market.

The unregulated pedagogy and curriculum of edu-business has not prevented Edu-business from prospering by capitalising on this flourishing and lucrative global industry. According to the Industry Report (2022-2023), a trusted industry data source with over 40 years of publication, US-based educational institutions and corporations spent in excess of 100 billion US dollars overall with an average expenditure per learner ranging from 1200-1400 US dollars (Freifeld, 2022). In Australia, the largest edu-business institute Pearson recorded 2014 sales of over 9.5 billion AUS dollars. In the European Union, the data is less concrete due to the absence of a clear common classification in the EU treaties and regulations for the private sector of continuing education and training. These classification differences relate to the nature of the programme and the recognition of economic or non-economic status for their related activities (OECD, 2022).

1.3 Research Study Design

This research assumed a qualitative design that involved semi-structured interviews with learning professionals in edu-business who were identified as experts in their field. As professionals, they are uniquely positioned to explore the edu-business challenges of learning approaches in the current global climate. For this study, they will be referred to as learning developers who as research participants provided deeper insights drawn from their direct intercultural experiences in European-based edu-businesses.

The data collected from the participants was analysed using an adapted form of framework analysis interpretative approach. According to Goldsmith (2021), qualitative research and framework analysis are well-suited based on a "comparative form of thematic analysis which employs an organized structure of inductively and deductively derived themes" (p. 2061). I sought to reveal deeper insights that related the participants' experiences to the broader contexts in which they work. Researchers posit that decolonising "curriculum and pedagogy are

deeply implicated in grounding, validating, and/or marginalizing systems of knowledge production" (Shahjahan et al., 2021, p.74). They have called for the exploration of 'Other' knowledge paradigms by breaking with engrained ways of conceiving knowledge that bind us to Western paradigms (Alvares & Faruqi, 2012).

In connecting to participants' experiences, I align with Faul (2021) who identified that there are interactional behaviours between educators and learners that perpetuate historical inequalities which links this study's research assumption that European-based edu-businesses are subject to Western hegemonic systems and ideologies that have manifested in educational practice. I also refer to Said's (1978) use of 'Other' and of 'Othering' signified by the capitalisation of 'O' which has been applied in the writing of this research. This 'O' identifies the concept as distinct from the general idea of other people and refers to the display of alterity by someone or something radically different where "that which is outside us, and that which we acknowledge as strange, takes us beyond ourselves. Beyond our common sense. The 'Other' transforms the one who sees the Other" (Jones et al., 2005).

As outlined, the sociocultural, historical and political contexts have implications for constituting knowledge production in edu-business. Specifically, I have placed importance on exploring the dominant learning paradigms and structures that frame learning in edu-business that may hinder intercultural knowledge production. In applying a framework analysis, I employed a decolonising frame for recognising historically embedded colonial relations, and their possible impact on current educational relations and processes in edu-business. Shahjahan et al.'s, (2021) framework for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy (DCP) in higher education provided a useful reference for situating the participants' experiences within the wider structures and discourses in the edu-business context. The DCP framework thus served as a comparative basis of analysis for understanding how the nonformal learning context of edu-business differs from the formal context of higher education. Its application in the data analysis will be explained in greater detail under the methods section.

1.4 Edu-business: Contextual Assumptions

Following Dei's (2000) assertion that knowledge is contextually situated, it is important to clarify the assumptions for edu-business that position this research study and the findings drawn from the data analysis. Three contextual assumptions need to be elucidated: (1) edu-business is entrenched in a neoliberal environment, (2) the European context for edu-businesses assumes a Western perspective, and (3) current intercultural education in edu-business remains relatively static. The following sections further explore these contextual assumptions.

The Edu-business Neoliberal Context

First, as a 'for-profit' enterprise, edu-business is assumed to operate under the socio-political ideology of neoliberalism described as "a global free market, without government regulation, with businesses and industry controlled and run for profit by private owners" (OLD, 2023). Previous literature suggests that economic drivers impact the marketisation, and privatisation of education and these drivers contextualise the knowledge economy as an environment that increases pressure on the edu-business's capacity to maintain a competitive advantage.

Although globalisation is not just about economics, it has also transformed modes of connection and flows of information (Appadurai, 1990). This has implications for "how a system connects with its external world... connectivity is not just about good relations with those outside the company. It impacts the quality of strategy and design and direct impact on a company's success" (Pascal, Millemann & Gioja, 2000, p.91). Therefore, the global context that frames edu-business and the neoliberalism economic assumption impact how edu-business operates. It is globalisation that drives the neoliberal expansion into diverse markets which has altered communication patterns and intensified the commodification of goods and services including the knowledge economy (Ritzer, 2004).

Edu-business embodies a Westernized perspective

Secondly, as a growing sector in nonformal learning, edu-business is assumed to embody a Westernised perspective for intercultural education programmes. By intercultural education, this study refers to the definition following the Council of Europe's (2008) idea of social and educational reciprocity rather than multicultural

distinction which is elaborated further under the section on terminology that follows. This intercultural research study involved learning developers situated in the European geographical zone. Their learning relations may reach beyond European borders due to the accelerated flows of information in globalisation, but they are firmly rooted in Western ideology. According to Rizvi (2007), colonial effects are present in current intercultural relations that contribute to diverse perspectives and impact cultural relations over time. Alvares & Faruqi (2012) also emphasise the hegemonic Western paradigms that centre and organise Western education in which intercultural education programmes in edu-business are contextualised. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider learning developers' experiences and insights drawn from a consolidation of their Western experiences and their involvement with the Western context of edu-business.

The static nature of intercultural programmes

Thirdly, intercultural education programmes have remained relatively static in terms of their Western-grounded paradigms. Cultural theory models (Hall 1976, Hofstede 1986) can be traced to frameworks for understanding culturally diverse groups. They include in the scope of theoretical vocabulary the terms of cultural classifications (Hall, 1997) cultural dimensions or orientations (Hofstede,1997), cultural clusters (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004), and cultural categories (Lewis, 2010). These models offer cultural group descriptions as a simplified solution to the intercultural challenges encountered in globally complex and diverse cultural environments (Jones, Parker & ten Bos, 2005). They simplify cultural differences as 'geo-ethnical' group descriptions (Hall & Hall, 1987) which assigns commonly held characteristics or behaviours across one culturally distinct group. For example, cultural orientations convey German and American people as low-context; the Japanese and Arab societies as high-context (Hall & Reed, 1987); the American and British people as individualistic; and the Chinese and Malaysian societies are considered collectivist societies (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Using cultural orientations for classifying groups by essentialised traits, promotes simplified group-biased descriptions. As Bastian and Haslam (2004) point out, "essentialist theories play a major role in giving explanatory coherence to group stereotypes, and in guiding the social information processing" (p.229). Similarly,

Gutiérrez, & Rogoff (2003) suggest how the "reductive notions of culture and cultural groups" (p.20) serve to support more generalised understandings of culture and allow for simplified cognitive processing for understanding complex cultural challenges. Therefore, there is a tendency to stereotype the knowledge associated with categorised group descriptions (Devine, 1989). Bhabha (1994) also described the "dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of Otherness" (p.66) which he connected to the power of coloniality. He posited that stereotypes work to stabilise knowledge and identification.

> For it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization, produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed" (Bhabha, 1994, p.66).

Furthermore, these essentialised group descriptions tend towards universal applications and do not account for individual differences amongst members of the same group or the effects of intercultural diaspora. They do not account for individuals who identify across more than one cultural group. Craig, Douglas & Douglas (2006) claimed that "culture is becoming increasingly deterritorialized and penetrated by elements from other cultures. This is resulting in...cultural pluralism and hybridization. It has become more difficult to study culture as it is becoming diffused," (p. 322). Herein lies one of the inherent challenges of static intercultural programmes in pluralistic environments which are challenged by the evolving intercultural learning needs. This corroborates my personal experiences of identifying with both Canadian and Chinese cultures. Consequently, my intercultural challenges persist and do not align with cultural orientations approaches allowing my intercultural knowledge gaps and needs to remain unaddressed in globally diverse environments.

That acknowledged, my aim is not to dispute the merits of cultural dimensions theory but to further build on this knowledge that has been fundamental to intercultural scholarship. I argue that intercultural knowledge requires more than

intercultural literacy amongst learners and educators and involves a more learner-cognisant approach to intercultural education. Therefore, a decolonisation of the dominant Western paradigms such as cultural orientations theory may better address the evolving intercultural needs of learners in edu-business. Mignolo (2007) advocates "changing the terms of the conversation" (p. 459) to focus on the removal of Eurocentric perspectives that structure our socio-cultural and political histories.

Interculturality in Edu-business

In parallel, the Council of Europe (2008) advocated changing how conversation occurs through a dialogic approach. They emphasise that the consequences of a non-dialogue approach risk the problem of essentialised understandings of 'Other' groups that advance coloniality:

> "Not to engage in dialogue makes it easy to develop a stereotypical perception of the other, build up a climate of mutual suspicion, tension and anxiety, use minorities as scapegoats, and generally foster intolerance and discrimination... Intercultural dialogue, including on the international plane, is indispensable between neighbours" (The Council of Europe, 2008, p.16).

Interculturality is often used interchangeably with interculturalism and involves a connection to one's historical transformation and multicultural positionality. It is the prefix 'inter' that suggests an interactive context involving "different identities beyond race, ethnicity, nationality, and language also contribute to interculturality" (Dervin, 2016, p.4). Equally, it is the recognition that there is an intersectionality of meanings and concepts that increase the complexity of interculturality related to elements of identity markers like gender, profession, social class, and age with 'doing' culture, national identity, and language (Dervin, 2016, p. 115). As an ideology, interculturality is rooted in its opposition to the rational paradigm that has traditionally ordered the world. The difference with interculturality is the focus on a critical and reflective approach to analysing the embedded power relations that disrupt traditional ideas in education, and "requires using certain concepts which have a specific history—different meanings and associated ideologies that need to be unpacked" (Dervin, 2016, pp.7-8).

In formal education contexts, the focus is placed on understanding the dichotomous ideas of superior/inferior or their related dominant/subordinate positions but also on exploring the over focus in terms of cultural differences (Dervin, 2016). These power relations reveal the hidden ideologies of how educators approach interculturality in education. In other words, interculturality issues concern how individuals and groups can operate from the perception of fairness and equal treatment by making claims about those relations (Shi-xu, 2001).The hidden ideologies revolve around the inequalities that exist "that they do not just represent a 'culture' but also different social classes, genders, generations, and religions that intersect that is highly problematic (Dervin, 2016, p. 58). As an approach to pedagogy and research, how formal education contexts integrate interculturality implicates its positionality on the decolonisation of pedagogy and curriculum.

In contrast to edu-business, which is assumed to operate under a neoliberal context, its context functions from a commodified and essentialised approach to intercultural education. For edu-businesses that operate as corporate entities, the education frameworks are based on values of economic and educational efficiency rather than research and academic initiatives or alternative approaches to pedagogy and curriculum. The public-private partnership edu-business structures are also subject to the conditions of competition (Verger et al., 1999) as well as the division of interests and resources allocated under their partnership arrangements. Thus, the public-private partnerships that promote a strong research and innovation agenda will prioritise an evolving approach to pedagogical pursuits in balance with their economic requirements.

From an interculturality perspective, there is potential to question how edu-businesses approach their interculturality as an ideology within its diverse political, social and/or economic contexts and actors. Related questions would entail what intercultural knowledge is valued, how it is validated and by whom. At its core, the neoliberal context in which edu-business is embedded does not afford the luxury of time and space for a philosophical evolution toward interculturality and the related dialectic considerations of learning equality (Shi-xu, 2001). Therefore, for edu-business, the transformation of its intercultural frameworks must be weighed against its neoliberal drivers.

Interculturality reflects a process and opportunity to bring Other knowledge into the fold of intercultural education. As the literature review will show, decolonising literature in higher education has promoted diverse conceptions of knowledge and intercultural relations by integrating different value systems, behaviours and perspectives recognised by 'Other' cultural groups, disciplines and societies. They have emphasised the need for decolonising approaches to pedagogy and curriculum in higher education. By building on this established research, this study seeks to explore the possibility of reframing edu-business from a decolonising approach to intercultural education.

1.5 Research Study Significance

The significance of this research falls into three areas of professional praxis: (1) the importance of learning sustainability in edu-business for human-centred and inclusive development, (2) the enhancement of academic-to-business relations and (3) the issue of learning quality and relevance in nonformal education. As outlined, the changing global context under which edu-business operates has additional pressures as a nonformal learning context. It means that edu-business must consider its role in the greater system of intercultural knowledge and development if it is to successfully participate in local and broader community long-term goals and well-being. The United Nations' (2023) sustainability goal for reduced inequalities, figures gender, race, age and disabilities prominently in the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023. As sub-categories of cultural diversity, they require a more aggressive approach beyond conventional sectors and linear frames. Such a paradigmatical shift focuses on equitable and inclusive development over economically driven goals (Hosagrahar, 2023).

As previously mentioned, intercultural education programmes in edu-business tend to rest on the relatively static cultural orientations theory (Adamczyk, 2017; Carper, 2014; Meyer, 2014; 2016) that is seemingly detached from integrated thinking. This approach packages intercultural education programmes as easy-to-consume learning solutions which fit the efficient 'for-profit' operating model (Jones et al., 2005) of edu-business. Such one-off solutions to intercultural education usually address practical approaches for navigating pluralistic cultures. These include the use of essentialised group descriptions to navigate cultural

differences. Again, this economic practicality highlights the need to ask the extended research question of how cultural content decisions are realised in edu-business. It calls attention to the interests and motivations behind static cultural models and how they are operationalised within intercultural education in edu-business. It raises the question of whose interests are truly served by sustaining static approaches to intercultural education.

This leads to the second area of research significance which underscores the enhancement of academic-business relations at both the local and the broader level. Ideland & Serder (2022) point to the significance of interrelations between higher education and the business sector where research considers the practicalities and purposes of study. This underscores the significance of collaborative relations in the knowledge production process within an ever-evolving global environment. When these relations are spelled out and spanned beyond the Western lens, there are opportunities for knowledge production across disciplines including more innovative areas of research and development. It indicates that collaborative relations between academia and business can more effectively address the learning needs and market requirements of a neoliberal global environment.

Moreover, Ideland & Serder's (2022) research illustrated the value derived from collaborations between education, research and the business sector which can be manifold in the areas of economic, pedagogical, political, academic and social. They emphasised the practical side of research as an economic asset, particularly for the edu-market that is seeking legitimacy through research. What adds weight to this argument for aligning academic and edu-business relations is the contradiction between academic publications that may be profitable but not always have pedagogical value. This holds true for when business outcomes are not in line with academic endeavours. These relations need to bring the usefulness of research into question and its dissemination when "translated through commercial interests" (Ideland & Serder, 2011, p.13). Once again, it highlights the extended question of whose interests are served. Herein lies the vast potential of knowledge sharing across the academic-business divide that is essential to an increasingly interconnected but ambiguous global context.

Furthermore, improved relations between academia and business, bring into focus the third issue of quality and learning relevance for intercultural education in edu-business. Shi-Xu, (2001) claimed that issues of content and praxis surrounding globalisation and localisation of content involve the interaction of diverse cultures as an integral part of the context. This raises important issues surrounding 'what' content is relevant for intercultural education in edu-business as well as issues of practice and dissemination that concern quality transfer for globally diverse environments. It warrants a deeper exploration into related practices that support and obstruct intercultural education in edu-business. That said, this research aim is not to set down a set of global intercultural learning principles but rather to open a discourse which intends to contribute to the conceptual body of intercultural knowledge and its broader context beyond academia. It aligns with promoting intercultural dialogue as "a major tool to achieve this aim, without which it will be difficult to safeguard the freedom and well-being of everyone living on our continent" (Council of Europe, 2008, p.13).

1.6 Researcher's Positionality

1.6.1 Personal Positionality

This research is personally significant because it responds to issues that have eclipsed my individual and professional intercultural experiences and contexts. Living as part of marginalised Chinese communities both in Canada and Europe fronts the issue of intercultural ambiguity and 'Othering' at different intensities in my personal and professional journeys. These contextualised paths have shaped my identity and cultural lens. Born and raised in a Western environment, I have inculcated aspects of both Western and Chinese perspectives and value systems that are currently prevalent in these cultures. This does not definitively allocate me to either cultural group identification but rather emulates qualities of both cultural value systems. For example, my Canadian identity, education and upbringing have nurtured a Western value system that supports a nuclear family structure based on equality and shared responsibilities which were practised in daily activities. In contrast, significant family decisions favoured the Chinese patriarchal structure in which family authority centres around the elderly dominant male figure. Elder family members also made a conscious effort to preserve our

Chinese sense of identity. For example, the celebration of the departed family members was an annual ritual marked by a gathering of joy and symbolic offerings of money and food. These traditions have formed part of my cultural inheritance and were underscored as an important element in forming our cultural identity (Phinney, 2000).

Residing in the Netherlands since 2009, I have also developed a sense of belonging with my Dutch community. Despite acquiring Dutch citizenship, cultural integration and a sense of belongingness have been unintentionally cultivated through the social and professional networks that have immersed me in the social, political, and economic culture of Dutch daily life. However, feelings of exclusion have shrouded my integration with the predominant White Dutch community. This may be associated with challenges of cultural transition. When I am immersed in my Dutch community, I feel compelled to qualify myself as Canadian Chinese perhaps to illuminate my gaps with the Dutch language and sociocultural competence. It may be an indication of my affiliation with the diverse facets of my cultural identity relative to my immediate environment. Thus, my multicultural identity may have hindered rather than helped my integration into the dominant Dutch culture. By this, I mean that I experienced an acutely Dutch citizenship process which stipulated levels of Dutch language proficiency as part of my initial residency conditions.

Hence, I would describe some of my experiences as 'Othered' (Said, 1978) and some of my interactions with the Dutch dominant majority as 'essentialised' stemming from assumptions surrounding my geo-ethnical affiliation. Interestingly, my Dutch sense of belonging is more predominant when I am outside the country where I readily acknowledge that I am from the Netherlands. This recognition I attribute to my heightened awareness and affiliation with the Dutch language and sociocultural knowledge from an external position.

These experiences are not exclusive to my Dutch experience but also resonate with intercultural encounters that have shaped my experiences living as part of a marginalised community in Canada and Europe. I also relate to feelings of being 'Othered' in my Canadian environment because I do not physically represent the predominantly White Anglo-Saxon Canadian majority. Yet, I do claim a sense of

privilege from middle-class Canadian and Dutch positions in terms of educational opportunity that would set me apart from 'Othered' individuals who have not benefited from the knowledge, experience and privilege of belonging to more than one cultural context.

Therefore, I identify as having a blended sociocultural background established by my Canadian-born upbringing and education, rooted in my Chinese ethnicity and shaped by Dutch cultural integration. My cultural identification more closely aligns with a hybrid identification as defined by "the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, (as) a complex, ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities" (Bhabha, 1984, p.3). My cultural hybridity reflects a fluidity of intercultural perception springing from diverse sociocultural, sociohistorical and socio-material contexts that have shaped my cultural perspective, and understanding of learning, pedagogy and curriculum development. This has problematised my experience with essentialist approaches and cultural dimensions theory (Hall, 1976) offered by edu-business intercultural programmes. Moreover, it has amplified the personal significance of this research and may bias the value I allocate to systemic and dominant knowledge systems. Hence, the border areas of cultural and 'in-between' spaces of cultural processing (Bhabha, 1984) necessitate further investigation of the Western intercultural approaches to edu-business and knowledge production.

1.6.2 Academic and Professional Positionality

As the primary researcher in this study, I serve as a research instrument (Creswell, 2002). This position has affected my subjectivity and has contextualised the knowledge frameworks that I apply in the interpretation of data. As a researcher, I am positioned as a distinct part of the research phenomenon (Bhattacharjee, 2020). I remain critically aware of the Western Eurocentric epistemology upon which this research is founded. My theoretical approach to conceptualising knowledge accepts an understanding of 'difference' within Western learning frameworks and recognises other epistemologies that may cause tension (Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, 2016). I also align with Dei (2000) who recognised cultural tensions as important points for examination and development. This ties decolonisation to

pedagogical research and making educators cognisant of dominant discourses that influence who and what knowledge is produced.

Professionally, I belong to the community of learning and development professionals in edu-business which is a unique and under-examined research area. Learning developers, as previously defined, have a vested interest in intercultural approaches from a learning and development standpoint. I acknowledge that my academic and professional experiences are founded on Western educational paradigms which are challenged by the diversity of my personal perspectives and value systems. Hence, my distinct professional and personal context drives this research inquiry for exploring decolonisation as a theoretical approach to meeting learners' unique intercultural learning needs in the edu-business environment.

1.7 Relevant Research Terminology

At this point, I have provided an overview of relevant terminology because I believe that delineating the usage of terms presented in this research is critical to understanding the various nuanced meanings and choices in terminology for intercultural understanding and research. For example, the choice for the use of intercultural rather than multicultural extends to specific socio-historical and political understandings that frame this research. Not only are the descriptions intended to enhance the reading experience of the general reader, but they also contextualise the understanding for the more informed reader. By supporting and locating the theoretical underpinnings, they frame the nonformal learning perspective and lens of edu-business.

In recognising the significance of these meanings to intercultural research, I acknowledge that meanings may also hold assumptions and implications grounded on Western understandings which may inadvertently foster colonial formations and productions of knowledge (Mignolo, 2003). Their clarifications and usage prior to reading this study are essential for acknowledging their geopolitical enunciation. Western clarifications are indispensable to the non-Western or Indigenous reader who benefits from these interpretations at the outset of the research rather than at the end. This recognises the position of Western knowledge that may be perceived as Other knowledge from the Indigenous lens. Therefore, full transparency of meanings is crucial in the implications and the validation of

knowledge, its production, marginalisation and by extension the decolonisation of curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business.

Capitalism

Broadly speaking, capitalism can be described as a free-market system that operates on the economic principles of supply and demand. Its distinguishing features are productive relations based on competition and revenue. For philosopher Karl Marx (1887), his defining emphasis was on the dynamic inter-relational aspects of the market based on control and inequality in the production and dessemination of product and services. He defined capitalism as grounded on the labour-value exchange through the exploitation of a socially organised collaborative workforce described as the working class or proletariat. The proletariat "value is therefore an exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour- power by capital, or of the labourer by the capitalist" (Marx, p. 153) and aimed at increasing profitability through competition (Marx, 1887).

On the other hand, Milton Friedman (1962, 2002) links capitalism to "increases in economic freedom (which) have gone hand in hand with increases in political and civil freedom and have led to increased prosperity; competitive capitalism and freedom have been inseparable" (p. ix). He sees capitalism as a means to the dispersion of power and identifies competitive capitalism as an instrument for separating political power from economic power. Friedman (2002) also recognised a positive capitalist impact to the lessening of social and economic oppression for diverse groups based on their economic activities. In his view, capitalism does not contribute to enduring restrictions rather the "free market has been the major factor enabling these restrictions to be as small as they are" (p. 109). "Furthermore' and perhaps more important, there is an economic incentive in a free market to separate economic efficiency from other characteristics of the individual" (Friedman, 2002, p. 109). He posits that market behaviours resulting from cultural discrimination can limit a person's choice by generally affecting cost-value ratios (Friedman, 2002). He means that discrimination can intentionally affect one's supply or choice of supply which affects overall demand.

Gilabert & O'Neill (2024) agree that capitalist relations involve social and economic interactions of control that are marked by the free market mechanisms of private ownership, labour power and flows of production and consumption. In this sense, capitalism promotes free choice, innovation and economic efficiency. Market framing can present the concept of choice aligned with the idea of freedom that gives people the sense of power to determine what education, what quality and by whom their education is desseminated (Verger et al., 2017).

At the same time capitalist freedom risks the exploitation of people and resources which may lead to economic disparities. Quijano (2000) extended the understanding of capitalism beyond the practical conception to Marx's relational socio-economic aspects. Quijano (2000) connected these reconfigured relations to race-based social classification and Eurocentric rationality. His perspective has led to the notion of global capitalism which articulates capital to form "a new pattern of organizing and controlling labor in all its historically known forms, together with and around capital" (Quijano, 2000, p. 219) as alluded by Friedman (2002).

Stephen Ball (2012) strongly argues against the reconfigured capitalist arm of global education. He explains capitalism in education as the "buying and selling in another sense, through the business strategies of multinational edu-businesses, management service organisations and private- equity companies" (p. 16). He indicates that there are blurred relations between advocacy and for-profit business organisations like edu-business that on the surface can seem in the best interest of education. In reality, "this infrastructure is layered and complex, is constantly evolving, and is made up of multi-facetted partnerships, collaborations and exchanges" (Ball, 2018, p. 588). These are part of the larger narrative of "education reform (that) is now in effect a marketplace of business opportunities and commercial solutions" (Ball, 2018, p. 587). He argues that the commodification of education products and services is a critical consequence of these capitalist drivers and activities.

Diversity

From a decolonising perspective, it is important to clarify that there are multiple interpretations and meanings for the term diversity. Firstly, I acknowledge that

diversity, cultural diversity and cultural pluralism may be used interchangeably in education contexts. I align with the European Union SatCen explanation (2024) that defines how "diversity relates to the mix of backgrounds, characteristics, experiences, professional skills and perspectives… This includes diversity streams with a focus on gender, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, age and religion" (p. 1). There is an understanding of "the sum of the various kinds of difference – ethnic, "racial," (Siapera, 2010, pp.6-7) which may also include issues connected to race, economics and political marginalisation (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). According to Lundberg (2019), diversity encompasses the concept from its broader context which reflects "an integration of global interrelationships and the "mobility of knowledge in ways that point to global interrelationships of communities and cultures" (p. 146). It means that the varied interpretations of the term diversity are context dependent and affect how diversity is understood differently. Moreover, these interpretations follow the post-structuralist perspective of this study which assumes the terms diversity and diverse are connected to the broader contextual conditions in which they are constructed.

Diverse Learners and Learning Contexts

As a descriptive term, the use of 'diverse' in this research applies to learners, their exchanges and their related contexts at the global, institutional and local levels. The working definition for this study refers to learning contexts that combine varying individual perspectives and value systems derived from their unique sociocultural, sociohistorical and political backgrounds. This understanding follows Lundberg's (2019) ideas on the diverse global space that contains "pluralistic ideas of universal interrelationships and shared forms of knowledge" in which "students bring with them different belief systems, historical contexts, and sociocultural backgrounds (p.146).

Diverse contexts describe the merging of social spaces and "conveys a need to respect similarities and differences among human beings and to move beyond simply developing sensitivity to active and effective responsiveness" (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009, p. 11). Global institutions are comprised of merging people and spaces which Hurtado et al. (2012) underscore that "institutions do not exist in a

vacuum, but rather are part of communities and individual external commitments and macrosystems or the contextual forces outside the institution" (p. 49). Recent research has delineated different contextual positions for institutions at the macro level, meso institutional level, and the micro individual level. These diverse contexts bring new challenges and opportunities for intercultural learning that confront the evolving sociocultural dynamics and relations of power.

An interesting framework of diverse contextual levels is represented in the Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012). It provides a multi-layered approach and more comprehensive understanding of diversity. This model delineates how organisations are entities that structure and are structured by their context including the sociohistorical and local influences that shape it. In other words, diversity is shaped by who is a part of the context, what and how diverse elements are considered and which elements are left out (Hurtado et al., 2012).

Therefore, this study acknowledges that there are diverse learning spaces framed by diverse contextual positions at the institutional edu-business level and the individuals and groups that inhabit those spaces. From the post-structuralism perspective, I recognise the value derived from the sharing of multiple viewpoints, social connections and contradictions with different frames of reference that enhance ways of knowing oneself and one's surrounding world (Lundberg, 2019). This research study aligns with this understanding of diverse learning contexts framed by its interconnecting dynamic of people, perspectives and the spaces that shape it.

Essentialism/ Essentialist Understandings

Cruikshank (1992) defines essentialism by its geo-ethnically located attributes of "ideas and concepts to the Indigenous voice' (p.8). These attributes are reflected homogenously across the same cultural group. Alvaré (2017) agrees that essentialist understandings depict group descriptions and understandings based on "the assumption that all members of a category of people share one or several identifiable, defining cultural features (p.34). This term finds its origins in postcolonialism, and feminism under the disciplines of humanities and social sciences. Previous literature refers to essentialised Western representations that

delineate and marginalise 'Other' groups that inhibit cultural understandings to the exclusion of alternative or 'Other' knowledge. Essentialism is often conflated with the notions of stereotyping and cultural orientations theory (outlined earlier). It focuses on singular conceptions and representations of Others by the dominant group. This is how the understanding of essentialism has been addressed in this research.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism encompasses the idea of cultural diversity as "the genuine recognition of, and respect for, diversity and the dynamics of cultural traditions, ethnic and cultural identities, religious beliefs, artistic, literary and socio-economic ideas and concepts" (The European Court of Human Rights, 2004). According to Gallois & Liu (2015), the concept of multiculturalism in Europe emphasised the centrality of the state and dissuaded the idea of a mono-global culture which incorporated cultural differences into one (p.518). It acknowledges "the existence of different cultures in one nation" (Birkle 2004, p.6) and reflects Europe's diverse heritage characterised by a tolerant open society with a rich cultural diversity (Council of Europe, 2008).

Multiculturalism in Education

Multicultural education in Europe recognises and respects cultural differences with the aim of toleration and assimilation of others for peaceful coexistence (Portera, 2009, p. 485). Multiculturalism advocates support for the model in which marginalised identities and cultural practices are retained from the philosophy that endorses the social integration of immigrants (Song, 2020). The European Court of Human Rights (2004) further delineated that "the harmonious interaction of persons and groups with varied identities is essential for achieving social cohesion".

Over time, the multiculturalism objectives of integration and assimilation were questioned because social interaction and mobility are contextual realities which were not factored into the educational approach (Rocha-Trinidade, Luisa & Mendes 2018). The Council of Europe (2008) did not believe the interpretations of assimilation under multiculturalism adequately responded to the extraordinary growth of cultural diversity. Rocha-Trinidade et al., (2018) agreed that the Council

of Europe's initial multicultural pedagogy overlooked sociocultural interaction and historical contributions which signalled the inadequacy of socio-political and intercultural educational projects based on integration and assimilation.

Ultimately, the Council of Europe (2008) declared that a multiculturalism approach was insufficient. To achieve inclusion in society, it required an approach that included cultural interaction and intercultural dialogue. It stated that multiculturalism "is understood as a specific policy approach, whereas the terms cultural diversity and multiculturality denote the empirical fact that different cultures exist and may interact within a given space and social organisation" (The Council of Europe, 2008, p. 11). The notion of multiculturalism has flourished into modern multicultural theories that support the "recognition and inclusion of minority groups defined primarily in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and religion" (Song 2020, SEP). Antor (2006) concurs that multiculturalism is primarily referenced in national debates. Arguably, Parekh (2000) also stated that multiculturalism "is neither a political doctrine nor a philosophical issue but actually a perspective as way of viewing human life" (p.59). However, the theme emerging from the policy documents and literature is that multiculturalism is more politically driven for publicly affirming and recognising cultural diversity and respect for 'representations of Otherness' which serve to maintain cultural identity boundaries (Kastoryano, 2018).

Interculturalism

The literature has conceptually distinguished interculturalism from multi-culturalism by delineating two key ideas: the element of dialogic relations and the significance of cultural context. The first key differentiator acknowledges the element of dialogic relations from which cultural recognition derives through a dialogical process (Parekh, 2000). The Council of Europe (2008) established a defining idea of dialogue for interculturalism.

> "Intercultural dialogue is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect... It operates at all levels – within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world" (p.10).

This emphasised the practice or act of dialogic relations between groups and group members in society instead of with the state. Political discourse had not been included in the process of intercultural dialogue for policy formation (Levey, 2012) which also set interculturalism apart from multiculturalism. According to Atkinson & Heritage (1984), it is within the intercultural interactive process that constitutes a mutually constituted understanding.

The second key differentiator of interculturalism is its diverse conceptualisation relevant to context (Levy, 2012). The concept of interculturalism advocates, the recognition of the salient differences in context that figure prominently with interactions between culturally diverse groups and individuals. By acknowledging diverse socio-political and historical contexts, the meaning of context reflects the "essence of the multicultural, intercultural and transcultural nature of individuals and collectivities" (Guilherme, 2019, p. 2). Moreover, it stresses the relations of power that are inherently linked to education that underscore an intercultural education approach.

Interculturality

Although closely related to interculturalism, interculturality further denotes the dynamic process or interaction across individual and collective engagement (Dervin 2016). In particular Dervin's reference to cultural heritage "is the result of encounters and mixing with representatives of other cultures" (Dervin, 2016, p.9). James (2008) affirms that "Interculturality is a dynamic process whereby people from different cultures interact to learn about and question their own and each other's cultures. Over time this may lead to cultural change" (p.2). It is distinguished as "a process and something in the making" (Dervin, 2016, p.1). The essence of interculturality can be found in its changing analysis (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006). Thus, it is a notion that exposes a point of view that is unstable, sociopolitical and ideological reflecting the individuals, their perspectives, ideas, practices over time (Dervin, 2016).

From a coloniality perspective, interculturality is seen as the continuous practice of negotiation of shared meaning and adaption that considers the sociohistorical and wider sociocultural relations of power that undergird these exchanges. This

understanding of interculturality also reflects the ideas of Bhabha (1994) who describes the inter-cultural as "articulated across and alongside communities of difference, in acts of affiliation and contingent coalitions" (p. xxii). It focuses on the lived experience or fluid exchange, the navigation and the transformative nature of those interactions that shape hybrid cultural identities. It recognises the inequalities at work in society and the need to overcome them. It is an ongoing "process which requires mutual respect and acknowledges human rights". (James, 2008, p.2). Wikan advocates the need to educate on the contradictions of ideologies in interculturality:

> Talk of 'culture', and the picture that springs to mind is one of difference, divergence, and distance. Talk of 'people' or 'persons' instead, and the picture is one of humans who struggle with some of the same compelling concerns and who therefore—despite all difference—can resonate across time and place (Wikan, 2002, p. 84).

Intercultural Education

Based on these key differentiators of interculturalism, interculturality 'intercultural education' and 'intercultural pedagogy' linked to globalisation and its merging of culturally diverse global contexts, they hinge on dialogical relations (Portera, 2008, p. 484). 'Dialogical relations' convey an enduring state of dynamic cultural interaction and intercultural education which promotes an active pedagogy (Rocha-Trinidade et al., 2018). This established the Council of Europe's definition of intercultural education based on ideas of 'reciprocity' that encompass both political as well as educational dimensions which "contribute to the development of co-operation and solidarity rather than to relations of domination, conflict, rejection, and exclusion" (Portera, 2008, p.483).

Seemingly, the discourse surrounding multiculturalism and interculturalism represents different camps but are often used as synonyms in their interchangeable usage (Guilherme, 2019). However, the key interculturalism differentiators of *sociocultural interaction* and *contextual components* open possibilities for activating the assumption of a static intercultural learning approach in edu-business. Therefore, this research study is located by the influence of socio-

historical and political considerations which are essential components to a decolonising approach to intercultural education in edu-business.

Intercultural Competence, Cross-cultural/ transcultural

Intercultural competence is closely related to intercultural education but acknowledges the competence related to the enablement of learners. Ladson-Billings, (2006) described intercultural competence as helping learners "to recognize and honour their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture, where they are likely to have a chance of improving their socioeconomic status and making informed decisions about the lives they wish to lead'' (p.36). This definition underscores the educator's role in facilitating competence. Similarly, the notion of cross-cultural or 'trans-cultural' refers to something as a sociocultural process between people (Adamczyk, 2017).

In the Council of Europe's publication "Developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence: A guide for language teachers and teacher educators", it defined intercultural competencies over three dimensions of intercultural knowledge, intercultural know-how and intercultural being or awareness (ECML, 2007) determined by evaluative criteria. As Dervin (2016) points out, this understanding of intercultural competencies assumes a universal system and interpretation of competencies that are assessable. It fails to recognise the intersectionality of elements: discourses, identifications, multifaceted perspectives, structural forces and power relations (Dervin, 2016). For this research, intercultural competence encapsulates a concept of capability that is instable, contradictory and fluid within the broader scope of intercultural education.

Indigenous Knowledge/ Indigenisation

Indigenous knowledge is defined as the accumulation of a body of communal knowledge that has functioned, developed and disseminated over time (Millat-e-Mustafa 2000; Purcell,1998). Shahjahan (2022) refers to indigenisation that engages with other systems of knowledge in relation to dominant paradigms and encapsulates localisation and diversification in the transformative process of non-Western epistemes, pedagogy and curriculum. In previous literature, the term has

often been merged with an interpretation of decolonisation that denotes Indigenous exchanges as "sites of decolonisation within and outside of higher education" (Shahjahan et al., 2022). From a decolonising lens, Attas (2019) also introduced the need for the centring of Indigenous knowledge by aligning "Indigenous and settler knowledge on an equal footing in terms of both content and pedagogy" (p.127). It suggests that the intended meaning and application of indigenisation differ along geopolitical factors which is important for this research study.

Other/ Othering

Although the concept of Other or Othering was briefly described earlier, a more complete understanding of Other or Othering is provided here. Othering introduced by Said (1978) was described by Spivak (1971) as "a process by which the empire can define itself against those it colonizes, excludes and marginalizes" (p.171). By stigmatising 'Others' through sociocultural, geographic, economic, ethnic, racial or educational differentiation, it allows one dominant group to self-elevate through Other group denigration based on essentialist disparaging ideas of Others. Similarly, Powell & Menendian (2016) contextually define Othering as a dynamic process that marginalises and debases others based on difference and identity:

> "Othering is a term that not only encompasses the many expressions of prejudice on the basis of group identities, but we argue that it provides a clarifying frame that reveals a set of common processes and conditions that propagate group-based inequality and marginality" (p.17).

The conceptual dimensions of Othering are considered deeply contextual but can occur at the individual or group level. Powell & Menendian (2016) explain that group-based inequality and marginality are achieved through prejudicial expressions of group identities which "may include but are not limited to religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (class), disability, sexual orientation, and skin tone" (p.17).

Postcolonialism/ Postcolonial Experience

Postcolonialism signifies a time period that follows inherently geopolitical colonisation and considers our taken-for-granted or imagined spaces, imperial

origins, and the connections to globalisation, immigration, and cultural hybridity (Jazeel, 2012). It includes imperial power-based assumptions of geographical hierarchies and inequalities that structure the history of our current understanding of knowledge transmission within the geographical present. According to Dei (2000), postcolonialism incorporated the interplay of imperial-colonial relations, the enduring cultural and political postcolonial effects on education, knowledge production, identity matters related to historical and sociocultural construction.

For this research, I align with Fanon (1952, 2008) who qualified the prefix 'post' of postcolonialism tied to Eurocentricity to imply a temporal period that does not assume completion because of its physical and political inoccupation especially in the conceptions of identity. This connects to the meaning of coloniality which was previously explained as the ongoing effects of colonialism. It centres on the notion of the postcolonial experience and "the ongoing effects that colonial encounters, dispossession and power have in shaping the familiar social, spatial, and political structures, as well as the uneven global interdependencies of the modern world (Jazeel, 2012, p.5). Therefore, the notion of coloniality is important for this study and the broader field of decolonising research because it minimises the local or Indigenous people's histories and their colonial inequities by undervaluing the Indigenous experience and marginalising the constituting of 'Other' knowledge.

Subaltern Knowledge Perspective

Grosfoguel (2011) defined this epistemic perspective as "knowledge coming from below that produces a critical perspective of hegemonic knowledge in the power relations involved" (p. 6). The notion of subaltern is important for understanding the power embedded in knowledge that is located as dominant under the Western coloniality perspective of subaltern from the subordinate side of colonial relations. It has implications for the decolonising of knowledge related to geopolitics and how information particularly from peripheral countries and cultures is valued, propagated and by whom in the global context.

1.8 Research Policy for Edu-business

Within the Western context of edu-business, it remains a relatively unregulated nonformal learning environment which is not affiliated with recognised

certifications or regulating bodies. The specific context of edu-business is not included in the guidelines provided by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD has recognised the significance of global cultural competence and has established a conceptual assessment framework (OECD, 2023) but it is specific to formal education. It is based on Western paradigms of evaluation and regulation and does not extend to the monitoring of professional practice for intercultural education, content quality or dissemination in nonformal learning environments such as edu-business.

Currently, edu-business relies on the Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 9000 series as a widely accepted accreditation recognised solely for quality of processes and efficiency in the management of course administration. It does not monitor for content quality, regulation or the study of intercultural education as part of any accreditation process. The standardisation for quality management standards (QMS) is achieved by a set of desired socio-economic practices that reflect an organisational commitment to cohesiveness and regulation of processes (Terlaak 2007). However, research by Hussain, Eskildsen & Edgeman (2020) on ISO literature, revealed that QMS are motivated by a desire to portray "a positive image to stakeholders, getting a competitive edge at the marketplace, doing the business with credibility, and satisfying customers' quality consciousness mind-sets" (pp.1195-1196). The latter is focused on economic efficiency and linked to the accelerated and foreseeable use of ISO standardisation for quality management in the future.

For quality standards related to learning content, there is an absence of adequate guidelines for monitoring or assessing the value and quality of cultural education programmes in non-formal learning environments. This relates to the primary research question of what the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education are practiced in Europe and the extended question of how these approaches are realised. Thus, intercultural education in edu-business falls under the radar for international organisational governance. At a minimum, the raising of awareness for learning quality in edu-business would initiate a dialogue for developing guidelines in this context. Following the definition of interculturalism established by the Council of Europe (2008), the element of dialogue is considered key to mitigating culturally diverse affiliations and environments. "Intercultural dialogue

helps us to avoid the pitfalls of identity policies and to remain open to the challenges of modern societies" (The Council of Europe, 2008, p.18). Furthermore, without dialogue, developers risk exclusionary perceptions based on a lack of cultural experience and knowledge of Others. This contributes to essentialised 'Other' perceptions rooted in fear and ignorance that can lead to cultural tensions, anxieties, and intolerance (The Council of Europe, 2008, p.18).

While acknowledging the importance of intercultural dialogue, this research inquiry does not advocate for universal standards or practices which would risk propagating Western prescriptivism that contradicts a decolonialising strategy for edu-business. It does signal concerns regarding what criteria, what contextual forum and by whom an intercultural education qualification project would be appropriately conducted and even ethically acceptable. These are questions that lie beyond the scope of this research study. Thus, this research focus remains centred on the exploration of European-based edu-business and the contextual conditions surrounding its pedagogical approaches to intercultural education.

In the subsequent chapters, I logically structure this research study to set down the groundwork and research design approach. I begin with a summary of related literature upon which this study scaffolds relevant theoretical approaches including the concepts of Shahjahan et al.'s (2022) Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy (DCP) framework as an appropriate research frame of reference for edu-business. The theoretical approaches drawn from the research literature focus on the importance of postcolonialism, poststructuralism, post-modernism, neoliberalism and decoloniality that undergird the research positionality and the methods chosen as described in the subsequent theoretical approaches and methodology chapters in that order. The important theoretical analysis section follows with a closer examination of the data and the relevant issues framed and deduced by the DCP concepts. The final sections include a discussion of the findings for edu-business, future research directions, and the impact of the findings on my professional practice. I close with final remarks that summarise the research findings for learning developers in edu-business.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

In order to explore research related to decolonising curriculum and pedagogy, my research strategy turned to content that would be meaningful to this study's primary research question: *What are the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe?* This content approach to decolonising literature illuminated the void that exists for decolonising research specific to the context of edu-business. Notably, there is a good body of decolonising literature that has focused on interdisciplinary curricular and pedagogical research in higher education (Sanchez, 2018). However, Mignolo (2003) emphasised that research conducted for interdisciplinary fields establishes systems of knowledge production in which coloniality is deeply embedded. I qualified interdisciplinary educator experiences as relevant to the experiences of learning developers in edu-business because of their shared objectives for developing "learning initiatives that enable organisations to constantly evolve and develop" (The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2023) in edu-business. Therefore, this systematic literature review aimed to provide an overview of the body of research on decolonising pedagogies across disciplines to ascertain theoretical directions for decolonising intercultural learning related to the context of edu-business.

As a result, this interdisciplinary literature review led to relevant studies for actualising or activating a decolonising pedagogy. This meant the situating of decolonising research in the broader global frame beyond insular concerns or its geopolitical context. From this research focus, the sheer breadth of decolonising research emphasised the need to clearly define the concept of decolonising, its effects and limitations, in relation to the edu-business context. Therefore, this review offers a meta-level or bird's eye synthesis of research that includes alternative ways that embody decolonising curriculum and pedagogy related to intercultural learning for edu-business. It focuses on the notion of 'relationality' which for this literature review captures an 'essential quality embedded in an iterative process of drawing interconnections between two or more discrete categories and phenomena that may not necessarily be binaries' (Yeung, 2005, p. 44). This allowed me to locate the current state of decolonising knowledge across potentially relevant disciplines in decolonising research.

I also acknowledge that this review assumes a Western approach for qualifying existing research related to decolonising pedagogy for edu-business. My initial theoretical position assumes that knowledge is socially and politically located and that the 'global' presupposes "a relation to the local" (Yeung, 2005, p. 44). However, following Delgado & Romero (2000) "local histories are everywhere but that only some local histories are in a position of imagining and implementing global designs" (p.8). This problematised the concept of the systematic literature review in connection with this research inquiry because it questioned what constitutes previous knowledge and how it is evaluated in the field of Western research. It does not presume that the peer-reviewed published research study constitutes the entire body of knowledge on decolonising educational research. However, for efficiency purposes, only peer-reviewed research and not grey literature was filtered and analysed in relation to the field of intercultural learning in edu-business notwithstanding that Western research and publication play a role in perpetuating Eurocentric valuation and knowledge production.

In the following sections, I outline the literature review process, the inclusion criteria for the studies that were selected for review, and the critical analysis of literature based on Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, and Dillon's, (2003) framework. The research studies included were chosen for thematic relevance and their bearing on the literature review question: What are educators' experiences with decolonising intercultural curriculum in edu-business? I reviewed these studies by extracting common themes to present a more comprehensive understanding of decolonising research in higher education. The following identified literature themes were explored in what follows: (1) situating the hegemonic epistemic context, (2) integrating a relational pedagogy, (3) employing reflexive agency (4) unfolding critical subjectivity and (5) activating praxis.

2.0 Literature Review Process

According to Pettigrew & Roberts (2006), an appropriate qualitative literature search would include a minimum viable review of relevant databases. This literature review included the SAGE social science research database, ERIC education database, JSTOR digital library and the Glasgow University Library. I initially employed the Sage Research Methods Mapping tool. This tool provided a

visual map of how content and methods are interconnected using search-specific terms and related keywords to drill down search efforts. I sequentially implemented relevant search terms of keywords, keyword combinations, truncated words and synonyms allowing for both British and American spellings of descriptors such as decolonising/ decolonizing and organisational/ organizational.

My initial search results indicated a significant deficit of research for the context of edu-business that specifically contained the term edu-business related to intercultural education. This combination of search terms indicated no relevant results specifically to this sector, unlike the abundance of studies retrieved related to intercultural education or decolonisation in higher education. This indicated a clear need to extend my search strategy across the broader scope of related research. Thus, I opted to forego study sensitivity which refers to a literature search that "retrieves a high proportion of the relevant studies" (Pettigrew & Roberts, 2006, p.81) which can be exhaustive and return a lower percentage of relevant studies. Instead, I conducted a literature search that allowed for more research studies with a lower degree of irrelevance (Pettigrew & Roberts, 2006). In other words, I focused on retrieving research with higher specificity. I funnelled my review of research to include relevant interdisciplinary research studies that would be meaningful to the context of intercultural learning. This included peer-reviewed studies that extended to nonformal contexts such as study abroad experiences and vocational learning which I related to on-the-job learning experiences of edu-business.

In addition, research surrounding the internationalisation of higher education reflects the increasing shift by academia to globalisation and the need to recognise the global learning context (Welikala, 2011). According to Busch (2017), internationalisation in higher education encompasses a neoliberal approach to education which is aimed at increasing marketisation, competition, consumer demand and the return on investment (Busch, 2017). This holds relevance for decolonising edu-business and its central for-profit operational model in providing learning services. It suggests that research concerning the shift to the internationalisation of Western-based higher education research may have implications for edu-business.

2.1 Inclusion Criteria for Study Selection

I completed a preliminary sorting of studies based on typology, theoretical approach, methodology and context which helped to locate studies that were most relevant to my central literature review question: What are educators' experiences with decolonising intercultural curriculum in edu-business? By limiting this review to peer-reviewed research, I sustained a standard to previously qualified and accepted criteria for transparency of validity and transferability. Bearing in mind, that there is no best method or best criteria (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006) for selecting and qualifying research studies, I found the PICo framework (MU, 2023) for qualitative studies, to be a useful scaffold for my initial study selection. This scaffold criteria included study population, research problem, research interest or experiences and study context.

Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, and Dillon's, (2003) framework for research appraisal questions was also useful for creating review questions for research specificity:

- How well does the study address its original decolonising question?
- How relevant are the study's findings to the study of decolonising pedagogy?
- How has decolonising knowledge been extended by this research?

This qualified 18 related studies located primarily in three areas: intercultural learning, higher education and vocational or business learning. These studies represented a range of qualitative studies from Western, North-western to Eastern geographical localities, and reflected across comparative international disciplines and learning contexts from which previous research themes could be co-opted. I examined each study for overall conceptual analysis and presentation of information that attributed to the study's internal validity. This included the use of thick contextual descriptions of phenomena, and evidence of triangulation–drawing from multiple referents such as the consistency of different data sources, use of several observers or analysts, and multiple theoretical perspectives (Patton, 1999).

I found the challenges of the systematic literature review process and its implementation to be true for qualitative reviews as described by Dixon-Woods & Fitzpatrick (2001). For this review, they comprised how the studies' findings

related to and potentially impacted the research priority of decolonising knowledge in the context of edu-business. They included review questions concerning:

- How well does the research approach, process, data collection, basis for evaluation and analysis relate to Edu-business and has that been well-documented?
- How well have the sample population or participants, decolonising study context and data sources been conveyed?
- How well have the assumptions, ethical concerns, diversity of perspective and content been explored and related to the decolonisation of pedagogy?
- How well has the detail, depth, and complexity of the data been represented in connection to the decolonising learning context?
- How clear and coherent is the reporting: links between data, interpretation, and conclusions have been communicated in relation to the study's decolonising research objective?

2.2 Literature Review: Critical Analysis

For the literature studies reviewed, I assessed the possible research inferences drawn from the data by aligning with Green (1999) who considers data as context-relevant and rooted in its sociocultural and environmental conditions. This supports a poststructuralism approach to this literature review which will be further clarified under the theoretical foundations section. Thus, it was important in the review of decolonising literature that the framing of processes and shaping of ideas were acknowledged by the researchers in each study. The research process needed to be foregrounded by its researchers for a fair assessment of their conclusions. I also attended to the researcher's acknowledged positionality in their research and to what extent the researcher focused on the context of knowledge construction throughout the research. Malterud (2001) appropriately states that "a researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (pp.483-484).

Hence, I begin this literature review by assessing relevant research framed under the broader multidisciplinary learning landscape. This is followed by a narrowing of

the thematic focus to more context-specific studies which may have less transferability to other contexts, times and people (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). From this review of related research, I extracted five themes from the reviewed research that provide a more comprehensive understanding of decolonising research relevant to the edu-business context. These themes I describe in the following sections as (1) situating the hegemonic epistemic context, (2) integrating a relational pedagogy, (3) employing reflexive agency (4) unfolding critical subjectivity and (5) activating praxis.

2.2.1 Situating the Hegemonic Epistemic Context

A pervasive theme across the reviewed studies is the dominant Western epistemological and ontological approach for a decolonising pedagogy which manifests differently across domains. This has unique pedagogic consequences for the ways of thinking and doing in learning. The most common considerations focused on race and power relations that were woven throughout diverse educational approaches and contexts. Salient to these power relations is how they exist in the learning content for engendering meaningful discussion among participants in the learning environment (De Sousa, 2021).

For example, in the vocational learning research conducted by Beaudry & Perry (2020), the hegemonic challenges of five Indigenous apprentices were reported as an embedded and normalised approach to the on-the-job Indigenous apprenticeship programmes in Winnipeg, Canada. The learners' experiences of coloniality were systemic. They reflected common Indigenous realities and even expectations for on-the-job mistreatment. Drawing from five in-depth apprentice interviews, the data revealed that the neoliberal model of apprenticeship challenged rather than enhanced apprenticeship programs due to the embedded systemic barriers. The vocational employer-centric market-driven model served to proliferate colonial pedagogies that further marginalised learner-apprenticeship experiences.

Further evidence by Gilbertson, Parris-Piper & Robertson's (2021) ethnographic research in New Delhi indicated that there were interwoven aspects of privilege and power during their study tour. Reflections on their roles as researchers and as researcher-participants noted a colonial perspective held by their New Delhi tour partners. In other words, the study tour organisation attached an added value to

the integration of Australian students that may be associated with Western modes of knowledge production. This served to legitimise Western knowledge framed by coloniality as a potential economic currency within the underprivileged context of India (Gilbertson et al. 2021). This resonates with Quijano (2007) who claims there is a value placed on Western colonial knowledge production which is viewed as more rational. This finding was endorsed by the University of Melbourne undergraduates who participated in the programmes.

Similarly, there were hegemonic challenges embedded in the existing sites of knowledge process and production both inside and outside Swedish higher education. Thapar- Björkert & Farahani (2019) revealed in their autoethnographic research how their experiences with educators framed White Swedish experiences as more legitimate while invalidating others. This actively produces specific types of privileged knowledge. They described a dominant Eurocentric logic that overshadowed their non-Swede racialised positions. Farahani (2019) illustrated this point by the requirement to present marginalised content exclusively from the British and American pedagogical perspectives. This resonates with Bourdieu's (1968) notion of 'habitus" that constrains the social structure or mode and perception of practice "which frame the mechanisms of disparities within the academy but also the (re)production and maintenance of racialized hierarchies of political and social entitlement" (Thapar- Björkert & Farahani, 2019, p. 220), also referred to as the hidden curriculum.

Rai & Campion (2022) also brought to light the colonial hegemonic structures constituted by neo-liberal inequalities and hegemonic practices situated in the broader global context. Their data findings were drawn from focus groups and online interviews of 19 history or geography academics and learner participants across 13 Russell Group universities in the United Kingdom (UK) over two years. They pointed to the expansion of education and policy structures to increase academic capitalism in research (Ellis, Glackin, Heighes, Norman, Nicol, Norris, Spencer & McNicholl, 2013). Western metrics like the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Research Excellence Framework (REF) cast a Eurocentric neoliberal standardisation system over research. Moreover, it structures learning value on a Western framework.

Finally, Burgess, Bishop & Lowe, (2022) shifted power relations to expose the inner hierarchies of Western knowledge at the local level and to disrupt the notion of White knowledge as supreme knowledge. By privileging Indigenous voices, the researchers sought to address hegemonic systemic challenges. This involved the experiences of Aboriginal mentors and mentees in which knowledge production processes were revalued in the research context of a three-day cultural mentoring programme– Connecting to Country (CTC) conducted by the Inner City Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG). The Aboriginal people were situated as knowledge keepers allowing participants a space to engage with diverse Aboriginal systems of knowledge within the Eurocentric pedagogical structure.

Their conclusions supported the salience of developing a learning context with an Indigenous-centric foundation that nurtured a climate of respect and recognition for Aboriginal people as sovereign educators and provided further evidence in support of inter-relational pedagogies. This connects the diverse hegemonic structures to the 'in-between' or relational spaces that shape pedagogical relations in the section that follows.

2.2.2 Integrating a Relational Pedagogy

What stood out as a strong theme in the reviewed literature was the concepts of relationality and collective interactions in support of diverse contexts for decolonising pedagogy. As described by Chinn (2006), these interrelations support a pedagogical stance that challenges the ahistorical, acultural and impersonal contexts of Western-dominated epistemologies (Chinn, 2006). Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) also recognised the importance of a relational pedagogy as well as the epistemic tension that accompanies critical collaboration, engagement and relation-building. In their Culturally Responsive Pedagogies of Relations Project (CRPR), they compared relations within two intercultural education study contexts in India and Canada. Both contexts focussed on exploring how individuals relate and respond to cultural differences and how their learning experiences are diversely framed by contrasting contexts. These tensions were created by disrupting the power dynamics of the learner-to-learner and the teacher-to-marginalised learner relations. This resonates with Bhabha's (1984) notion of the

'third space' that is conceived for understanding the cultural dynamics of diverse relations.

Likewise, Thapar-Björkert and Farahani (2019) described this relational tension as social discomfort that results from culturally diverse norms of accepted knowledge practices, adding further support for inter-relational approaches to pedagogy. Drawing from their autoethnographic experiences of Swedish higher education, they claimed that there are nuanced and undefined interrelations that are considered appropriate or normative for Western knowledge production. They posited that an "unmarked nature of 'privilege' sustains the sense of entitlement through which members of non-stigmatised statuses make epistemic claims, which may result in the continuation or (re)production of privilege and marginalization" (Thapar-Björkert and Farahani, 2019, p.223). In other words, they experienced ambiguous academic relations, but these ambiguous relations have a determining effect on how decolonisation persists in the Swedish academe.

Adding weight to Thapar-Björkert and Farahani's (2019) argument of social discomfort, Wernicke (2021) found that vulnerable and uncomfortable spaces are potentially decolonising. She drew from her autoethnographic accounts of Canadian higher education but linked to self-conceptuality and interculturality in her higher education language class. She deliberately made space for self-inquiry with the experience of Others and invited cultural tensions about who owns the knowledge and its meaning. It presented opportunities to challenge power relations within the teaching space. She framed her research interpretations on Deardorff (2009) for cultivating the individual's natural capacity for openness and ethno-relative perspectives within intercultural communication.

The importance of context and self-inquiry through an interrelational pedagogy was also supported by Mayuzumi's (2009) autographic account of her lived Japanese experience. She faced socio-cultural challenges that are entrenched in Japanese higher education and underscored the inherently connected relations concerning matters of representation, knowledge production and identity. Her insights described the shifting context of her Japanese national identity and suggested that the richness of her traditional and sociohistorical knowledge is at risk with the hegemonic frames that constitute knowledge in Japanese higher education. The

Japanese focus on an interrelational pedagogy caused her to reflect on her positionality alongside the power dynamics of local and global systems. For Mayuzumi (2009), Western hegemony is a type of ideological colonisation, reflecting Said's (1978) ideas of Western hegemony, and in her case, they are embedded within Japan's social and technological flows of knowledge production.

Adding weight to the relational argument between self-inquiry and context, O'Neill & Viljoen (2021) described a culturally responsive pedagogy that problematised "the borders between self and Other" (p.29) promoted through "modes of connection and affinity and constantly allowing the translation of meanings between people" (O'Neill & Viljoen, 2021, p.585). Their findings were informed by their auto-ethnographic study of their experiences in Australian higher education of intercultural pedagogies which connected relations of cultural difference and the central notion of relationality. This relied on the coming together of people to give meaning to the knowledge-building process and transformational learner engagement.

However, context issues for relational pedagogies also encompassed issues related to content creation. Gilbertson et al.'s, (2021) research revealed the connection of interrelations in knowledge production. The participants' relational experiences focused on intercultural differences which were an integral part of the knowledge production context. Through participatory action and development, they engaged with the social, economic, and political positioning of the study tour in New Delhi, India, and discovered differences with Western paradigms and historical colonial influences that structure content. This added more weight to the influential role of hegemonic relations that affect issues related to context and content.

Laing (2021) agreed on the connection of context to content production. Her collaborative research approach fostered debate over meaningful ways to decolonise the study of geography. She drew insights from 39 geography UK undergraduates and staff who participated in the 'Decolonising Movements' course module at the University of Sussex. These included moving beyond structural issues around conventional academic knowledge production by facilitating parallel relations between staff and students. She introduced perspectives that challenged and decentred Western sites of knowledge production found in the course

academy. In so doing, she opened up opportunities for participants to debate about how they teach and learn about the dominant system of knowledge deposited from teacher to learner. Her approach reflected Freire (1972, 2006) who decolonised content through a dialogical 'problem-posting' approach to relational pedagogy.

The research of de Sousa (2021) also supports the decolonising of traditional forms of knowledge content. Their case study with 24 Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) student advocates in the UK serving as curriculum consultants liaised with module leaders to gather student perspectives on content, delivery and assessment. Race and power issues became points of entry to engender deeper discussions between learners and teachers. By co-opting student voices with teaching curriculums over a three-year period at the Business School of the University of Birmingham, they integrated lived experience and observations into the curriculum to facilitate and expand perceptions. The decolonising of the curriculum was not a stated objective, but ultimately decolonisation was recognised as a firm learning point to explore the impact of historical power relations on current learning curriculums.

The connection of inter-relationality and content production also raised a final point for consideration by Burgess et. al (2022). Their research hinged on treating Aboriginal educators as cultural mentors which was intended to support rather than manage relations. They nurtured relations with Aboriginal communities in New South Wales, Australia and found that building on notions of relationality increased their engagement and confidence. This cultivated the idea of reciprocity by empowering 'Others' on a socio-political as well as sociocultural level which countered the hidden hierarchies within Western-dominated cultural and academic norms. A relational theme was underscored by the educators' need to develop skills in designing decolonised pedagogies and delivering practices in a space that invited an equitable exchange of perspectives. Their findings emphasized the need to move away from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous binary that has often framed their pedagogical assumptions.

2.2.3 Employing Reflexive Agency

My review of the related literature also revealed a dominant theme that underscored narrowing the focus from relational modes to the individual learner

lens. This theme was very clear in Mayuzumi's (2009) research which explored her positionality and self-awareness in relation to knowledge. Following Hall (1990), she found it compelled her to consider her own identity in relation to the contextual influences that shape representation. Mayuzumi examined her sense of agency for determining her identity rather than through the accepted frame in the national Japanese hegemonic discourse. She discovered her embedded ideas of agency were critical to the activation of her agency. Drawing on her self-analysis, Mayuzumi proposed her Indigenous knowledge framework and critically interrogated the related socio-historical realities of representation. These realities problematised the knowledge production process by questioning 'whose voice is heard and for what purpose' (Hall, 1997). She also found that for subjugated groups, personal agency became a centring tool that is crucial in a Western hegemonic knowledge framework. This again highlights the salience of situating the hegemonic context. She advocated agency for nurturing a positive balance between knowledge and power relations in the global environment.

Similarly, Chinn (2006) added insight for employing reflexive agency that revealed how educators must interact as social actors. This type of social agency promoted and cultivated the exchange of intersubjective understandings to shape the development of individual knowledge and the production of knowledge that occurs between actors. She extracted insights from a 10-day professional STEM teacher development programme in Hawaii and focused on the *experience* of discourse for building awareness of knowledge and power relations that shape societal and academic contexts. Informed by Habermas's (1981) communication theory, Chinn (2006) framed a more meaningful context in which teachers could integrate their cultural values and life experiences into the process of critiquing curricula and the inherent power-knowledge relations of their learning environments.

The notion of agency was supported further in the extensive five-year study by Garson, Bourassa, & Odgers (2016). They explored the impact of faculty perceptions of interculturalising curricula in Canadian higher education. Drawing from survey and interview data from 70 faculty across four multidisciplinary cohorts, the data revealed that their altered lenses resulted in the revision of their teaching approaches. By providing the context to reflect and dialogue, it triggered substantive changes towards more inclusive and intercultural practices that

transformed some faculty to becoming advocates for equity. This transformation served to leverage 'faculty participant experiences and disrupt established ways of knowing and critical reflection as an interdependent process'. This aligns with both Mezirow (1991) and Cranton (2006) whose understanding of learning transformation advocates individual agency as a social action for increasing introspection and engagement.

Learner agency was also clearly highlighted in Laing's (2021) research. The study context centred on the 'Decolonising Movements' course module at the University of Sussex, UK. The findings from participants in this decolonising curriculum course uncovered the need to move away from standardised approaches. The data also revealed the need for learners to engage with a variety of tools and resources from alternative sources and perspectives not as an 'add-on' but as an embedded part of the course. These insights are in line with Bonwell and Elson (1991) whose earlier research found that learner efficacy increased when given opportunities to partake in their learning process. It also reconfirmed the results from the University of Sussex's 2016 decolonising campaign that supported "pedagogies that engage students as active agents shaping their own learning and away from teaching structures that maintain hierarchies and power imbalances in the classroom" (Sussex Students' Union, 2016, n.p.).

Powerful insights from Lemaire's (2020) Indigenous participatory action study in Alberta, Canada evoked feelings of mutual responsibility. Their emotional experiences resulted in changed views that saw educators self-identifying as agents of change. Their findings indicated that the pre-service teacher reflections encouraged working towards Indigenous understanding and collaboration. These sentiments were also echoed by Arday, Belluigi & Thomas (2021) based on their exploration of the impact of the Eurocentric curriculum on Black, Asian, and Minority Ethic (BAME) students and academics in the UK. Their data analysis of semi-structured interviews with 15 Russell University participants and an academic focus group revealed a prominent theme of reflexive agency. Arday et al., (2021) related educators' and learners' efforts to "disrupt(ing) received knowledge, instil(ling) an ethic of discomfort, shatter(ing) polite silences and spur(ring) action so that academics can become transformative intellectuals and agents of change" (p.196).

Adding further support for learner identity, self-determination and agency Beaudry & Perry's (2020) research examined the contextual realities specific to Indigenous learners' on-the-job environment in Manitoba, Canada. They advanced Billett's (2016) holistic paradigm and advocated relations of trust which were absent in the participant-employer relations. They found that the Western hegemonic relations that framed the Indigenous apprenticeship programme intensified the Indigenous feelings of 'Otherness' which are at the core of decolonising frameworks for learning. This underscored the salience of understanding the apprenticeship context as a complex practice embedded in socio-political and institutional relations (Lave, 2019). Beaudry & Perry (2020) advocated not only learner agency but apprentice and employer co-navigation and co-learning to challenge the employer-centric apprenticeship context.

Echoing this collaborative co-learner approach to agency, O'Neill & Viljoen's (2021) findings were based on their experiences in their respective disciplines of applied linguistics and cultural studies, they deepened their "focus on the interrelatedness of language, culture and knowing, and on understandings of their significance in creating and interpreting meaning, and the self" (O'Neill & Viljoen, 2021, p.572). This reflected Liddicoat and Scarino's (2020) approach to interculturality that responds to Others "through 'processes of making, exchanging and interpreting meaning' in and through language" (p. 400).

Finally, Vandeyar (2022) advocated an additional issue for the implementation of agency where meaningful analysis of intercultural knowledge is related to cultural context and structure. This concerns the attitudes and perceptions that are often fixed in the Western mode of knowledge production and dissemination. She posited that people respond to their contextual constraints and conditions which determine their exercise of agency (Archer, 1985). She analysed the experiences of 78 South African University faculty and found strong indications that the implementation challenges of decolonising concepts lie with Western approaches that are engrained across faculty of all racial backgrounds not just the White South African educators. This may account for why decolonising efforts were supported mainly by Black or coloured academics and resistance was felt from the more privileged positioned White academics. This further points to how the employing of reflexive agency is framed by overall faculty perceptions.

Vandeyar's findings reverberated with Rai & Campion's (2022) research which indicated a collective response was needed both conceptually and pedagogically for more meaningful engagement. Their data analysis across Russell Group academics and learners in the UK suggested the collaboration between academics and learners over individual efforts to achieve meaningful decolonial changes in UK higher education. They further narrowed the employment of agency by calling for the sanctioning of anti-racist higher education and action as an essential element of decolonialising in UK higher education.

2.2.4 Unfolding Critical Subjectivity

Closely linked to employing reflexive agency is the important theme of unfolding critical subjectivity that was prevalent in the reviewed literature. This was deeply expressed by Mayuzumi (2009) through her need "to articulate (her) subjective self and become a whole being" (p.512) in her Japanese learning context. Her autoethnographic account served as an informative link to sociocultural and historically situated knowledge production connected to her lived experience. Her unfolding of critical subjectivity helped her resist acculturation with normalised intercultural discourses. According to Denzin (1997), this would account for more critically meaningful connections to theory by drawing 'from the perspective of the interacting individual' (xv). This critical connection to cultural and personal experiences promotes a critical approach to pedagogy and curriculum.

Chinn (2006) also found that the sharing of the educators' narratives led to increased expertise through the broader recognition of the value from their prior knowledge. It suggests that the prioritising of person-based experience and knowledge in conjunction with place-based learning enables greater critical consensus on the importance of other knowledge, ethics and practices. Equally, Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) stressed the need to recognise narratives that promote coloniality by encouraging learners' sensitivity to the sustained and unjust historical narratives that affect the Indigenous communities. They advocated opportunities to critically explore their subjectivity and leverage intercultural understanding that enhances Other ways of coexisting to justify the Indigenous ways of thinking and doing.

However, Madden & McGregor's (2013) research insights revealed a shifting subjectivity that was difficult to stabilise for intercultural understanding. Their study focused on exploring student voice of post-graduate learners in universities located in Canada. In particular, they focused on the Indigenous voice as part of the response to the Accord on Indigenous Education at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (ACDE, 2010). It helped with "establishing mechanisms and priorities for increased Indigenous educational engagement, establishing partnerships with Indigenous organizations and communities, and using educational frameworks based on Indigenous knowledge" (ACDE 2010, p.2).

Madden & McGregor (2013) used duo Canadian ethnographic studies in the context of an education doctoral course. They discovered that some learners did not view themselves relative to Indigenous people and that the Eurocentric Indigenous/ non-Indigenous descriptors served to silence certain voices within that limitation. This underscored the salience of exploring Other subjective understandings and positions. Again, it adds further weight to the notion of complicity in the learning exchange. Such a notion was also supported by Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, (2016) who examined teacher-learner relations to discover that participants became more conscious of their positionality in diverse contextualised learning contexts. According to Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016), what is required of educators is:

"they need to be prepared to acknowledge and examine their own subjectivities, to understand how they are complicit in the violence committed by westernised education systems, curricular and pedagogy, and to understand how this affects their positionality in intercultural interactions" (p.369)".

Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) revealed how in the process of critical exchange Western university curriculums value certain knowledge and behaviours over others and how teachers can position themselves as complicit in that space. From their preservice teacher CRPR project, they suggested that critical subjectivity is required of a decolonising pedagogy as it becomes a point of departure for more meaningful discussion over differences and alternative approaches to decolonisation.

Gilbertson et al., (2021) agreed and their insights revealed that the notion of complicity surfaced as an averse aspect of participants' experiences. When participants were asked to critically reflect on their study tour in New Delhi, they revealed how they are positioned as unwilling proponents of Western privilege. These locations of power were embedded in their shared experiences and revealed feelings of shame and guilt. Similarly Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) suggested how binary teacher-learner exchanges are a salient point of subjectivity in which to critically compare and enhance insights in the process of knowledge production. The findings of both Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) and Gilbertson et al., (2021) underscore critical subjectivity connected to complicity is a point of concern in the decolonising of pedagogy.

However, the notion of Western complicity was challenged by Arday et al.,(2021) stemming from their data collected from BAME students and academics in the UK universities. They posited that institutional complicity in education is blatantly framed by a Eurocentric approach to curriculum where dominant White norms are intimately entangled with elements of societal and academic institutional racism and dominion. "Universities and the curricula that reside within them remain complicit in facilitating the opposite of their intended charge to portray inclusion, equity and diversification" (Arday et al.,2021, p.302) thereby shifting some responsibility to the system in which BAME participants are entrapped.

Moreover, their research responded to the need for BAME students and academics to address the "restrictive forms of curricula that endorse an exclusionary canon which continues to disadvantage people of colour in the Academy" (Arday et al., 2021, p. 304). In response, Arday et al.,(2021) presented a predominant theme of the need for a paradigm shift in higher education. They called for the dismantling of persistent oppressive practices by disrupting individual comfort zones. They held complacent academic leaders accountable for the work of Others to discharge and sustain the decolonising effort. Vandeyar (2022) agreed that a critical perspective of the Eurocentric paradigm requires challenging our decolonising comfort zones in education.

An extended issue related to the emotional side of critical subjectivity unveiled learners' preconceptions and positionality. For Wernicke (2021), decolonising

education involves critical introspection where she was confronted by the deeper issues of navigating privilege, guilt, and our desire for reconciliation. Wernicke's (2021) autoethnographic study in Canadian higher education posited the need to question preconceptions and restructure new learning in the de-centring process. Her personal insights bridge to Chinn (2006) who endorsed critical analysis and decolonising strategies to engage learners in "examining lives, society, and institutions in ways that challenge dominant perspectives" (p.1252). It involved her personal struggle to unshackle from the Western practices and social phenomena that shape professional development. Rather, the educator shift needs to focus on the subjective interests and motivations that shape decolonising strategies for curriculum and pedagogy.

This de-socialising process was also supported by Marcelín-Alvarado, Collado-Ruano and Orozco-Malo's (2021). They recognised higher education in Mexican Intercultural Universities (IUs) as unneutral. Their interview data with indigenous and mixed-race educators revealed that internal stratification is embedded and reproduced locally at two different IUs in different Mexican localities. They found that intra and inter-power idealised relations are embedded in the political systems that do not recognise the autonomy of Indigenous People. This again shines a light on the theme of situating hegemonic relations for decolonisation in education. For example, Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) used communicative spaces for engagement and critical intercultural dialogue which increased learners' sensitisation to the sustained and unjust historical narratives that affect the Indigenous communities. These spaces served to open ideas of their subjectivity through a more critical lens. It also helped to leverage intercultural understandings to support ways of co-existing and justifying the Indigenous ways of thinking and doing.

Likewise, O'Neill & Viljoen (2021) used critical subjectivity as the basis of their two-case study autoethnographic research within Australian higher education. Their research involved shifting their pedagogical approach from simple language and cultural acquisition to an exploration of the dynamic and subjective processes that shape self-knowledge development and application. Their research emphasis on personal subjectivity and subjective knowledge-building were key elements but grounded on the premise that intercultural subjectivity is linguistically and culturally situated. I found their exploration of pedagogical changes intriguing

because they were designed on "narrative understandings of self, created collaboratively… transformed through the use of a self-reflexive auto-ethnographic approach" (O'Neill & Viljoen, 2021, p.585). They implemented critical subjectivity with their students' lived experiences that "sought to provide opportunities for students to re-author themselves on their own terms" (O'Neill & Viljoen, 2021, p.585). Thus, critical subjectivity was under continual reconstruction connected to one's changing narratives of self. This leads to the final literature research theme that underscores activating a praxis orientation for transforming to a more critical intercultural education.

2.2.5 Activating Praxis

There is a strong research orientation in the reviewed studies that points to praxis beyond simply disrupting the pedagogical approach. Garson, Bourassa & Odgers (2016) linked educators' introspective capacities to their professional and personal impact on supporting a transformative approach. They supported the belief that professional development requires an awareness not only of positionality but of seeing the world through changed lenses and re-envisioning professional work to become advocates for equity. Following Mezirow (1991) this requires activating decolonising strategies through transformative ways of thinking and doing at the learner level as well as at the educator level. Thus, the theme of activating praxis helps to prepare diverse learners to become effective citizens in a global reality as the following studies revealed.

For Garson, Bourassa & Odgers (2016), educators need to consciously consider the question of, "How do I ideally see myself and how I consistently act" (p.469) not only as a conscious part of practice but how it can be translated to action. It supports the leveraging of difference rather than the notion of minimising difference. It returns to the extended research question of what constitutes knowledge and by whom. Drawing from Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2000) it has do with ''the relationships between school and society. . . the social construction of knowledge and curricula, who define(s) worthwhile knowledge, what ideological interests this serves, and how this reproduces inequality in society'' (p.28).

The emphasis on transforming thinking at different levels was strongly advocated by Lemaire (2020) using what is described as an Indigenous participatory approach

to learning. This approach helped build altered perspective and understanding by immersing themselves in the simulation of First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) experiences. They applied an Indigenous *blanket learning exercise* followed by a *sharing circle* for the sharing of emotional Indigenous experiences. The 28 pre-service teachers in Alberta, Canada were able to amplify their perspectives and intercultural empathy for First Nations Métis and Inuit elders and also how they see themselves in those relations. According to Smith (2021), strategies that help learners see through the lenses of both marginalised and dominant groups can help increase intercultural understanding and insight from a socio-historical, economic and political context. Thus, this research was supported by Battiste (2013) who advocated decolonising pedagogy and Indigenous ways of knowing by revising their colonial narratives to bridge the Indigenous and non-Indigenous sociocultural gap. Indigenous knowledge is recognised as a valid and counter-hegemonic narrative but necessary for cultivating legitimate space (Wong, 2002). By altering one's thinking and perspective, questions surrounding what, how and by whom knowledge is legitimised are guiding the decolonisation of intercultural pedagogies.

Similarly, Laing's (2021) research examined a dialogical decolonising approach that was a pivotal development point for her Decolonising Movements module at the University of Sussex, UK. She reemphasised the importance of how we teach not just what we teach. Her geography students drew attention to the overemphasis on theoretical foundations and instead refocused on the impact of socio-historical and cultural events over time and how they are sustained in the present. She activated these insights by engaging with alternative thinking and epistemologies as an embedded approach rather than as a separate line of thought or as an add-on to the Western module content. This approach supports De Sousa (2021) who advocated patience, introspection, and revisiting content in new ways to challenge the canons of knowledge, embedded within knowledge systems. They referred to a disruption of the Western coloniality approaches. Marcelín-Alvarado et al., (2021) also described a 'decolonising turn' that involved the activating of citizen emancipation through educational action and practice. They advocated disrupting practice not only at the local level but beyond current intercultural contexts to transdisciplinary approaches. This involved holistically rethinking worldviews and

the actualisation of a broader critical vision to include the global periphery of historically marginalised people (Marcelín-Alvarado et al., 2021).

Rai & Campion (2022) contradicted the holistic approach put forth by Laing (2021). For them, the activation of decolonisation entailed an *extension* of their diversification strategies and identity politics within the academic disciplines. They stressed an *emergent* practice at the levels of learned societies and higher education but were cognisant of the realities of the knowledge economy. Coming from an activist stance, they are driven by an alternative vision of higher education for the common good. This parallels Laing's (2021) activist agenda that envisioned the role of learners as civic activists for transforming decolonising efforts. It means speaking *with* or *for* alternative knowledge not just about them. It follows from hooks (1994) who urges an emancipatory pedagogy as a form of political activism that "enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries" (p.12).

A decolonising pedagogy is thus articulated as a practical language not just of theoretical ideal. In this way, the aim of decolonising in higher education asks educators to be disrupters and transformative change agents where the world could not only be reimagined but practised anew. Vandeyar's (2022) research promotes the activating of praxis by engaging academics as change catalysts and across policy initiatives or reviews for intercultural education. This final theme in the reviewed literature for activating praxis aligns with Elias and Mansouri (2020) who advocated taking a definitive activist turn for decolonising approaches. The decolonising curriculum would then serve as a strategic tool for resisting and dismantling the assumptions and practices that continue to sustain coloniality in educational institutional structures.

2.3 Literature Review Summary

The reviewed literature of decolonising research literature in higher education for intercultural learning revealed prevalent themes that are potentially relevant for the nonformal learning context of edu-business. I have attempted to unpack these themes across diverse higher education contexts initially from a broader conceptual standpoint and then narrowed the focus as thematically outlined. These themes included the situating of hegemonic contexts, integrating relational pedagogy, employing reflexive agency, unfolding critical subjectivity and activating

praxis related to intercultural learning. They described the perspectives and positions of researchers and educators in which decolonisation served as an integral part of the education context for transforming pedagogy and curriculum efforts.

Wernicke (2021) posited that such decolonising themes are particular to former colonial nations and are often deeply embedded in Eurocentric perspectives. From the settler nation perspective, the reviewed research has highlighted more institutional efforts for activating decolonisation such as the Canadian Accord on Indigenous Education at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (ACDE, 2010) and the Truth and Reconciliation Report (2015) which recognised the Canadian government's role in historical cultural violence against Indigenous nations. These activities at the nation-state level have signalled a move away from "Eurocentric conceptions of interculturality toward Indigenous peoples' role in furthering intercultural understanding... emphasizing multilingualism and decolonization as principal objectives in reclaiming their identities and cultures" (Wernicke, 2021, p.1131).

Firstly, the reviewed studies show strong agreement that the dominance of Western European canons in pedagogy proliferates across current academic, intercultural and vocational curriculums. The research studies touched on different aspects of power embedded in ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies and pedagogies. A clear point of research consensus was that contextual realities require some rethinking and redoing to reach beyond just curriculum considerations (Rai & Campion, 2022).

The reviewed studies also revealed a strong alliance on the need to integrate relational modes of interpretation within a collaborative educational or Indigenous space (Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, 2016). They pointed to relational spaces that foster meaningful collaborations across scholastic disciplines, research communities, and academic and learner collectives. This would invite cultural tensions and spaces of discomfort that enable learners to consider what knowledge matters in relation to subjective positionality and the surrounding dynamics of power and privilege. This theme extended to disrupting comfort zones and exploring hidden assumptions that frame one's social-political, sociocultural and historical contexts.

For educators, it means moving beyond being content depositors and instead identifying as social actors for decolonising pedagogical and hegemonic structures. It requires employing their reflexive agency to move past the Western accepted binaries such as Indigenous/non-Indigenous descriptions. By building on these elements of educator agency, the literature stressed an unfolding of critical subjectivity in the process of decolonising education. This theme encompassed challenging educators in developing a critical consciousness to question what knowledge matters, why and for whom? Madden & McGregor (2013) posited that we need to "embrace complexity through supposition of subjectivity and voice as contextual, multifaceted, (and) perpetually in construction" (p. 386).

Finally, the literature underscored the activating of praxis stance beyond theory as a holistic decolonising paradigm. This theme steered transformational approaches for shaping learners into effective citizens for the greater good. This was well articulated by Marcelín-Alvarado et al., (2021) as citizen emancipation through educational action and practice not only at the local level but beyond intercultural contexts to transdisciplinary approaches. It means the translating of actions that support decolonising knowledge, with who determines research interests and whose interests they serve.

Therefore, the reviewed research literature profoundly points to a pedagogy for intercultural learning in the context of edu-business which would need to build upon social interrelations to examine how knowledge is socially constructed, who defines its value, how it is reproduced and whose socio-cultural, socio-political and communal interests it claims to serve (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). By extracting prevalent themes in the reviewed literature, I have provided a conceivable point of departure. They offer meaningful points to build upon that may be relevant for intercultural learning in edu-business. The literature insights have raised powerful points of decolonising interest on which to ground further research data and draw findings for this study. They also outline the decolonising theories which underpin this research. Theses theoretical approaches that are relevant to this research are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Research Approaches for Decolonising Intercultural Education in Edu-business

For this research, it is essential to make known the theoretical building blocks and the supporting rationale upon which the study is framed. There is an ongoing debate about the nature of reality in culturally diverse contexts. One argument views reality as comprised of entities or bodies that structure our understanding of reality. According to Ettlinger (2004), these entities contain differing assumptions about reality that alter our views of it. Following Ettlinger (2004), I have accepted an ontological view of reality that assumes no singular truth but acknowledges the ambiguous line between diverse conceptions of reality and how it is expressed.

Along with the nature of reality is the epistemology or the philosophy behind how we come to know these entities that structure our realities (Griffiths, 2007). In other words, what is the logic behind how we represent reality? How do we understand the relations between entities and the process of receiving new information which constructs our reality? A social constructivist approach to reality accepts that knowledge is contingent on context encompassing different actions, values and human belief systems which are situationally determined by the local context in which they arise (Baghramian & Carter, 2022). According to Adorno & Horkheimer (2002), the social context is important for revealing and constituting the nature of the social world and the dismantling of oppressive structures that are embedded within it. Aylesworth (2015) describes a social condition of diverse and shifting lines of thought that destabilise and challenge traditional views. This is at the core of the decolonising theoretical approach to education which will be explained in a subsequent section.

3.0 A Social Relativism View of Knowledge

Within the social constructivist view, reality is understood by means of social construction "to constitute social reality" (Blaikie, 2000, p.8). There are longstanding questions about how individuals and societies conceive, construct, relate and justify knowledge, rendering them sites of political and sociocultural reproduction. Theorists who come from a social relativist position, view knowledge and what counts as knowledge within its contextual conditions of knowing. Following Baghramian & Carter (2022), individual understanding is subject to

sociohistorical and sociocultural conditions bound by a particular place and moment in time. They believe that what counts as knowledge is determined by the individual's local conceptual and cultural paradigms rather than universal frameworks. I align with Bryman (2001) who asserts that "social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (and)... implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision" (pp.16–18). This means that educators, as social actors, continually shape their local conceptual and cultural ideas for what counts as knowledge.

Accordingly, education is effectively understood within its social and cultural environment. As Epstein & Carroll (2005) explain "one cannot adequately understand education (or any institution) apart from its social and cultural environment" and "the direction of education in democratic nations ought to be 'borrowed and adjusted' within the cultural context of each nation" (p.68). Educators who assume a social relativist view of reality do not accept universal cultural concepts because they may include or deny other cultural groups' privilege by the value attributed to essentialist descriptions. A social relativism standpoint accepts cultural differences by centring thinking from a singular cultural perspective rather than universal understandings.

This research accepts that reality is socially constructed and there are diverse sociocultural conceptions of their interrelations that are framed by their contextual conditions. These understandings determine what counts as knowledge and by whom. It follows that the epistemological position of this research rests on interpretivism to extricate meaning which is subjective in the ways that knowledge is constructed and imparts meaning to social experiences and interactions (Bryman, 2001, pp.12–13).

From the social constructivist stance, Edu-business is considered a social context under which the conditions of operation matter in the construction of knowledge. It falls under the umbrella of nonformal education and frames a specific social domain where actors and institutions interact and constitute relations (Grix, 2002, p.183). I recognize the experiences of learning developers as "constituents, or building blocks" (Epstein, 2012, SEP) of edu-business, whose insights and

interrelations reflect the 'conditions of action' (Sibeon, 1999, p.142). Following Agger (1991), the learning developers' experiences, in intercultural education and the diverse contexts of edu-business, embody multiple value-laden perspectives that are sociocultural and historically contingent.

Hence this study's view of knowledge as social constructed and socially relative, is theoretically undergirding for framing intercultural education in edu-business. In the subsequent sections, the theoretical approaches of post-modernism, post-structuralism, coloniality, cultural hybridity, relationality, postcolonialism, neoliberalism and decolonisation are discussed in relation to intercultural knowledge construction in edu-business. I link these theories to frame how learning developers' experiences and knowledge are revealed and constituted by the social context of edu-business and how they contribute to the building of intercultural knowledge. Finally, these theories provide the groundwork in the selection of a research framework. Shahjahan et al.'s (2022) decolonising curriculum and pedagogy research reflects these theoretical underpinnings and was therefore considered an appropriate framework to ground this research study.

3.1 A Research Approach for Intercultural Knowledge Production in Edu-business

This study sought to interrogate pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe by drawing on the experiences of learning developers in this diverse context. In the globalised space, diverse learners bring different cultural perspectives, values, and understandings of the world, therefore a socially constructed view of reality is an appropriate ontology for intercultural knowledge because it considers how we come to know or justify a socially constructed view of reality. In contrast to foundationalist theories of self-evident truths (Hassan and Fumerton, 2018) and the concept of 'perfect or innate certainty' (Newman, 2019) founded on the very act of inquiry, Descartes (1637) proposed the idea of the mind justifying matter. This notion was based on a subject-object hierarchical order that conceived the mind and body as distinct entities which grounded more than a single view of reality or truth. These earlier inquiries are critical to a socially constructed approach to knowledge because they mark the beginnings of alternative truths which are at the very core of alterity or 'Other' knowledge.

The following theoretical approaches scaffold the conceptualisations of knowledge that are relevant to this research. In particular poststructuralism and postmodernism laid out significant thought for the subject-object linkages between power and knowledge (May & Clark, 2010) and underscore decolonisation as a relevant theoretical research approach. These Western-based approaches support a theoretical scaffold for decolonisation as a supporting frame for global intercultural knowledge production in the European edu-business context connecting postmodernism, poststructuralism, coloniality, relationality, and neoliberalism. This is followed by a more detailed explanation of Shahjahan et al.'s, (2022) Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy (DCP) which was applied as an analytical framework for the examination of data and generating of research themes.

3.2 The Influence of Postmodernism

Although often examined under one conceptual approach, postmodernism and poststructuralism have been considered as related but distinct schools of thought under the larger critical discourse of modernism. Edkins (2007) asserted that they present the "new and rather uncomfortable or counterintuitive assumptions about 'life, the universe, and everything'" (p. 89). In other words, these approaches ask us to consider our commonly held convictions and to contemplate alternative perspectives and what they might mean for relations between people, objects, and systems and how they interrelate (Edwin, 2007).

The postmodernism critique of modernism centres on the need to dismantle the universal grand narratives including the underlying accounts of domination and control. According to Mignolo (2007), the grand narrative logic of colonialism focused on colonial differences. He extends this to Eurocentric thinking that gives substance to how coloniality continues to sustain hegemonic systems of exploitation while at the same time hiding its oppressive logic. Matin (2013) also connected this to a "historically distinct and globally hegemonic form of the material power of modern Europe in which these categories are implicated and to which they, in turn, give intellectual expression, political articulation, and, most importantly, universal validity" (p.361). This resonates with Lyotard's (1984) concept of the postmodern condition which problematises legitimisation under

modernisation and posits that knowledge and power are part of the same universal equation.

Postmodern theorists also position personal experience as a pivotal point for qualifying knowledge and distinguishing it from the grand narratives of modernism. They argue that knowledge is complicated by subjectivity which differentiates the representation and interpretation of what counts as knowledge. Researchers with a postmodernist lens understand knowledge to be limited by one's experience of it. It is this personal subjectivity of knowledge from diverse individual experiences that leads to the reshaping of information and provides the conditions for the formation of beliefs that vary with diverse contexts. For postmodernists, this also means that Western knowledge process and production comprise an ever-present power-knowledge authority that is manifested through exclusive discourses that determine the nature of that discourse, how it is transferred and by whom. The postmodernist approach asks, "Whose power, whose inequality, whose change, whose reality, and whose truth" (Maudin, 2024)? However, Parpart (1995) argued that the postmodernist view categorises knowledge without regard for the values or norms that may be in common. This is a salient point for poststructuralists who understand that social constructions of knowledge, are constructed on how they are accepted and represented in diverse communities.

3.3 A Poststructuralism Approach to Knowledge

Connected to the postmodernists' position on subjectivity, poststructuralism theorists believe that our subjective experiences have merged at a fluid time and place. These conditions construct the significance of individual experiences. Fox, (2016) explains that experiences are bound by the conditions in which they occur and reflect knowledge produced by the multiplicity of social realities. These contextual conditions account for the diverse but fluid values and norms that distinguish the poststructuralist critique from that of the postmodernist. A post-structuralism approach to knowledge production also "recognizes dilemmas and convergences of knowledge in relation to content and pedagogy" (Giovanangeli & Snepvangers, 2016, p. 39).

Poststructuralism is grounded on the work of poststructuralists such as Michel Foucault who extended the concept of 'difference' to its sociocultural and sociohistorical effects on education. Foucault (1970) underscored the relationship between knowledge and Western thought by focusing on 'the gaps' or difference. He considered the gaps to be signs of knowledge which were comprised of contextualised representations and interpretations.

> Resemblance for which had long been the fundamental category of knowledge- both the form and content of what we know- became disassociated in analysis in terms of identity and difference... comparison became a function of order; and, lastly, comparison ceased to fulfil the function of revealing how the world is ordered (Foucault, 1970, p. 54).

However, it is argued that Foucault's work failed to recognise the constructions of power, within those knowledge gaps. Both Said (1978) and Spivak (1988) underscored the power of European imperialism which perpetuated epistemic oppression and subjugated 'Other' knowledge to the margins of knowledge production. Mason & Clark (2010) argued that a post-structuralist episteme is also about problematizing the construction of content and the positionality of people behind those constructions.

As such, post-structuralists reject a 'unified' or universal accounting of what, how and by whom experiences are structured and our understanding of them, rather they focus "on the ambiguities between knowledge and belief" as well as "on the social distribution of power associated with the construction of knowledge" (Harcourt, 2013, p.21) which form the critique of the power-knowledge concept. A relevant example of the poststructuralist critique is the rationality of coloniality knowledge based on subject-object power relations. It has sustained the European cultural identity as superior to 'Other' cultures which has propagated coloniality (Quijano, 2007). This poststructural critique of power relations in knowledge construction is a central tenet to decolonising knowledge. It has social-cultural and socio-political implications for edu-business which is framed by the effects of coloniality.

Poststructuralist thinkers include the critique of French philosophers Jacques Derrida, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Emmanuel Levinas for their divergent thoughts

described as the 'deconstruction' of unified accounts. They situated their research on temporal dimensions of knowledge and how meaning is tied to human experience or the expression of it. Derrida (1997) deconstructed the founding concepts of knowledge by underscoring how meaning is constantly in construction in relation to its opposites. Oppositional comparisons give concepts meaning that challenge the uncertainty of knowledge and power. These ideas of conceptual fluidity suggest a constant deconstruction or interplay of meaning which Wittgenstein (1953) connects to language and our experience of it. Wittgenstein (1953) qualifies his ideas of language limitations:

> "We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound, essential, in our investigation, resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is, the order existing between the concepts of proposition, word, proof, truth, experience, and so on" (p.44)

He also clarified the role of our accepted conditions under which our language interprets our experiences:

> "The criteria which we accept for 'fitting', 'being able to', 'understanding' are much more complicated than might appear at first sight. That is, the game with these words, their employment in the linguistic intercourse that is carried on by their means, is more involved—the role of these words in our language other—than we are tempted to think" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 73).

Wittgenstein grounds our processing and reporting of information to previous experience as a language game that not only informs "the hearer about its subject matter but (also) about the person making the report" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.190e). This is a salient point for the interpretation of experiences which are bound by the limitations of language that differentiate cultures. In other words, meaning is predicated on how it is expressed and by whom in its broader spatial and temporal context.

For Levinas (1969), the idea of temporality is captured in the concept of 'différance' related to the Otherness or the experience of the Other. He referred to this as the 'infinity of Otherness' (Levinas, 1969) that understands the experience of Other as beyond conceptual grasp. May (2012) further clarified

Levinas' ideas as "the otherness of the other cannot be brought directly into discourse – it cannot be made present. The attempt to do so both misses the very otherness it seeks to capture and risks doing violence to that otherness" (p. 551). This idea of Otherness aligns with the poststructuralist logic of rejecting a universal prescriptive, especially in relation to intercultural understanding. By attempting to represent the Other, it risks its misrepresentation. The idea of temporality for poststructuralists was aptly described by Mason & Clark (2010) as "always partial and provisional, emerging as it does from an endless process of difference and deferral" (p.176). For Derrida and Wittgenstein, it was due to the temporal aspect of linguistic meaning and for Levinas, it was due to the infinity of Otherness.

Therefore, a post-structuralist approach to this research has enabled an exploration of how the sociocultural, historical and political contexts of intercultural exchanges are important contextual factors in the collection and interpretation of knowledge (Mignolo, 2007). These contexts have situated this research with a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values that inform the learning developers' insights thereby positioning the researcher's interpretation and insights as critical (Smith, 2021). It frames a temporal approach but contextually relevant approach to how learners and learning developers have come to bring meaning to "a space that is no longer characterized by shared social agreement over the structure of meaning" (Harcourt, 2013, p.1). By linking a poststructuralist conception to the production of knowledge, this research focused on the interpretive practices for intercultural pedagogy for edu-business and encapsulated the contextual considerations of the current global climate in which it is embedded. Knowledge is defined as a result of these diverse contextualised circumstances (Dei, 2000) and recognises the subjectivity of the individual in the culturally diverse contexts of Others, where every intercultural exchange constitutes knowledge creation.

Both postmodernism and poststructuralism break with the modernist affirmation of Europe as the historical world centre by rejecting the claims of modernist conceptions that conceal coloniality logic and reproduction. What is important from both these theoretical perspectives is recognising that knowledge production is derived from diverse representations of power that focus on the question of representation and explore how dominant perceptions produce and reproduce

relations of power (Çalkivi, 2020). These varied manifestations are critical in the exchange, interpretation and relations that undergird knowledge production. How certain forms of action are legitimated while marginalizing Other ways of being, thinking, and acting (Çalkiki, 2020) pertains directly to a decolonising approach to knowledge production and critiques the expansion of the current global state of knowledge. This resonates with Lyotard (1979) who referred to the evolving "status of knowledge" and how knowledge is manifested by globalisation. As mentioned at the outset of this research, global flows of information and the people that control those flows affect knowledge production which has relevance for curriculum and pedagogy in the neoliberal context of edu-business.

3.4 Coloniality in Knowledge Production

For this research, coloniality and its related effects are an appropriate theoretical approach for examining the current sociocultural and historical manifestations of power relations. Coloniality theorists assume that power relations have historically filtered through our intercultural environments. These effects are an important consideration for decolonising intercultural curriculum and pedagogy where dominant perspectives have persisted and sanctioned knowledge, how it is dispersed and by whom.

As previously mentioned, Edward Said's (1978) concepts are fundamental to an understanding of the process and proliferation of power through coloniality in Western knowledge. He defined his concept of 'orientalism' (Said, 1978) as the dominant lens by which the West was conceived over the 'rest' through imaginings of superiority and inferiority and challenged perceptions of authority by questioning their socio-political and cultural assumptions. According to Pannu (2021), Said illuminated imperialist exploitation and the consequences of colonial thought that exposed "the politics of culture, as well as the mobility and transmission of ideas" (p.2). Said (1978) argued that Western colonial narratives sheltered an imperialist and nation-state complicity from which coloniality continues to pervade current knowledge systems and institutions. He described this as the mobility and power of ideas and their transcendence over time relative to the dominant context. Grosfoguel (2011) also explained that "coloniality allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of

colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist world-system" (pp. 14-15).

It has been connected to concepts such as Foucault's (1977) 'governmentality' and the disciplining of thought and knowledge. His idea of governmentality entails a type of control that permeates the construction of current cultural thought and rationality. This resonates with the notion of the "coloniality of power" defined by Grosfoguel (2011) as "a concept that attempts to integrate as part of a heterogeneous structural process the multiple relations in which cultural, political and economic processes are entangled with capitalism as a "historical system" (p.22) and "refers to a crucial structuring process in the modern/colonial world-system that articulates peripheral locations in the international division of labor with the global racial/ethnic hierarchy and Third World migrants' inscription in the racial/ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan global cities" (p. 15). These coloniality perspectives provide a fundamental argument for the decolonisation of current knowledge and educational practices.

However, it is argued that in promoting the concept of orientalism from Said's lens, he propagated essentialist ideas of 'Other' which did not reflect inter-group diversity. In this, it was the Middle Eastern people that he was defending. Likewise, Guha (1982) contributed to the essentialising of difference by socially stratifying the Indian people into "hierarchically inferior and dominant all-Indian groups" (Spivak, 1988, p.27). These contrary but still essentialist perceptions by Western writers and philosophers did not authentically reflect the depth and sociocultural diversity of these societies. As a result, these critiques resurfaced discourse on 'cultural difference' and the decolonisation of pedagogy.

Hence, the notion of coloniality as a sustaining force for relations of power is a point of contention for theorists. The coloniality argument that Western approaches to pedagogy have posited a higher valuation and supremacy of Western knowledge has problematised the content and relevance of learning programmes founded on these essentialised conceptions of difference. This has signalled the need to explore the more complex and multifaceted elements of group identity and a deeper investigation into the contextual influences, power relations, subjectivity, and cultural differences that shape cultural relations.

To this point, Quijano (2000) argued that the exploitive 'colonial power matrix' sustains the subjectivity of knowledge by the Western organising structures of knowledge, institutional and socio-political life into hierarchies that have persisted through coloniality. It has led to significant theoretical approaches concerning how the interrelations between people and their surrounding conditions are critical for understanding the creation of intercultural knowledge in a global context.

3.5 Cultural Hybridity in Knowledge Production

Homi Bhabha (1984), presented his concept of cultural hybridity which framed cultural difference in a slightly different light. He advocated "an awareness of the subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity" (Bhabha, 1984, p.2). Specifically, he focused on the processes of articulating difference and questioned how subjects are formed in the 'in-between' or 'interstices' of subjectivity. His strategies for cultural representation merged in the exchange of conflicting cultural narratives, values and priorities. Bhabha (1984) explained that from the marginal perspective, difference is a complex, continuously negotiated socially articulated position "that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (p. 3). Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity, therefore, emerged from a shifting of fixed ideas of identity that initiated a rejection of dominant forces (Bhabha, 1995). It represents "a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality" (Bhabha, 1984, p. 13) and supports a condition of cultural fragmentation that individuates difference.

On the other hand, cultural hybridity is also argued to hold essentialist implications. Dei (2000) agreed that "the noted discontinuities and fragments are indeed part of a unified experience" (p.115). At the same time, Zeleza (1997) argued that hybridity may diminish the experiences of collective group repression while still amplifying the binaries of occident and Other. But as Powell & Menendian (2016) contended, the *appearance* of homogeneity for a group may emerge along one dimension of difference but likely contain a multitude of possible diversities along other dimensions of human difference that exist in any society. In this light, the essentialising of group difference is not a comparative form of representation. As Dei (2000) rightly points out, the debates in support of 'cultural

difference' have also unwittingly contributed to confirming essentialism by de-historicising and homogenising cultural identities. In so doing, coloniality theorists have essentialised 'difference'.

3.6 A Relationality Approach to Knowledge Production

According to Sobe (2018), the notion of relationality describes the nature or condition of being that is constituted through relationships with Others. It centres on knowledge that is constructed through relationships and determined by the context in which those relationships exist which are inherently fixed in the conditions of a particular period and place (Sobe, 2018). Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) view relationality as "the space between the self and the other where knowledge is co-created through the relationship" (p.359). Thus, relationality also supports and recognises comparison as a mode of production which may have embedded aspects of privilege and power (Sobe, 2018). This resonates with Derrida's poststructuralism concepts of *deconstruction* described earlier and challenges opposing ideas underpinned by knowledge and power.

Manzon (2011) agreed that comparison exposes the "hierarchical structure in the field of knowledge production, wherein some countries occupy a central 'paradigmatic' position for other countries located at the periphery" (p. 45). Moreover, the relations of privilege and power in cultural comparison return to the questioning of essentialist practices which may deny others privilege by the value attributed to their group descriptions. Derrida (1997) claimed that a relational approach to knowledge emphasises how "the space is shaped and reoriented" (p. 114) in relation to Others who bring different sociocultural histories and geopolitical realities. Extending on this, Osberg (2008) focused on knowledge at points of difference to understand their formation concerning the socio-cultural, political, and economic contextual dimensions. Martin & Pirbhai (2016) also emphasised that understanding relational differences required not only an examination of the underlying ontologies and epistemologies but also a critical look at the socio-historical and geo-political contexts that frame the relations between educators and learners (ibid, 2016).

Furthermore, Osberg (2008) extended her ideas to the idea of 'responsiveness' as "a necessary condition of relationality" (p.157). Her idea describes complex

responsiveness as the space in which cultural relations of difference occur and where critical choices are made. She described this space as one of criticality and renewal, stating: "When we understand education in this way, as a space of renewal, it therefore becomes possible to understand it, also, as a practice of freedom" (Osberg, 2008, p.158). It suggests that renewal occurs when critical cultural differences are surfaced especially differences that are not so ostensible such as covert relations of power. Responsiveness opens up a relational space of new opportunities for intercultural knowledge production. Osberg's ideas also reflect Giroux (2004) who claimed:

> "pedagogy is a moral and political practice that is always implicated in power relations and must be understood as a cultural politics that offers both a particular version and vision of civic life, the future, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment" (Giroux, 2004, p.33).

These perspectives of relational systems of difference and power broaden the concept of relationality to one of collective thought rather than individualism which Burgess, Bishop and Lowe (2022) describe for understanding cultural identity as fluid and adaptive.

A relationality approach for edu-business provides a critical perspective for decolonising the context and curriculum as a space of relationality. It "calls for the exercise of critical judgment again and again at all levels it is also a political space in which it becomes possible to continuously renew our ways of being-in-the-world-with-others and rethink everything about our world" (Osberg, 2008, p. 158). Therefore, this research recognises how social relations articulate relations of power and privilege in society and how knowledge retains its relevancy through resistance (Dei, 2000).

3.7 A Neoliberalism Approach

As mentioned in the introduction to this research, edu-business is assumed to operate in the globalised context where its effects are steered by a free-market ideology and approach to knowledge production (Krishna, 2009). This ideology is central to recognising and understanding the institutional culture or challenges that

frame edu-business. It has implications for how political, economic, social and technological flows have become part of an interconnected world of knowledge and "have rendered national cultural systems increasingly porous" (European Council, 2008, p.13). Under globalisation, Appadurai (1990) identified cultural 'scapes' that referred to flows of an ethno, media, techno, and financial nature which are historically, politically and economically situated (Appadurai, 1990, p.296). These flows contextualise the transference of cultural concepts and assert a complexity to the global environment referring to Anderson (1983), Appadurai describes these flows as "historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe" (Appadurai, 1990, p.296-297).

From an economic lens, it again resonates with Foucault's (1977) concepts of governmentality where education is controlled by universal ideas of what constitutes knowledge, how it is transferred and by whom. The focus away from public enterprise to privatisation under neoliberalism connects market governance to entrepreneurship and the reconstruction of knowledge. Lyotard (1984) states that "knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange" (p.4). Following de Alba, González-Gaudiano, Lankshear & Peters (2000), it is the enterprising society that has been cultivated by the state which bred private enterprise, the enterprising individual, and led to the enterprising curriculum.

What is important for this research is how edu-business has been responding to the global challenges which can be traced to its historical, socio-cultural and political foundations. From a post-structuralist lens, the edu-business neoliberal context is relevant for how learning decisions are made that impact the process of knowledge building. It suggests that coloniality which filters through the neoliberal environment is subject to these intercultural challenges and global flows that have implications for pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-business in Europe.

3.8 The Interconnected Relations of Coloniality, Capitalism and Neoliberalism

There is an interrelationship between neoliberalism, capitalism and coloniality that has global implications to current knowledge structures and by extension the

knowledge economy. These global implications can be described as sociopolitical, economic, and socio-cultural at the global level which afford a more critical understanding of globalisation by focussing on the complex dynamics and underlying philosophies that drive the divergent flows of information and engagement (Appadurai, 1990). In this section, I describe how these interrelations can be traced to their socio-historical events under coloniality. They have influenced how economics, religion and knowledge have dispersed across nations through the movements of coloniality, capitalism and neoliberalism.

As previously described, coloniality refers to the ongoing effects of colonialism and its continued exploitation of current contexts (Quijano, 2007). This exploitation refers to the development of lands, people and resources that are viewed as economic assets for the development and wealth of the West (Jazeel, 2012). It has resulted in structural inequalities that continue to suppress former colonised nations. These inequalities include individual and collective freedoms that have persisted due to the covert domination of people, their lands, resources and cultures in colonial nations. In the following sections, I will trace the links between coloniality, capitalism and neoliberalism related to the development of knowledge in the global context.

3.8.1 The Link to Capitalism

This capitalist global ideology is embedded in the coloniality of power that continues to connect Western nations to former colonised nations and to the colonial effects on the welfare of the nation state. It links to the capitalist ideology that promotes one Western Eurocentric epistemology where capitalism not only suppresses alternate knowledges but it furthers economic marginalisation and disparities that heighten socio-cultural inequality.

Former coloniser nations advanced this capitalist ideology through the promotion of ideas that describe a new sociological relationship between capital and the world market (Quijano, 2000). This "new pattern of power was capitalist, because capital- as a specific social relation- was the axis around which it was articulated…

(and) formed a new, original, single structure of relations of production in the world historical experience: world capitalism" (Quijano, 2000, p.216).

3.8.2 The Contradictory Notion of Capitalist Freedom Under Neoliberalism

It is the notion of individual freedom encompassed under a capitalist ideology that drives the allure of increased prosperity and financial opportunity. However, this capitalist notion cultivates individual freedom of the few over the collective social wealth of many that is rooted in the coloniality of power. As described earlier, Marx (1887) argued the liberal point by highlighting how the social order of capitalism is one of profit extraction and human exploitation that benefits one social class through the systematic disadvantage of the other.

According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism was first intended as an economic and practical approach focussed on human well-being. This was advanced through "liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). As global access expanded, it opened up increased trade channels and opportunities in other markets backed by the promtion of free-flow of information, and goods and services by the state (Appadurai, 1990). Therefore, increased economic freedom became increasingly connected to capitalist behaviours and has sustained capitalism as a conduit to individual freedom. In other words, the neoliberal strategy of freedoms has restored power but to a specific capitalist population.

However, Harvey (2007) emphasised how individual freedom is disguised as capitalist market aspirations. He states that "the idea of freedom 'thus degenerates into a mere advocacy of free enterprise" (p. 37) but underscored that there are different levels of freedom depending on how one fits into the hegemonic structure of society. As such, those from oppressed social groups will have less financial opportunity and thus, less opporutnity to gain individual freedom. Mignolo (2007) also questioned how society is organised around Western hegemonic ideas of production and prosperity that have continued to dominate our understanding in the global context. He agreed that capitalism has grown as a result of neoliberal ideals under the coloniality of power (Mignolo, 2007).

3.8.3 The socio-political power of neoliberalism

There is also a socio-political driver that springs from neoliberalism. With increased expansion to global markets, there is an impact on how global relations and process are structured and rationialised. Rizvi & Lingard (2009) explain how there is a broader "global shift towards a neoliberal values orientation, manifested most clearly in privatization policies and in policies that assume the validity of market mechanisms" (p. 72). It means that policy makers and agents promote the instruments that serve a neoliberal agenda. Rizvi & Lingard (2009) described how education values and policies are negotiated in the transnational spaces in line with "the emerging imperatives of globalization, aligning them loosely to the values negotiated at the national or local levels" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, p. 72). Thus, this type of socio-political steering shifts power to the financially well-positioned few and has resulted in a merging of globally integrated markets to facilitiate the flow of information, goods and services. This includes education products services across global borders.

For educational products, this has cultivated a free-market and competitive approach in the production of educational goods (Tett & Hamilton, 2019). With the advancement of technological communications and the actors that support their transfer, knowledge production has reconfigured into the branding of ideas that create knowledge products. These products are promoted by actors who identify as branded knowledge producers and whose networks reach across global space and time (Tett & Hamilton, 2019). As such, the capitalist potential lies in their neoliberal economic priorities undermining educational outcomes which propagate Western standards of education, efficiency and access. The result is that efficiency and monetised values are often prioritised over other pedagogical and social values, such as diversity, equity, well-being and care (Tett & Hamilton, 2019. P. 2).

As previously indicated, the more dominant neoliberal sector has increased their socio-political power through political influence and economic maneuvering. With this power, there is a neoliberal tendency for exploitation of the more vulnerable developing nations. At a global level, neoliberal ways of increased economic efficiency can lead to exploitation of resources, lands, people and ways of life.

These socio-political relations that link the neoliberal context to its capitalist and coloniality foundations are important for understanding the global challenges and the conflation of education and business objectives. The broader, sociocultural and historical context is implicated in the unequal power context that contributes to global competition and social injustices that form our sociopolitical landscape (Shi-Xu, 2001). Economic pursuits can overlook the value in alternate sociocultural beliefs and practices which have the potential to expand global understanding and innovation. By critically analysing the links between coloniality, capitalism and neoliberalism, knowledge production and dessemination can be understood in terms of its exploitive and dominant Eurocentric lens.

Thus, the challenge for the global education industry lies in the successful mitigation of the global dynamics under capitalism and neoliberalism which is still challenged by coloniality and the changing foci of the education actors in a knowledge economy. "This means that we need to acknowledge that we are all implicated in many ways in the neoliberal turn and so have to find ways of bringing in new perspectives that challenge the basis of our decisions and actions" (Tett & Hamilton, 2019, p. 4). Decolonisation is one approach that counters these global forces by deciphering and deconstructing the ideologies and interrelations that drive global knowledge systems as explained im the following section.

3.9 A Decolonising Approach to Knowledge Production

The preceding theoretical approaches have provided a historical and contextual scaffold for supporting a decolonising approach to intercultural knowledge production in edu-business. Leading from this, decoloniality describes the overall 'delinking' from colonial concepts and involves other knowledge systems that disrupt the universality of Eurocentrism (Mignolo, 2007, p. 453). It offers a counter approach to coloniality which can be interpreted as holding one ruling tenet of knowledge to the exclusion of others (Faul, 2021), Theorists and researchers working on decolonising pedagogy ask how and by whom the decolonising processes are produced, sustained and to what effect (Faul, 2021). It is "concerned with dismantling dominant pedagogical frames which promote singular worldviews" (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013, p.20).

The body of decolonial research reflects multiple theoretical pathways that infiltrate all aspects of society, and disciplines. These diverging perspectives for decolonising education require interrogating historical legacies and dominant forms of knowledge. According to French philosopher Fanon (1963), decolonisation is depicted as a 'historical process' that disrupts the social order. Therefore, these conceptual approaches may vary in relation to the diverse sociocultural and geopolitical contexts in which they occur.

From a South African interpretation, decolonisation "does not necessarily involve destroying Western knowledge but in decentring it or perhaps deterritorializing it'" (Le Grange, 2016, p.6). Faul (2021) underscores the need to examine how diverse valuations contribute to favouring certain groups, countries or cultures over others. Following Mignolo (2007) a decolonising praxis involves the undoing of colonial legacies. This suggests the importance of including in the fold of Western intercultural scholarship, the concept of 'decolonising' by deconstructing colonial and imperial foundations (Smith, 2021).

In contrast, a Western approach to decolonising pedagogy and curriculum requires decolonising at the epistemic level (Ruiz, 2021). Applying decoloniality in education has different interpretations for pedagogy and praxis, but educators underscore 'voice'- specifically who speaks and who is listening and why to illustrate the global decentring of the West, (hooks, 1994, p.40). These interpretive nuances in meaning are important for locating previous literature and comparing the broader understanding of decolonising terminology.

Following Dei's (2000) belief that knowledge draws relevancy through resistance, this study focuses on the dynamics and relations of power that are embedded in knowledge interrogation, production and validation which are important for acknowledging the multiple dimensions of knowing and being (Smith, 2021). A decolonising approach to pedagogy recognises the coloniality of power relations and how they manifest in current educational processes, institutions, and structures (Adichie, 2009) including nonformal environments like edu-business. As such, the intercultural context of edu-business is shaped by its conditions of valuation in a for-profit capitalist context. A decolonisation of pedagogy in edu-business would aim to deconstruct the underlying Western colonial concepts of

valuation and knowledge that marginalise Other epistemologies (Connell, 2007). By fostering decolonising approaches, pedagogy and praxis can become a transformative conduit for learners, educators, and educational organisations.

3.9.1 A Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy Framework (DCP)

Shahjahan, Estera, Surla and Edwards (2022) proposed a practical decolonising research framework for education that focuses on "the undoing of colonial processes and logic" (p. 83). A relatively recent research framework, their critical analysis of 207 articles intended to examine the "assumptions, context and nuances" within the socially located decolonising literature (Shahjahan et al., 2021, p.75) of higher education. They were motivated by questions surrounding the decolonisation process in higher education, and the overall development of the decolonisation movement.

In the two years since the Shahjahan's et al. initial publication, their research has been referenced in more than 20 studies applied in diverse contexts for analysing how decolonising draws on the importance of common components across disciplines (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018) for understanding critical questions about whose knowledge counts (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu (2018). For example, Murugaiah (2023) drew from the Shahjahan et al., (2022) framework to examine Nigerian teachers' beliefs against the context of sociohistorical and hegemonic Western humanitarianism in teaching practice. Gaio, Joffe, Hernández-Acosta & Dragićević Šešić (2023) also utilised the Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy (DCP) framework to prioritise the methodological context for decolonising management curriculum and cultural policy.

In addition, the DCP framework considers knowledge not only from a sociocultural, and socio-historical lens but from the critical lens of geopolitics. Following Dodds (2004), geopolitics is a debate about the global uncertainty defined by our social, political and geographical positions and the suppositions that underpin and sustain particular contexts. He argues that some states are better positioned than others "to influence the production and circulation of political discourses and thus possess the capacity to shape geopolitical understandings of the world" (Dodd, 2004, p. 52). Geopolitics can also be attributed to a politics of identity that subjugates some states based on their geographical interpretation. This is important for

delineating the assumptions and positions with Western knowledge approaches, especially concerning geopolitical positions of 'Other' nation-states and cultures.

In the geopolitical vein, Shahjahan et al., (2022) refer "to *a set of knowledge/ power relations* that privileges a certain *gaze* or representation of the world deemed universal, delocalized, and applied unquestioningly" (p. 76). They have drawn attention to "how articulations of DCP are neither neutral nor value-free" and "the *existing hierarchical global* higher education system that privileges certain world regions" (p. 76). As such, they acknowledged that curriculum and pedagogy are "deeply implicated in grounding, validating, and/or marginalizing systems of knowledge production" (Shahjahan et al., 2021, p.74) which serve as "sites of decolonization within and outside of higher education" (Shahjahan et al., 2021, p.76).

Therefore, this geopolitical perspective is in line with the outlined theoretical approaches that question divine truths and assume a non-rationalist, interpretivist and poststructuralist view of knowledge understanding and production. In the following sections, I outline the decolonising conceptual categories of the DCP framework which provide a meaningful frame of analysis for this study. The research aim makes use of the DCP framework with the aim of initiating a critical dialogue for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business. The DCP framework is subdivided into three principal conceptual categories: (1) the overall challenges of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy (2) the interrelated meanings for the interpretation of curriculum and pedagogy and (3) the actualising components of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy. They are described in more detail in the following sections:

3.9.2 The DCP Concepts for the Contextual and Cultural Challenges

Shahjahan et al., (2022) underscored four overall challenges for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy in higher education as: (1) common challenges (2) differences and drivers (3) disciplinary differences and (4) stakeholder differences. These areas focus on the overall resistance to decolonisation that spans learners, institutions, diverse disciplines, and systemic or structural barriers to resources. They traced these challenges to diverse epistemological and political perspectives that are embedded in the hegemony of academia. They are concerned with the

overall complexities of resistance to "balancing professional knowledge, socialization, and subjugated knowledge" (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.95) for decolonising pedagogy and curriculum.

Arguably, globalisation and the effects of the knowledge economy on edu-business make these DCP challenges in higher education formidable for a decolonisation approach to intercultural education in edu-business. Equally, they emphasise the significance of critical investigation for how they may complicate a decolonising process for edu-business. This is evidenced by the gap in research literature for edu-business. I recognise challenging points of interest such as differential drivers and stakeholder differences that are worth exploring in a decolonising dialectic for edu-business. It suggests that decolonisation in edu-business leans more toward an exploratory research prospect rather than one in progress. In other words, there is little knowledge to build on but rather a research path to be forged.

3.9.2 The DCP Concepts for the Interrelated Interpretations of Decolonisation

According to Shahjahan et al. (2022), an overriding issue with decolonisation is the variance in how decolonising in curriculum and pedagogy is perceived. This has implications for how decolonisation is interpreted in the learning content. These interpretations are neither impartial nor free from the contextualised values that link to privileged ways of thinking and doing (Shahjahan et al., 2022). For some educators, it means delineating the different types of constraints to knowledge while for others it entails a more active dismantling of these constraints. Shahjahan et al (2022) further distinguished the interrelated interpretations of decolonisation in curriculum and pedagogy into three concept areas: (1) recognising constraints to decolonisation (2) the disruption of pedagogical constraints and (3) remaining open to alternatives in pedagogy and curriculum that are manifested differently across regions and power relations (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.85).

3.9.2.1 Recognising Decolonisation Constraints

The first interrelated interpretation describes the *recognising of decolonisation constraints* within the scope of limitations that includes addressing "the privileged ways of knowing... in existing histories, policies, practices and methodologies and\

or theories and addressing them in the curriculum and pedagogy" (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.83). They extended these interpretations by "recognizing the constraints placed by monocultural perspectives or hierarchies in one's discipline, institution, profession, policies, and/or broader society" (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.83). This interpretation of decolonisation is understood as a process of "critically examining, deconstructing, questioning, uncovering, and/or recognizing" (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.83) the conceptions of knowledge that mediate or eradicate decolonising practices. To improve understanding of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy, the dominant and unquestioned Western perspective is a salient point. In this sense, decolonisation means exploring hegemonic systems that have permeated and validated learning paradigms that guide decisions about content.

For edu-business, it is important to question the fundamental assumptions about knowledge and power that are context-relevant. Edu-business is sustained by a 'for profit' environment, therefore it merits exploring this economic contextual constraint which not only interrogates and challenges the dominant knowledge paradigms, but why they are accepted over other forms of knowledge production and by whom. A decolonising approach in edu-business would question "what counts as knowledge, who produces knowledge and how, and what/who are absent" (Dutta, 2018, p.278).

3.9.2.2 The disruption of pedagogical constraints

The second interrelated interpretation of decolonisation concerns *the disruption of pedagogical constraints.* It means that *disrupting* constraints involves the prioritising and valuing of other knowledge alongside Western models to synthesise Other knowledge rather than eliminating Eurocentric approaches across contexts (Shahjahan et al., 2022). It is illustrated by challenging, decentring, destabilizing or disrupting dominant Western, Eurocentric, Neoliberal and hegemonic modes of knowledge production (Shahjahan et al., 2022). This can manifest in multiple ways in the global environment where the global imperative means increased points of cultural contact that require respecting and meeting the diverse needs of distinct groups, communities, disciplines and industry sectors.

3.9.2.3 Being open to alternatives

Thirdly, the DCP interrelated interpretation of *remaining open to alternatives* is associated with "asserting, imagining, giving voice, enabling, centring, embedding, reconstructing, validating, transforming, integrating, or achieving liberation, empowerment, and/or self-determination" (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.83). It focuses on how "decolonizing the curriculum is not only about disrupting and dismantling normativity of the Euro-American vantage point; it is also about nurturing capacities to imagine alternatives" (Dutta, 2018, p.273). This interpretative theme includes types of collaboration with Indigenous groups that are delineated into three understandings: 'Outward-facing' means searching outside the institution for empowering other work (2) 'inward-facing' that focuses on reforms inside the institution, and (3) collective which centres outward and inward work as a collective and shared responsibility subject to geopolitical relations in the global knowledge economy (Dutta, 2018, pp. 85-86).

Together these interrelated interpretations serve to confront the decolonisation gaps in the higher education context and the insular nature of academic discourse that may prevent an understanding of intercultural meanings and influences in the hegemonic context of Western knowledge (Shahjahan et al., 2022). They have implications for the nonformal learning context of edu-business that does not have layers of structured approval but may only need the imagination and initiative of an innovative learning and development team.

3.9.3 The DCP Concepts in Actualising a Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy

The DCP framework also identifies several concepts in actualising DCP practice. Shahjahan et al., (2022) have described actualising concepts that consider decolonising from the contextually relevant aspects of practice. They acknowledged that outside of higher education, decolonising curriculum and pedagogy "are affected by larger structural, contextual, local, and geopolitical forces... and the DCP frame reflects geopolitics of knowledge dependent on geography (region and/or country), discipline, and institutional type, tied to colonial histories (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.76). This connects to the influence of dominant sociocultural, socio-political, and historical forces in edu-business and underscores its relational position to knowledge production. I reiterate that these

articulations of decolonisation are "neither neutral nor value-free" (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.76).

Shahjahan et al. (2022) outlined two areas for actualising relational positions. First between instructor and learner where the instructor-learner relations are a co-constitutive process that considers learner agency. The second relational area includes cultural and spiritual pedagogical practices which prioritise community knowledge over institutional legitimacy. They further defined this actualising concept into 4 components for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy which they identified as (1) regularly critiquing and probing the positionality of knowledge in educational spaces (2) decolonizing by constructing inclusive curriculums beyond dominant knowledge systems, (3) decolonizing the environment through relational teaching and learning and (4) connecting to external institutions in the community, higher education and socio-political movement in actualising internal and external sites of learning and knowledge production (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.86). I outline these briefly in what follows.

Firstly, the DCP actualising concept of critiquing and probing *the positionally of knowledge* in educational spaces is critical for examining the dominant knowledge systems that may lay undisputed within the curricula. It advocates diverse ways that learners can analyse the predominant assumptions about power, knowledge and positionality of knowledge as an embedded part of their learning experiences. As gleaned from the initial literature for this study, this DCP theme is in line with the theme of *situating the hegemonic context* which describes the power relations that may be embedded in the social and political context of knowledge and thus indicates an actualising theme worth investigating in edu-business.

Secondly, the DCP actualising concept of *constructing an inclusive curriculum beyond the prevailing knowledge system* involves decentring or displacing dominant knowledge systems., Shahjahan et al., (2022) have advocated practical efforts such as cultivating critical discourse, fostering institutional coalitions, breaking conceptual assumptions, reifying dualistic notions and acknowledging community interconnections which generated the theme of constructing an inclusive curriculum and pedagogy. Therefore, the realisation of inclusive practice involves comparing 'Other knowledge' to challenge the privileging of paradigms

ingrained in our ways of thinking and doing in curriculum and pedagogy (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.2022).

Thirdly, the DCP actualising concept of *integrating relational teaching and learning strategies* involves the coproduction of knowledge. It engages active learning and critical reflection over transmission methods. The pedagogical focus is on the co-constitutive process of knowledge production where the educator and learner are mutual contributors and where power relations are confronted and set aside. This component of actualising relational approaches emphasises opportunities for self-exploration, social identities, and dislodging social positionalities concerning knowledge that is shaped by the identities and context of the knowledge producers (Shahjahan et al., 2022). These relational strategies also connect to affective elements such as subjective development and other pedagogies of a spiritual, cultural, and affective nature for the enrichment of knowledge production. This theme echoes the theme of *integrating a relational pedagogy* in the research literature review as previously identified and confirms the theoretical approach of relationality for this research.

Finally, the concept of *connecting to external communities and institutions outside of higher education* involves prioritising local "community knowledge over institutional legitimacy" (Shahjahan et al. 2022, p.87). They have described examining the nature of the institution for the cultivation of institutional and community relations as drivers in the actualising of decolonisation. This DCP theme promotes external connections in the co-constitutive knowledge process by relocating sites of knowledge access and production outside of the learning institution as an embedded part of the pedagogy (Shahjahan et al., 2022). It refers to surpassing conventional and imaginary boundaries in practice and encompassing Other community expertise in the coproduction of knowledge. Again, it supports the relational approach to analysis but from an external perspective.

3.10. Research Knowledge Assumptions

For this research, it is important to frame how the theoretical perspectives for the interpretation of knowledge production and transfer have been interpreted for this study. A relativism lens is central to the examination of knowledge production for the European edu-business sector. It means that knowledge production is a co-

constitutive process that is shaped by the knowledge and experiences of others in the edu-business context. This does not suppose knowledge coherence but aligns with the poststructuralist tenet that rejects a universal accounting of knowledge production. I align with Grant (1996) who recognises the value of knowledge based on experiences, how it is transferred and by whom.

As the primary researcher, how I situate and understand knowledge production draws from Smith (2021) who offers a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values that inform research practice. I draw from his critique for delineating the following presuppositions that are relevant to this study:

- Knowledge is structured from individual experience (Dewey, 1930; Kolb, 1994).
- Knowledge is operationalized differently given local contextualised environments (Dei, 2000, p.113).
- The sociocultural, historical contexts and the socio-political locations are important factors in the interpretation of knowledge.
- The nonformal education sector is framed by globalisation and geopolitical context which impacts knowledge production.

The questions of *what* knowledge is valued, *who* produces the knowledge and *how* it is produced become steering questions for guiding pedagogy and curriculum design for intercultural education. As such, this research explores edu-business as a social entity of Western education which propagates the hegemonic environment and sustains relations of power which are oppositional and affirmative to pedagogy and praxis (Giroux, 1997). An exploration of these tensions is critical for understanding and initiating a dialectic approach to decolonising intercultural education in edu-business which must contend with the shifting demands of globalisation. These theoretical approaches and research assumptions undergird the application of the DCP framework which is discussed under the methodology chapter that follows.

Chapter Four: Methodology

This research methodology is informed by a social science approach to qualitative design, data appropriateness and interpretation. This has implications for the research methods chosen to support this design and the driving primary research question: What are the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe? I explored and analysed data with the research intention of engaging a dialogical process for intercultural praxis in edu-business to challenge Western embedded ways in curriculum and pedagogy. As previously defined, dialogical relations express an enduring state of dynamic cultural interaction especially thinking in relation to context (Weigerif, 2017) which allows the prospect of learning from diverse 'Others'. Therefore, I was steered by both this research intention and the prevailing research question for this qualitative research that sought to exhibit trustworthiness and transparency in quality research design. In the following sections, I describe in closer detail the qualitative research design and the ethical considerations it entailed for this study. I then explain the methods used to support the qualitative design including participant selection and sample, semi-structured interviews, and the framework analysis approach for the interpretation of data. I close this section with an overall outline of the DCP concepts (Shahjahan et. Al., 2022) with the related research issues that were revealed in the data analysis.

4.0 Qualitative Research Design

This qualitative research draws from the meaningful participant discourse connected to the contextual and cultural grounding of participants' constructed experiences. Following Morrow (2005), qualitative design in social sciences is supported by means of critical discourse, the researcher's reflexivity and positionality. Lather (1994) concurs that a socially constructed approach to research design considers the role of critical reflection in data interpretation for authenticating others' perspectives. Thus, reflection is a critical component of a socially constructed approach. It serves to link its theoretical foundations to the data analysis which increases trustworthiness in qualitative research (Morrow, 2005).

With the intention of trustworthiness in qualitative design, I pursued a dialogical approach and sought to reveal deeper insights from the experiences of learning developers related to the broader intercultural learning contexts in which they practice. I aimed to reveal assumptions and underlying themes in the data that are "theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.85). I identified beliefs and assumptions that might be used to engage a deeper decolonising discourse which was cognisant of the notion that knowledge is "always provisional. contextual, multiply voiced and open to new understandings" (Weigerif, 2017).

By situating the learning developers' experiences within the wider structures and discourses, I applied an adapted framework analysis using Shahjahan et al.'s, (2021) decolonising curriculum and pedagogy framework. I found this framework to be relevant for analysing decolonising themes relevant to intercultural learning in edu-business. It helped to illuminate possible issues from the shared insights and experiences of learning developers in the edu-business context.

Therefore, a theory-driven inductive/deductive hybrid process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) was employed using the DCP framework. The inductive/deductive analysis is described in further detail in the research methods section that follows. I supported this analysis with the use of thick descriptions to add weight and meaning to my research data interpretations. This contributed to the theoretical robustness of the study and conveyed the density of culture and context in which experiences are embedded (Morrow, 2005, p.252). In addition, the linking of data, methods and findings served to increase the quality of the thematic codes (Patton, 2002, p.544). These qualitative practices increased the transparency of the qualitative process thereby strengthening the integrity of the research analysis and rigour of qualitative research (Gasson, 2004).

As an interpreter of participant data, I am also a co-constructor of meaning framed by previously outlined positionality, my known/ unknown knowledge biases and the selected theoretical frames of analysis for this study. My subjective experience has framed how I have made sense of the phenomenon which is affected by the diversity and multitude of my experiences (Bhattacharjee, 2012). By employing a poststructuralist approach for analysis, I accepted the variability and ambiguity of

knowledge production as a part of the construction process which shapes my insights in support or contradiction of the DCP theoretical themes. Therefore, I derived meaning from the differences or gaps that distinguished the data from the DCP Concepts which opened possibilities for alternative ways of thinking and doing in edu-business. My methodological approach builds on the work of Shahjahan, et al., (2021) by extending their findings in higher education to the context of edu-business for determining relevant connections or contradictions to their Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy (DCP) framework.

4.1 Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns surrounding this research fell into three interrelated areas: (1) the interpretation of data was subject to the researcher's and participants' positionality (2) the position of research control and its effect on the depiction of participants' insights, and (3) the attention to privacy and protection concerning the use of data. In the research setting, the researcher and participant backgrounds contextualise the insights and claims drawn from the data. I have indicated that the research is grounded in an interpretive approach in which the researcher's context and positionality frame any findings that are derived from the data. It affects the credibility of the research conclusions which must be considered in this distinct light. Furthermore, my researcher positionality predisposes my Western lens and knowledge through which I filter and process information. My interpretation of the data and previous conceptualisations of knowledge has an impact on the research findings. Therefore, what is understood to be of value in terms of research outcomes and future study directions has been framed from my Western scholastic lens and knowledge biases. To deny my individual sociocultural and scholastic disposition contradicts the supposition of sociocultural diversity and the decoloniality approach which I seek to explore and substantiate.

Firstly, my position as an integral part of the research context is a distinct part of the research phenomenon (Bhattacharjee, 2020). It extends to any ethical considerations that surround this research. Thus, the construction of meaning and my theoretical perspective are framed not only by my sociocultural positioning but also by my known and unknown knowledge biases that lean towards the selected

theoretical frames of analysis for this study. In line with postmodernist thinking, my subjective experience frames how I have made sense of the phenomenon which is contextualised by the diversity of my human experience which is not singular in its representation (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This research accepts the limitations that encumber the human side of analysis which requires a human eye to qualitatively interpret the data and any confinements it may infer.

In the same light, my positionality affected the application of my research assumptions and biases. This was particularly relevant as new assumptions emerged with the data and biases were revealed through the continual revisiting and processing of data. In theory, my capacity for researcher reflexivity continually altered my perceptions of knowledge (Morrow, 2005). I believe this varied with each research participant and the insights that were generated through the process of questioning and prompting for deeper clarification. It also affected my depiction of each research participant in the selection of transcript sections that were chosen to illuminate meaning. It brought to the fore the intricate researcher-participant experience as mutually constitutive (Morrow, 2005) and reiterated the complexity of the interpretivist-constructivist exchange.

Secondly, it is also important to acknowledge that my researcher position is one of control. Not only does my position control the research design, but the theoretical underpinnings selected to frame and analyse the data. This implicated my position in the data as an instrument of the research. This power imbalance described as the 'researcher to researched dynamic' (Morrow, 2005) ratified my dominant researcher position and the participants' vulnerability in terms of question flow and interpretation of their responses. Moreover, my previous professional rapport with the participants may have created a set of expectations for both the researcher and the researched. I am aware that I may have held preconceived ideas about how different individuals might respond based on my understanding of their personalities and professional histories.

Hence, it was crucial to remain cognisant of my knowledge biases and theoretical inclinations that may have indirectly infiltrated the interview process and influenced participants to respond in ways that supported the study's theoretical frames. Equally, the participants may have unknowingly geared their interview

responses to what they believed was in line with the research topic. With this in mind, my prompting them to clarify their experiences intended to uncover their authentic frames of knowledge and professional insights. Consequently, the interpretation of data during all stages of the data collection and analysis phases has been framed within the aforementioned ethical considerations.

Finally, the attention to privacy and protection of data with participant information and the handling of data was ethically managed. To prevent tracing back to their identities, any references to professional affiliations or personal identifiers were removed. Guided by the General Data Protection Regulation (Official Journal of the European Union, 2016, p. 679), the EU privacy and confidentiality laws, the participants' rights, identities and vulnerabilities were secured. Specifically, Article 8(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Article 16(1) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (EUR-lex, 2020) further heightened the element of research trustworthiness and confidentiality for participant participation. It enhanced the integrity of the research process and subsequent outcomes.

In addition, any identifying connections to their professional or personal backgrounds in the context of the interview responses were stricken from the transcripts or substituted with an XXX in place of names or titles. For the writing of this research, the names that do appear are fictitious. The possessive adjectives of 'she/her' have been applied coherently throughout to minimise associating the data to a specific gender which may reveal participants' identities. As well, the pre-approved research proposal and design were respected as outlined by the Ethics Committee of the College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow. My overall ethical aim was to respect and safeguard the participants' sense of privacy and professional integrity (Wilson, 1997).

4.2 Research Methods

The methods I have employed for this study took into consideration the theoretical approaches and the reasoning behind the collection of research data and its selection for interpretation. This included a purposeful and criterion-based participant selection, a limited participant sample size, a semi-structured interview design, the use of an open-ended question flow, the creation of a safe

interview space and the relevance of the decolonising curriculum and pedagogy (DCP) as an appropriate framework for applying an inductive/ deductive hybrid approach to the analysis of research data. These methods are detailed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Purposeful and Criterion-Based Participant Selection

Participants were chosen who fit the research aim and participant criteria. I utilised a purposeful selection of interview participants for data collection. Purposeful sampling was appropriate for qualitative research because it aims to generate relevant data aligned to the research purpose, criteria and the main research question as already indicated (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). It was motivated by the practical limits, logistics, and government protocols imposed by the pandemic restrictions that were in effect during the data collection phase. I considered the increased challenges participants faced with in-person interviews during the pandemic context. It added travel time, energy and coordination efforts which was factored into the decision to conduct online rather than in-person interviews. It would have also increased the challenge of locating willing participants.

I invited potential participants from the community of learning developers who were currently working in edu-business or who had previous work experience in the European edu-business context of the Global North. Drawing from my professional network, I recruited participants who also had direct or indirect experience with intercultural environments or with intercultural education programmes. This work experience included diverse edu-business contexts for learning development and facilitation. It extended to the broader global context given the expansion of diverse global organisational configurations and remote working arrangements.

The learning developers, as a participant group, who represented experts in their field of learning in edu-business, and therefore, have the potential to provide direct insight into the domain of intercultural education (Morrow, 2005). As subject matter experts, they contribute to the enhancement of knowledge and learning competencies across diverse learning contexts (Lieven, 2020). In delineating the roles of learning developers, I included learning roles that were involved in the development, facilitation or strategy of learning development that fell under the

larger learning professional role descriptions. The term learning developers was used throughout this research which identifies the breadth of roles within the participant group and reflects the diversity of professional tasks associated with these roles. Some roles were exclusive to content design, while some involved content facilitation and delivery, and others were consultative in nature or a combination of one or more of these tasks. However, all roles involved an aspect of learning development in the theoretical or practical application. The descriptions included but were not limited to learning functions identified as learning designers, learning and development specialists, learning consultants, learning managers, and learning facilitators who contribute to the intercultural learning context or programme at diverse knowledge production levels.

4.2.2 Limited Participant Sample Size

By limiting the participant sample size, I aimed for depth over breadth. Following Patton (1990), this decision supported the "validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry (which) have more to do with the information-richness" (p.185). All the participants' direct experiences in the edu-business context were enhanced through thick descriptions of the phenomena and were enhanced by the descriptive contextual and cultural layers in which participants' experiences occurred (Geertz, 1983; Morrow, 2005). I aimed for the depth of the learning developers' insights (Morrow, 2005) while endeavouring to preserve participant anonymity.

In addition, I aimed for diversity in the participant demographics. The participant sample reflected different ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, genders and ages to obtain a range of experiences and perspectives (Kitzinger 1994). The participant group spanned in age from 25-55 years and included American Dutch, Dutch, German Austrian, Israelian, Spanish, and Scottish national or ethnic backgrounds. Three of the participants identified as male and the remaining five identified as females. As stakeholders with a vested interest in edu-business, they served as ideal research participants in the field of learning development research (Adams, 2015).

4.2.3 Diversity of Participant Roles and Working Contexts

The diversity of participant roles was also represented by varied levels of learning responsibility and related professional tasks. The participant group included both learning and development professionals in leading and supporting roles and reflected a depth of experience that spanned both nonformal and formal learning contexts. In what follows, I describe the varied roles and contexts represented by the research participant group which reflects the diversity of the sample and provides a relevant snapshot of the wider diversity of the edu-business sector.

All of the participants' contexts reflected direct work experiences at privately held small scale edu-business organisations of European-based ownership. These edu-businesses reflected organisations of 100 or less employees. There was an apparent multitude of learning services offered at the smaller edu-businesses which attracted a mix of client organisations by sector and scale. The learning developers' responsibilities addressed both internal employee needs as well as external client educational services in the areas of personal and professional development including intercultural education as previously described.

There were also participants who had direct experience in edu-business contexts that focused on one education product and its related services. For example, for these participants, their single focus edu-business contexts were both centered in the learning technology sector and involved larger scale organisations focused on the development and education of SaaS tools. Specifically, one participant worked in a privately held German-based edu-business centered in the global financial tech and cloud banking platform services. The other participant's edu-business context involved a Dutch owned global digital workflow management platform.

The learning developers' responsibilities for both of these larger scale edu-businesses focused on internal learning development needs for approximately 500 employee populations. Their learning development tasks included both professional and personal development content in addition to diversity and inclusion training to enhance their internal organisational cultures and employee experiences. The training that is specific to developing knowledge of the SaaS tool was allocated to the technology subject matter experts (SMEs) for both internal and external client learners.

In addition to the edu-business contexts, the participant working contexts encompassed previous direct experience in formal public education contexts. For example, two participant roles have previously involved accredited vocational institutes, and one participant had experience in a higher education hospitality school. Although, these formal contexts are guided by regulated content, and by definition were not considered to be edu-business contexts, their participant experiences were noted to exemplify the depth of the participants' professional backgrounds. From a poststructuralist viewpoint, their experiences in formal education contribute to their overall perceptions of intercultural education. Thus, this research acknowledges that the participants' experiences in all sectors of formal and informal learning may influence both their personal and professional contexts which shape their views and perspectives of intercultural learning as an interconnected and ever-evolving learning dynamic.

4.2.4 Semi-structured Interview Design

As a research method, semi-structured interviews provided a practical method of inquiry during the pandemic environment. It meant that social distancing protocols were adhered to and respected. This increased the challenge of the data collection period which occurred over five months. The participant interviews averaged 45-65 minutes in length and were conducted using the Zoom online communication tool. This achieved two purposes- physical safety and efficiency. The participants resided at various locations across the Netherlands including one participant located in Germany but who was remotely employed by a Dutch edu-business.

I employed the SaaS tool online Descript.com transcription in real time for the recording and transcribing of interview data. This application tool transcribed the participants' responses in real-time meaning the transcript was produced as the words were spoken which allowed for accuracy checks following the interview if required. During the transcribing process, the added audio-to-text feature allowed me to search and align the text to the spoken word verbatim as well as to review my interpretation of the participants' insights. Overall, there were few transcribing inaccuracies except where the participant's enunciation was unclear. This review feature helped to ascertain the context in which the participant's statements were made and to generate some initial commonalities and contrasts between the

participants' experiences and insights- an important initial step in the analytic process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The semi-structured interview design also allowed for open-ended questions and invited individual perspectives and insights from participants (Morrow, 2005). This promoted a critically reflective process for participants that allowed them to learn and contribute insight from their previous experiences. A semi-structured interview approach also encouraged the participants to freely contribute their knowledge and experience rather than limit their responses to the preconceived confines of the question. When appropriate, I prompted the participants to clarify or further expand on their insights and experiences.

This semi-structured approach also enabled me to redirect my researcher's position of control to the participant. I intended to nurture a nonformal environment where the participant is considered the knowledge keeper in a multiculturally interactive space (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013). The questions were designed loosely on the PEST model (CIPD, 2023) which prompted political, economic, sociocultural or technological considerations that could impact the decolonising approach to pedagogy. By using open-ended and shorter focused question prompts, I aimed to elicit richer descriptions of their experiences aligned with their initial responses by recurrently asking for examples. This helped me extract the deeper meanings shared by the participants' insights. In the appendices, please refer to Table A: Exploratory Research Question Flow for a more detailed question outline.

4.2.5 An Open Interview Context

To create an open and comfortable interview space, I attempted to put the participant at ease with preliminary informal questions to establish rapport. Even though the participants were a part of my professional network, I had different levels of connection with each participant and social contact had varied during the pandemic environment. These previous levels of professional rapport helped to optimise the interview time enhanced by a pre-established air of familiarity. Still, I added a layer of reassurance by stating my commitment to stop the interview session at their signal. This was intended to give the participants a sense of control and safety in the process and to minimise the power relations that are constituted by researcher-researched context. Given the sensitive nature of content relating to

cultural diversity and power relations, my attention to the participants' comfort and safety endeavoured to retain a high level of authenticity especially if participants feared that their responses were not aligned with the researcher's aims (Adams, 2015).

4.2.6 A Framework Analysis: Data Collection, Organisation and Analysis

I applied an adapted approach to framework analysis driven by an inductive/deductive process and reasoning following Goldsmith (2021). This method is considered a complex form of thematic analysis that is suitable for a population of interest aligned with a particular research question (Pope et al., 2000). Therefore, I found it to be an appropriate research method for examining learning developers as a group of interest and their pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe. It also provided a structure by which to compare the overall DCP concepts (Shahjahan et al., 2022) and frame their relevance to edu-business. Shahjahan et al., (2022) described these categories as (1) the challenges of a decolonisation curriculum and pedagogy (2) the interrelated interpretations of decolonisation and (3) the actualising of decolonisation in curriculum and pedagogy.

Framework analysis structures the analysis process by identifying and describing key patterns that are significant in the interpretation and grounding of data (Goldsmith, 2021). The analysis process is based on five key phases following Ritchie & Spencer (2011): (1) data familiarisation, (2) identifying a thematic framework, (3) data indexing, (4) data charting, and (5) data mapping and interpretation. I adapted this approach by implementing Shahjahan et al.'s (2022) DCP framework as a point of departure rather than generating a framework drawn from limited data. My decision was based on the limits of this research study which considered the size of the participant group, the shorter research timeframe and the existence of the established DCP framework which is already comprehensive in its examination of decolonising research for higher education.

I also adapted the inductive-inductive process for the indexing and charting phases of the framework analysis method to a deductive-inductive process following Proudfoot (2013). My intention for using the framework analysis process of this research was to make transparent the assumptions and biases that connected to

the deeper issues and understanding that "(a)ny theoretical framework carries with it a number of assumptions about the nature of the data, what they represent in terms of the 'the world', 'reality'" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.81). This was undertaken for intercultural education in the context of edu-business. For the deductive side of the thematic analysis, I compared and contrasted the DCP Concepts for higher education research to nonformal education specific to edu-business by deducing patterns of similarity and difference. The value derived from a deductive-inductive driven analysis draws on the dynamic process of undulating between the predetermined DCP concept and the issues derived from the data (Hatta, Narita, Yanagihara, Ishiguro, Murayama & Yokode (2020).

In the first phase of data familiarisation, I gathered the data to identify general themes by interpreting the participant's intended meaning. I reread each transcript verbatim for the generation of themes that captured initial thematic ideas supported by the ancillary notes made for each interview. By collecting initial ideas, I sought to explore the data for relevance to the DCP concepts as previously outlined. This thematic organisation of data highlighted nuances in the participants' insights which were organised to define ideas that supported or refuted the DCP concepts.

In the next phase of data indexing, I conducted more concept-driven deductive processing guided by the DCP framework (Shahjahan et al., 2022) to extract meaningful ideas that I described as issues framed under Shahjahan et al.'s (2022) broader conceptual categories. It was extremely useful to colour map the issues following Miles & Huberman (1994) to help identify and connect ideas along similar conceptual thought lines. The main research question guided the uncovering of themes related to the learning developers' pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-business in Europe. I generated 124 initial issues which were colour-mapped by conceptual grouping. An example of the initially generated themes from a participant's data set is provided in Appendix B: Initial Thematic Colour Mapping from Participant Data Set With Key Code.

For the data charting phase, an inductive analysis further aggregated the identified issues by their significance and implication to the research context (Proudfoot, 2023). This was critical for illuminating the participants' experiences, perspectives

and reflexive processes related to their insights. I used an iterative process of mapping and re-interpreting the issues to isolate more specific decolonising issues revealed in the data. These issues were enriched by the direct quotations and insight of the participants. I worked in cycles of analysis with the DCP concepts, which helped me to illuminate and delineate thematic issues as a continual process of synthesis and refinement following Hatta et al., (2020). This phase of framework analysis had "the advantage of being tempered by the inductive element as a counterbalance to the imposition of theory" (Proudfoot, 2023, p.319).

4.2.7 Data Interpretation and Aggregation: Thematic Issues

In the data interpretation phase, I consolidated the initial issues into comparable categories across all collected interview data following Locke, Silverman & Spiriduso, (2010). I then clustered initial ideas that enriched, extended or provided different but related issues in connection with the DCP concepts. I also grouped issues that indicated a point of contradiction or conflict with the DCP concepts. For example, in the second inductive phase, there were two initial themes generated that were grouped by their similar interpretations: *the individual lens helps to bridge cultural understanding* and *self-knowledge plays a crucial role in successful cultural collaboration*. They were eventually aggregated under the final theme of *developing self-knowledge in relation to Others* which was deduced under the DCP actualising concept of *integrating relational approaches to teaching and learning*. Notably, the analysis of data benefited from my stepping away briefly and then returning to the interpretation process after several days. This allowed a renewed perspective which I felt promoted clearer results in the inductive stage. It was also important to articulate the issue clearly to limit ambiguity and enhance the clarity of meaning for future researchers. Ultimately, I generated 13 issues from the data that were related to the DCP main concepts (Shahjahan et al., 2022) of decolonising challenges, interpretive DCP concepts and actualising DCP concepts.

It is important to note that throughout the analytic process, I became acutely aware of how my interpretation of the data could shape the conception of meaning based on my research subjectivity. It underscored the value of my researcher reflexivity for uncovering my personal knowledge dispositions and biases. This iterative reflexivity continually refined and streamlined the issues in support and

contradiction to the DCP concepts. Although this multiple-phased data aggregation process was more complex, it speaks to the integrity of the framework analysis process and contributed to academic rigour by conceiving "a systematic method whose assumptions are congruent with the way one conceptualizes the subject matter" (Reicher and Taylor, 2005, p.549). Please refer to Appendix C.1 and Appendix C.2 respectively for two examples of data charts. The first example illustrates the deductive-inductive charting and colour mapping of the DCP concepts for the *interrelated interpretations of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy*. The second example illustrates the deductive-inductive charting and mapping of issues that relate to the *DCP actualising concepts for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy*.

By employing this framework analysis approach, I did not intend to deductively approve or disprove the DCP framework but to extend the DCP concepts as emergent issues in the field of edu-business. I found that the combined deductive-inductive interpretation process helped to draw relevant connections or contradictions between the context of edu-business and higher education upon which the DCP framework was centred. I drew from significant theoretical approaches to further support the implication of these issues for curriculum, pedagogy and practice in edu-business and the primary research question: What are the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe?

The iterative process also rendered nuances within the issues which were revealed through re-analysis. These nuanced points of interest connected to the research issues served to better initiate a discourse on decoloniality in edu-business which is the underlying aim of this research. The 13 aggregated issues are significant for edu-business and are outlined under their DCP framework categories and subcategories (Shahjahan, 2022) that are shared in appendix B. The application of the framework in the analysis of research data is provided in the following three chapters which have been allocated into the three relevant categories under the DCP framework: Related Issues to the contextual challenges, issues related to the DCP concepts of Interrelated Interpretations and related issues to the concepts for actualising a decolonising curriculum and pedagogy.

Chapter Five: A Framework Analysis

The framework analysis for this research revealed potent issues between the framework for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy (DCP) by Shahjahan et al., (2022) in higher education and a possible decolonising approach for intercultural curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business. As previously outlined, the data analysis revealed 13 issues connected to intercultural learning in the nonformal learning sector of edu-business. While some of the issues strongly supported or extended the interpretations of the DCP concepts, there were issues raised that challenged or contradicted the DCP framework concepts (Shahjahan et al., 2022). Guided by the primary research question of what the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education are for edu-businesses in Europe, I applied the framework analysis to strive "beyond a thematic description of a phenomenon to the development of multi-dimensional typologies" (Goldsmith, 2021, p. 2062).

In the chapters that follow, I discuss the DCP conceptual categories by drawing learning relevance for intercultural education in edu-business based on the data analysis that revealed 13 related issues. I endeavoured to critically analyse the conditions surrounding knowledge production from the unique lens of learning developers in edu-business. As learning experts in the edu-business sector, their perspectives weigh heavily on what intercultural education is produced, how it is transferred and by whom. I explore the revealed issues in connection to the concepts framed under the broader DCP framework. The conceptual categories are identified as (1) contextual challenges, (2) interrelated interpretations and (3) actualising of a decolonising pedagogy and curriculum. Please refer to appendix D for a summary of the DCP concepts and their related issues to edu-business that were revealed in the research.

5.0 DCP Concepts of Contextual Challenges

5.0.1 Related Issues to the Contextual Challenges of Institutional Context

Shahjahan et al. (2021) identified two broader challenges for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy in higher education related to the institutional or cultural challenges in the broader global context. A prevalent issue revealed in the data analysis pointed to *the realignment of edu-business priorities in the global*

context. The insights from learning developers revealed how edu-business, as a nonformal education provider, is greatly impacted by globalisation and strongly indicates a clear shift of edu-business priorities from the individual learner to the organisation. The participants focused on how various global components have affected their professional practice. For example, Rene stressed how the impact of globalisation has impacted her learning practice. In the current global climate, she believes the learning developer's capacity to meet diverse learning needs has been challenged by a quickly changing landscape that has affected knowledge production in the long term. She explained that sustainable learning is often *not* factored into the decisions for intercultural learning programmes, and believes that programmes are designed for short-term learning at both an individual and organisational level:

> Based on my past experiences, it's quite often something which doesn't
> have longevity to it. So, it's short-term infusion of information, but
> there's very little, long-term stimulus to continue that cultural
> transformation to boost that information that people are getting during
> the training (Rene).

Her words suggest that she is accustomed to responding to the current context and adapting to the fluctuating immediate demands of the organisational context. Rene's experiences align with Szkudlarek (2009) who underscored the time pressures for learning developers. Krishna (2009) also refers to the compression of time and space which is a determining factor for intercultural learning programmes that do not sustain long-term cultural transformation.

Val's experiences within her current edu-business support Rene's perspective. She has felt the impact of globalisation in terms of rapid organisational growth and the related economic pressures. She claimed that the issues of global diversity within her edu-business context are inadequately addressed:

> I think that there, well, there are two issues: One, that we are growing at
> such a fast pace that it's hard to keep up with, you know. But at the same
> time, opening offices in many other cities in different countries. And you
> know, so whatever we put together, it has to be scalable, but it has to be
> also culturally sensitive... the fact that we are diverse in terms of coming

from different countries is something that people value. It's just that there is not like a global strategy, especially at the rate that it's growing.

Val described how her organisation is under pressure to meet its accelerated rate of growth and it indicates that her edu-business intercultural learning issues are given less priority. Both these participant accounts strongly support the theme of a realignment of edu-business priorities, and the participants stressed the need to attend to the diverse cultural needs of edu-business as an organisation. They delineated how organisational global needs are delineated and prioritised over the intercultural needs of learners in edu-business. This issue further resonated with Jo who shed light on her institutional cultural challenges. She underscored the importance of the organisational culture of edu-business and identified the organisational cultural needs as fundamentally different from the learners' cultural needs:

> What I notice is that, well, colleagues had a hard time linking the training needs of the individuals to the organisational needs. So, normally you start with an organisational purpose or an organisational goal. And from there on, you think about the programmes you buy into and think about, and also match it to the needs of learners. And ideally, that's a great fit, but it's not always the case. So, what I see is, there's a difference between a learner need of an individual and the organisational need, and the culture in the commercial office. ... the focus was on how to match with different cultures since it was a commercial setting... It's not always linked to where you live or the language you speak. It can also relate to the culture that is common within a company (Jo).

This suggests that Jo's distinction between the culture of the individual learner and that of the organisation was central to her understanding of how intercultural learning directions are defined. She indicated the organisational culture as distinct but also linked this to the priority of the commercial context of edu-business. For Rori, her professional experiences echoed Jo's on the need to distinguish the organisational cultural context and needs:

> If you say culture in the corporate set-up, we mean our company culture values, and who are we as a company. So, it's very distinct. Culture is our

organisational development and where we are heading. And diversity and inclusion are our way to say: "We receive everybody and everybody's welcome" (Rori).

Rori has clearly distinguished the organisational cultural identity as separate from the individual or group culture. Her comments emphasised that the organisational and group cultures co-exist in her edu-business, but they are conceptually different. This distinction was also emphasised by Max who underscored the organisational culture as a guiding component for her learning directions. Max draws from her professional experience in differentiating the target audience and client brand identity. She purposefully integrates these as defining elements in her learning decisions:

> I think, as a developer, you always have to cater towards your target audience and the brand that we're working with. And a training- developing a training- for a company that is very culturally active and aware, I would like to call it, is a lot different than when you're designing for an older, let's say, more traditional brand.

Her comments suggest that her learning directions depend on her understanding of the diverse needs of the organisational brand identity as well as the specific target learners. She stresses how her learning choices are driven by the organisational priorities and context in which the individual or group culture is embedded. Such organisational structures position "the market as the sole and best arbiter of decisions about the allocation of resources" (Krishna, 2009, p.5), and can be traced to power relations rooted in coloniality.

Based on the analysis of this data, I argue that the organisational priorities and learners' needs significantly diverge, and the learners' intercultural needs are contextually and culturally challenged in edu-business. There is a powerful organisational influence over learning decisions in edu-business. This resonates with Knight (2018) and the commercial side of organisational priorities which "highlight(s) differences between institutional vs. departmental priorities, and between stakeholders at the local level" (Knight, 2018, p. 286). Krishna (2009) also asserted that an economic lens is determined by the dominant ways of doing and thinking rooted in long-established practices of the "domination of the West over

the world in the realms of knowledge production and culture, or Eurocentrism" (p.4). This finding helps to form a response to the extended research questions surrounding the contextual conditions that frame the pedagogical challenges for intercultural education in edu-business. It is the organisational priorities that have a prevailing influence over pedagogical decisions for intercultural learning programmes in the edu-business context.

5.0.2 Related Issues to the Systemic or Cultural Challenges

Shahjahan et al. (2022) also underscored challenges relating the systemic or structural barriers such as the lack of cultural support from leadership and different stakeholders and how these relations are often laden with power issues. They include stakeholders in both leading and supporting roles who can influence how the decolonising process plays out in diverse learning contexts. An exploration of the impact of hegemonic Western leadership in edu-business is critical for understanding how leaders fit into the decolonising process. How leaders propagate the intercultural narrative is crucial for mitigating structural barriers. The leaders' Western perspectives dominate how they make learning decisions and act upon those decisions. Mignolo (2007) referred to the Eurocentric macro-narrative rooted in coloniality and how it remains the singular and accepted superior Western way. These ways of working must be excavated in edu-business to understand where the power structures lie.

Stakeholders in edu-business also have an influence in leading learning directions. Their behaviours are relevant for understanding how systemic barriers pertain to the organisation and the connection to the current state of intercultural education. Based on the data analysis, there is a significant cultural challenge with *the hegemonic influence of Western leadership in edu-business*. Several participants indicated that the role of leadership for intercultural learning development in edu-business has been a central point of concern. As Jo highlighted, the role of managers is instrumental in activating and modelling intercultural relations in daily practice: "As managers, they have a really important role, in stimulating this, this informal learning. For instance, stimulate people, share feedback with each other, and build that into meetings" (Jo). Her comments emphasised the role of leaders as an ongoing and dynamic intercultural process that is integrated into the course

of normal activities and tasks. Max also placed strong weight on the hierarchical role of leadership for modelling and sustaining organisational culture on a wider level:

> Because if leadership or basically very, very high up the food chain, do not do it, see it, it's not, it will not be ingrained in the philosophy of the company. So, that's my opinion. It has to start high up.

Her comments indicated that the hierarchical structure is pivotal to how any organisational ideology is instilled and suggests that leaders have an essential role in shaping the organisational culture and by extension a decolonising philosophy. This resonates with Gale de Saxe & Trotter Simons (2021) who acknowledged the need to apply a broad lens over Western ideology to deconstruct the hegemony that has sustained and dominated social and educational structures.

However, Ursa raised a significant barrier that exists with leaders' intercultural capacities. She claimed that leaders may want to see intercultural changes in their organisations but acknowledged that they may lack the confidence and intercultural knowledge to lead cultural transformation:

> There is a lot of, you know, especially the Europeans, they see a certain change in the culture and leadership behaviour and aspects, and they believe in that they want to do it, but there is still a little bit of...I wouldn't say resistance, but doubt.

Interestingly, her insights reflected a bias towards Europeans for embracing intercultural change but indicated a knowledge gap exists for implementing intercultural changes at the leadership level. Her insights align with Szkudlarek (2009) who claimed that those in leading positions including human resources practitioners are in a position to dictate content but have limited intercultural knowledge. This is complicated by leaders who are faced with more complex organisational conflicts:

> ...if issues are perceived to assume the ethical high ground, or are understood to conflict with managerial efficiency, they are often either quietly dropped or they are only ritually mentioned. No radical analysis of the dominant, hegemonic discourse occurs (Szkudlarek, 2009, p.978).

Sian (2019) also pointed to how stakeholder resistance may be interpreted by how receptive they are to decolonisation as a pedagogical endeavour. Their research data indicated that there is White educator resistance in higher education which was attributed to a lack of decolonising resources and staff to implement broad-scale change to the curriculum.

Moreover, Moe believed that leaders' intercultural capacities are also linked to their level of authenticity. She submitted that leaders do not back up their words with action and from her experience, the central leadership needs to embody the cultural diversity of their organisation:

> I thought if I was, if I had a more senior leadership position here, I would really be banging this drum and just saying to people, guys let's have a real example of building cultural empathy here. If I'm being very honest about it, the leadership team just didn't do enough about it because they were all Dutch... I think whatever culture, you want to see, the leadership in any organisation has got to model and live and eat and breathe these values. And if they don't, it's just a pile of cards built on sand. It's just going to fall away very quickly.

Her experiences suggest that leaders demonstrate an inauthentic representation of cultural values and behaviour. Her views reflect Szkudlarek (2009) who expressed concern over inauthenticity in leadership and the unrecognized power dynamics within intercultural relations. Moe's insights have extended the leadership knowledge gap to the importance of leadership as an authentic and critical part of the decolonising process. Leaders are a powerful part of the intercultural dynamics and therefore they are an essential part of the decolonising practice and communication. They can be instrumental when intercultural conflict occurs by providing insight into situations that can benefit from their intercultural experience. Moreover, leaders are in roles of authority and have an impact on the 'learner's truth' because they are positioned to help learners understand how truth is relative and must be navigated with the diverse professional and personal facets of their lives Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009).

Rene also supported the onus of leaders in overseeing learning transformation, but she extended the responsibility to the individuals as a collective to inculcate intercultural change that initiates and shifts cultural thinking. Rene explained:

> But I would like to see is that people become empowered to be able to set these transformations forth based on their own cultural knowledge and expertise and not based on someone else's perspective and expertise... they actively have to contribute to creating that new mind shift as well.... challenge(d) them in specific things, (and) they challenge(d) us.

Rene's words emphasised how cultural transformation and leadership are inextricably linked to knowledge production. Her beliefs support a comprehensive approach to cultural learning as an inclusive transformation tied to the importance of transcending people at different levels of the organization or learning community. She advocates a collaborative approach to cultural learning that is not something just for the leadership or the individual but as a collective undertaking. Rene's thoughts reflect Young (2012) who encouraged the dismantling of structures of power and privilege and promoted the decolonising agency of educators in combination with Others. Based on these findings in the data, they begin to formulate a response to the extended research question on the contextual conditions that influence content decisions in edu-business. They call for a shift in priorities and shared relations to deconstruct the contextual and structural barriers. I argue that decolonising opportunities exist for leaders and learning developers as a collaborative effort. They must operate beyond the realms of familiar structures and systemic barriers that contextually challenge the decolonisation approach to intercultural education in edu-business.

From this examination of the DCP contextual and cultural challenges, the learning developers revealed two predominant issues *the realignment of edu-business priorities in the global context and the hegemonic influence of Western leadership in edu-business*. They are subject to strong Western global influences and leadership that constrain the conditions under which they make learning decisions. The impact on their learning decisions indicates the need to further explore the learning developers' recognition of these contextual challenges in connection to interpretive issues. Specifically, the recognising of decolonising constraints, issues

related to the disrupting of pedagogical constraints and issues related to being open to alternatives for curriculum and pedagogy. These related issues for edu-business are further explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Related Issues to the DCP Concepts of Interrelated Interpretations

The issues surrounding how a decolonising pedagogy and curriculum are perceived and interpreted in higher education are significantly related to intercultural education in edu-business. Shahjahan et al., (2022) described these interrelated interpretations as (1) the recognising of decolonising constraints (2) the disrupting of pedagogical constraints and (3) being open to alternatives for curriculum and pedagogy. These diverse interpretations of decolonisation revealed four related issues for edu-business. Specifically, the participants shared their insights related to neoliberalism, eurocentrism, universalism, and essentialism as constraints to decolonisation in edu-business. What stood out for participants is how the globalised context and its neoliberal drivers fundamentally constrain the learning environment. This key issue is explored first under the related DCP concept of recognising decolonising constraints in what follows.

6.0 Issues Related to the Recognising of Decolonising Constraints

Under the DCP interpretive concepts of recognising decolonising constraints, the data analysis revealed how *neoliberalism is a powerful mitigating driver for edu-business*. As previously described, edu-business, as part of a globalised economy, is a 'for-profit' organisation that is entrenched in the neoliberal ideology. This neoliberalist environment stimulates powerful economic drivers for the edu-business learning model that by definition steer cost-effectiveness aligned to its economic objectives. As the participants' experiences will show, it has formidable consequences for learning developers and by extension, their learning decisions for pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe. A clear example was shared by Rene who identified the neoliberal drivers that have affected her learning decisions:

> The companies that I've worked for in the past are all about the quick wins. Let's call them that. We all know that it's not super successful or what's the word, there's no longevity creating a one-day training but it's business in the pocket. That's what's stimulating so then people don't really think, hey, let's actually advise that's it going to cost more money- it's a bigger investment- this is what we stand for. I mean, it's

> the short-term money in the pocket versus really doing what's right for
> the learners and the organisation that you're being hired by.

Her comments are a clear indication that the neoliberal drivers undermine her learning decisions and reaffirm the 'for-profit' motive. It surfaces aspects of Weber's rationalisation theory for efficiency and the means-end rationale that supersede (Weber, 1921/1968) other objectives over the individual's needs.

Rene's perspective was also strongly backed by Max. She contended that the learning decisions are often out of the learning developer's control. She offered more insight into how her organisation's economic priority drives her learning decisions, "The client is the decision-maker because they buy the training that they want us to develop ... the client will decide what gets trained. And what they buy and in the sense what we develop". Moreover, this lack of authority placed her at odds with her professional values. This was strongly felt under the organisational expectation to endorse the learning decisions that align with the client's organisational parameters sometimes at the expense of the learner. Max elaborated:

> There will be times that your own integrity, I wouldn't say, compromise
> because that's too far, but might be shifted because of the demands of the
> customer ... But in the end, if the company doesn't want to change, it's not
> going to happen.

This suggests that there is an expectation of learning endorsement in favour of the client's objectives even when the learning developer is aware that organisational neoliberal goals constrain the learning decisions for intercultural learning. Max's comments again highlight the prioritising of the organisational needs over those of the learner. As representatives of their edu-business, learning developers favour the interests of the client organisation in support of the edu-business's 'for-profit' model and illustrate how their learning decisions are susceptible to neoliberal drivers. Max's insights resonated with Szkudlarek's (2009) ideas on the lack of authority given to developers for navigating development directions and their associated ethical issues. Fukuyama (1995) also asserted that "people will act as self-interested individuals often enough for the "laws" of economics to be a useful guide for making predictions" (p.21). It is a sad indication that "the paradigm has

shifted from meeting the needs of society and fulfilling the moral purpose of education for the public good to one focused on income generation" (Krishna, 2009, p.5). The issue of neoliberalism as a mitigating driver provides poignant insight for the extended research question of how pedagogical decisions are realised in edu-business and whose interests are served—they serve the organisational clients'.

From my analysis of the data, I argue that the participants' views and experiences are a strong indication that the neoliberal context is a decolonising constraint to developing a decolonising intercultural curriculum and pedagogy. It further highlights how cultural content decisions in edu-business yield to the priorities defined by the leadership of the client organisation. Moreover, the participants' ethical conflicts indicate a need to mitigate the particular power dynamics of edu-business that impact pedagogical decisions. Rightly, Mamdani (2016) calls for economic decolonisation or transformation of how organisations like edu-business sustain coloniality through economic relations. Szkudlarek (2009) also advocated reassessing the organisational priority to embrace "a new dimension of cultural expertise (that) should become a source of advantage within the corporate context. … this advantage should not be a competitive one" (p. 980). This leads to the following DCP interpretation of decolonisation as a more disruptive notion.

6.1 Issues Related to the Disrupting of Pedagogical Constraints

Shahjahan et al. (2022) identified an additional interpretation from their research which connected the concept of decolonising pedagogy through disruptive means. This concept requires the amalgamation of Western and 'Other' perspectives across both formal and nonformal learning environments to decentre dominant knowledge systems. This process of disrupting and decentring is essential to the decolonising of ideas and assumptions that form the dominant pedagogy. It promotes the value of diverse knowledge rather than a total elimination or replacement of one knowledge for the other (Shahjahan et al., 2022). Based on the data analysis, a key issue related to disruptive interpretations of decolonisation focused on problematising the permeation of Eurocentrism in Edu-business. In other words, there is a deep concern with how Eurocentric thinking and doing pervade intercultural learning approaches in edu-business.

As revealed in the previous data issue, the participants readily acknowledged the dominance of hegemonic leadership as a contextual challenge. This perspective was underscored by Edward Said (1978) who claimed that knowledge and representation were intimately linked to power issues which determined how knowledge is represented. He stated that cultural hegemony is supported by the continual dominance and superiority of Western thought (Said,1978). This notion of superior Western thought is strongly reflected in the participants' perspectives of intercultural knowledge production. Val described evidence of Western cultural hegemony in her edu-business:

> So, I think this is a very good example of, you know, how everything is centralized here in Europe and every single thing that is done, disregards, everybody else's situation... So, it's just, it shocks me that that's the case. It's very sad. It's very Euro-centric.

Her words underscore the overall prevalence of Eurocentrism in her organisation that dominates most organisational aspects of her edu-business. Rene acknowledged this Eurocentrism but turned those challenges inward. She reflected on her deeply embedded Western approach to 'Other' perspectives and underscored her lack of specific cultural knowledge. She recognised her own intercultural knowledge gaps that inhibited her pedagogical approaches in relation to a particular client's organisational priorities. Rene explained:

> So, this is kind of the other side of the coin. So, I'm looking also at it from a Western perspective, but with a lot of knowledge about the Middle East, ... there's a gap because I'm creating trainings where they're still not comfortable with it because it's simple things that are just very engrained into the culture... Perspectives about what type of people I'm going to be creating these trainings for... I think that that's really important for me to investigate.

Her reflective insights indicate that Rene has located her learning challenges in the perceived incongruency between her Western-centred approach and the learning approach of the client's cultural context. She indicated that the Western learning objectives do not always fit the context even if it is desired by the client. This

resonated with Giroux (2004) who problematised pedagogy that is specifically located:

> "the specificity of place... it foregrounds the need for educators to rethink the cultural and political baggage they bring to each educational encounter; it also highlights the necessity of making educators ethically and politically accountable for the stories they produce" (p. 38)

Rene's insights align with an ambiguous *locus of enunciation* which Grosfoguel (2011) defined as "the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks" (p. 5). Furthermore, her experiences also revealed a dominant Eurocentric ideal held by the client organisation. There is an apparent discord between the client's organisational goals, the contextual constraints and the true intercultural needs of the organisation. Rene elaborated on the complexity of intercultural elements at play:

> And then there's another client that I'm creating trainings for which they're located in Saudi Arabia. And it's a very modern economy. I think it's a very Western perspective that we're trying to bring to life within Saudi Arabia. And I'm not sure that is even a match. So, there's some discrepancy there as well. But it's the vision of people even higher up that this is a reality, so that this and this should happen... They want to put Saudi Arabia on the map with innovation, as a global player.

Rene's experiences suggest a deep misalignment between the localised organisational goals and her intercultural learning objectives. Szkudlarek (2009) claimed that "inequalities are also growing between the managerial and professional elites" (p.977). Drawing from direct experience, Porto & Byram (2022) emphasised the importance of implementing a critical but not exclusive lens in favour of the Other and how the phrase 'locus of enunciation' can be used to argue for rejecting what comes from elsewhere" (p. 406). Porto & Byram (2022) expounded on the potential deeper layers of socio-political power for the loci of enunciation:

> "locus is therefore not singular but plural, not fixed but dynamic, in permanent development and crisscrossed by issues of power, inequality and

domination as the phrase 'politics of location' indicates. The usual expression 'the/a locus' in the singular fails to capture the dynamism, evolving nature and complexity of an actual locus and blurs the power issues" (Porto & Byram, 2022, p.407).

Porto & Bryan (2022) have highlighted the issue of how dominant Western cultural norms are entangled with Other cultural ideologies. It adds to the complexity of the challenges in an ever-evolving global landscape. Szkudlarek (2009) intimated that "the pro-Western bias of intercultural meta-narratives is so familiar to most of us that it seems 'natural', and we usually do not even notice it or acknowledge it with purely ritual declarations" (p.982). This underscores how globalisation may drive 'Other' cultural communities to conform to a value system that is manufactured in the dominant Western ways of thinking and behaving. Ritzer (2004) in his book 'The McDonaldization of Society' discussed how the predominance of similar global inputs and pressures has led to increased homogenisation of hegemonic structures. He argued that homogeneity and heterogeneity are linked to conflicting local and global processes and posited that "global heterogeneity predominates when local (or Indigenous) practices are dominant in different geographic locations throughout the world" (Ritzer, 2004, p.162).

Adding more fuel to the ambiguity of location, Grosfoguel (2011) indicated that the Western Eurocentric perspective has hidden its 'location of enunciation' (p. 7) which has enabled the cultivation of superior systems of knowledge in the West and inferior knowledge of Other. I argue that Eurocentrism is so strongly embedded in intercultural learning practice that it steers Western knowledge production as an unquestioned ideal that hides its colonial drivers. The Eurocentric perspective is a universal thinking and interaction pattern that facilitates and constrains approaches to globalisation (Smith, 2021). As such, it provides further insight into the extended research question of how intercultural content is realised in edu-business. It speaks to how an over-reliance on Western models must cultivate regard for 'Other' knowledge in order to curb the global path of universal Western paradigms.

6.2 Issues Related to Being Open to Alternatives for Curriculum and Pedagogy

Beyond the concept of disrupting pedagogical constraints, Shahjahan et al., (2022) underscore the concept of being open to alternatives which has implications for intercultural education in edu-business. They identify the decolonising of pedagogy that provides opportunities for integrating, validating and sharing diverse voices with 'Other' epistemologies to promote curiosity, instead of scepticism of alternative knowledge. In the edu-business environment, the learning developers' ability to effectively mediate cultural differences with alternative ways of thinking and doing is a key point for a decolonising intercultural pedagogy.

However, the data analysis exposed a painfully clear gap in the pursuit of pedagogical alternatives that highlights the use of a *paradoxical logic of universal approaches in edu-business*. In other words, this issue refers to addressing diversity through universal approaches that "support the notion of a standard set of norms, equally applicable across different cultural worldviews" (Szkudlarek, 2009, p.978). Their application compares to a 'one-size-fits-all' thinking which can be an 'easy fix' for developing programmes that demand a more consumable and cost-effective solution to intercultural challenges (Jones et al., 2005). Universalism also aligns with the neoliberal economic ideology as a homogenised approach responding to the forces of globalisation (Ronaldson, 2000), which is deeply entrenched in the edu-business context.

The participants demonstrated such homogenised thinking to cultural diversity with the established use of universal approaches for intercultural education. Yet, the tendency to employ universal content was a significant point of contention for the participants. This was emphasised by Drew who explained how universal intercultural content does not reflect the diversity of the learner audience, nor does it meet their specific needs: "I think a lot of times it's just written for very general audience… So, it doesn't fit the needs of people with certain disabilities learning, hearing or otherwise". Her concerns lay with the uniqueness of her learners and their diverse needs. These issues were echoed by Val who shared similar experiences regarding the standardisation of intercultural curriculum and pedagogy. She explained that the content is geared to the dominant culture whose needs are prioritised:

> …it's all aimed at the standard employee with at a certain level of knowledge, a certain level of language understanding, from a certain background, but that's not actually the group of people you're training. So, you need to look at the target audience and that's not always done right… you always have to cater to everyone, but there's so many different factors backgrounds, knowledge experience.

Her comments disputed the standardised approach to intercultural learning assumed by her edu-business that favours the dominant Dutch culture. Both Val and Drew's experiences signal a need for personalisation with universal approaches. This resonates with Zinga and Styres (2019) whose research revealed that:

> …educators often seek prescribed or universal tools that can be implementedacross diverse educational contexts. Universal approaches are not effective within decolonizing and anti-oppressive work due to the deeply personal work that must be done on the part of both the educator and the student (p.44).

This suggests that individuality or uniqueness of context are critical elements that may counter universal approaches. In the same vein, Moe compared her experience with cultural learning to a formulaic approach to curriculum design that aims at the edu-business need to conform to modern standards: "I think it's often seen as a tick box exercise, but that is what is said and promoted and marketed", suggesting that her experience with intercultural education in edu-business is about the semblance of intercultural convention. According to Ferri (2022) "tokenistic displays of inclusion and diversity appropriate the word 'intercultural' and use it as a form of currency in neo-liberal academic discourses while glossing over inequality and othering practices within these same institutions" (p. 384).

The data analysis also extended the universal approaches to the idea of creating harmonious conflict-free learning environments. This was conveyed by Ursa who relied on this paradoxical logic for handling intercultural differences from a slightly different pedagogical rationale. Rather than directly addressing intercultural diversity in the pluralistic context, she

allowed intercultural learning to happen spontaneously. As her comments revealed, she opted for intercultural issues to occur naturally in the context of the learning exchange rather than purposely raising diversity as an issue for deeper examination:

> And we have a lot of different cultures. They wouldn't say that for the... European group of people because they are very similar. Very often people realise different perspectives, different understanding in different contexts... That's a situation where, you know, participants realise these things… that there are diverse levels. But if there are really different cultures, like Korean or Asian ones or sometimes French, as well, because they have a different ego... Let's say that on a positive note... they have different arguments and look at things differently; they might raise that issue.

Remarkably, Ursa referenced essentialised descriptions of other cultural groups while denoting Europeans as a singular monocultural group. It suggests that Ursa applies a dominant Eurocentric lens for mitigating cultural difference which "garners its representational power through its ability to be many things at once, to be universal and particular, to be a source of identity and difference'' (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995, p.302).

This adds further weight to the issue of Eurocentrism that permeates edu-business as a definitive part of the context. Noted is how Ursa also added a descriptor to qualify the French 'ego' as diverse from the European way, but her *positive* connotation for the French 'ego' gave weight to the flexibility and power that undergirds the 'whiteness' of her lens (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Moreover, she applied a mode of thinking that reflected assimilationist approaches to cultural difference in pluralistic environments. Her approach further sustains the lingering Eurocentric assumption of assimilation and 'the whiteness' that dominates institutional thinking and ways of working (Ahmed, 2017). Such assimilationist methods are no longer endorsed by The Council of Europe (2008).

Less convincingly, Drew shared mixed feelings on universal approaches. She advocated 'neutrality' for navigating the challenges of culturally diverse learning spaces in edu-business. Arguably, neutrality might be considered a semantic

variation of a 'conflict-free' approach. However, she cautioned that cultural assumptions occur where there is an absence of information which suggests some scepticism surrounding her neutral approach.

> But if you need to look at how to handle intercultural situations in the workplace with a culture that's so diverse from the Dutch culture where I live, that it is mind-blowing the way you get trained on how certain cultures work because a lot of it is stereotyping… I think sometimes, sometimes just keeping it in neutral, you know, and it doesn't always have to be like neutral…. if you keep it neutral, people can start filling it (in).

Drew stressed that the use of stereotypes may lead to false cultural comparatives about the dominant culture. She highlighted that knowledge gaps may lead to assumptions that sustain intercultural power relations. I noted how her stance on neutrality may have attempted to avoid an 'essentialism' ideology, Fairclough (1995) submits that neutral positions may be taken when specific ideologies are viewed as "incompatible with his or her overt political or social beliefs and affiliations, without being aware of any contradiction" (p.42). Neutrality is assumed to be a less risky or a pedagogically safer approach to managing cultural diversity that legitimises universal practices. Holiday and Aboshiha (2009) referred to an apparent neutrality that resides in our essentialist Western ideologies citing that "Western contexts (are) imbued with assumptions of domination and supremacy (Gist-Mackey, 2022, p.559).

The ability of learning developers to uncover and question dominant and engrained perspectives is central to the DCP concept of being open to alternatives for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy. It has signalled the importance of effecting a decolonising context that is conducive to 'Other' knowledge. Standard modes of practice, instead reflect a simplification of ideas and concepts for consumption that are not always in the interest of its intended learners intercultural needs. Rather, they optimise efficiency objectives to further the organisational interests (Ritzer, 2004). Again, this highlights how edu-business is not immune to the element of knowledge commodification as seen in the globalising effect of neoliberalism (Ritzer, 2004). Universalist modes of practice further exemplify how

neoliberalism drives the economic priority for curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business.

Probing further into the use of universal approaches, the data analysis revealed an underlying issue for intercultural education that falls under the universal approaches for edu-business. In the data analysis, this issue describes *an essentialist rationale for intercultural education*. As clarified earlier, edu-business has relied on essentialist approaches for intercultural education. Szkudlarek (2009) asserted that they are often detached exercises with biased 'scripts'. This depiction aligns with my experience of intercultural programmes in edu-business where learners cloak themselves with intercultural tools rather than authentically empathising with 'Others'. As O'Sullivan (2013) contends, it may lead to a default mode of learning that relies on essentialist paradigms and blinds learning developers to the sociocultural and interactional evidence that is before them. The use of essentialist thinking or stereotyping practices was a commonly applied approach, although a contentious practice, as revealed in the data analysis. Drew did not support the use of stereotypes in connection with professional experience:

> So many stereotypes in this world... and people tend to take that to the training room as well...You know, there's always these stereotypes that are used in examples when we talk about dealing with people from other cultures, and it doesn't always help because it's not always true.

She underscored how the common practice of stereotypes does not accurately depict 'Other' groups, but they are heavily engrained in the knowledge and previous experiences of learners. This is an important consideration for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy which seeks to dismantle essentialist cultural frameworks and assumptions.

On the other hand, Jo suggested that these types of cultural comparatives can be useful. She reasoned that the use of essentialised cultural representations may be a practical way to improve cultural understanding. "What's easily done is put people in boxes, but it's like not a good thing to do, I think. Yeah, sometimes we do it to understand, (to) get a better understanding of things" (Jo). However, her logic reflects Western values that are rooted in coloniality for the identifying of 'Othered' groups which further perpetuate relations of power. Hundle (2019)

claimed that the fitting of people into identifiable boxes aligned with the capitalist practice of commodification and universalism. This commodification of people can also be traced to the colonial practice of slavery that assigned a trading value to 'Othered' individuals and cultural groups. Shahjahan (2011) connected this notion of commodification and slavery as "based on physical power and depended on accounting controls to ensure work discipline" (p.195). In other words, the commodification of 'Others' or the systematised work of 'Others' has served to propagate domination and control. It shines a clear light on the coloniality effects that persist in the neoliberal context of edu-business.

Max added to the ambiguity surrounding essentialism as an intercultural practice. She recognised individual uniqueness using descriptors that she redefined as 'personality traits'. She viewed cultural stereotyping as an obsolete practice:

> I'm thinking, you know, stereotyping is never a good idea and there are very loud French people and very indirect Dutch people and there are very timid Americans. And, you know, it's so outdated and you know, it doesn't work anymore. And I think that's, you know, you shouldn't stereotype... And if they are from whatever cultural backgrounds, you have to know how to deal with different kinds of people. But stereotyping is easy.

Max has made a good point with the ease of applying stereotypes to explain cultural differences. At the same time, his comments demonstrate how he has unwittingly used stereotypes of cultural groups to validate their disuse and, in effect, made them useful. It could be argued that the tendency to essentialise group descriptions has become such an engrained part of Western cognition that it may be useful to accept them as a working model rather than completely reject their relevance. This follows Spack (1997) who claimed that by acting on the "power to identify, we actually may be imposing an ethnocentric ideology and inadvertently supporting the essentializing discourse that represents cultural groups as stable or homogeneous entities" (p.73). I recognise this logic in my need to proclaim both Canadian and Chinese cultural affiliations as distinct from my Dutch membership. My declaration of diverse cultural identities serves to further support the usefulness of essentialised representations.

Further insights shared by Ursa, showed her use of essentialised approaches for engendering moments of learning reflection. She referred to Hofstede's (1986) cultural dimensions as advantageous for building intercultural awareness:

> We sometimes refer to Hofstede as well... just to create awareness of, you know, what other cultures may be like or communicate or whatever to be aware of issues with another culture. I'd say that were positive and negative… to not only think out of my frame, try to understand the other person, the other culture... other contexts.

To Ursa's point, it is important to consider the assumptions and essentialist descriptions that are shared not only for what they say about others but for how those descriptions are transferred and accepted in the Western context. O'Sullivan (2013) noted that essentialised cultural descriptions may be an unavoidable facet of human thinking and it may make more sense to attend to their interpretation and application. From a decolonising standpoint, this might include examining how we objectify others in what is often a construct void of contextual and power dynamics (O'Sullivan, 2013). Integrating the use of essentialised cultural descriptions has stressed how educators need to "take issue with the interpretation of essentialising descriptions that we propagate in our own discourse" (O'Sullivan, 2013, p.161).

Rene's comments raised a further point with regard to how essentialised intercultural approaches depict the fixed nature of intercultural models in the globalized context, "I do think that a lot of the older models don't fulfil the needs of what's going on within culture as in globalisation, as in the world today, *period (emphasis added)*". She revealed how her essentialist foundations have persisted as assumptions that she has formed about diverse cultures and inevitably she has formed cultural biases that are integrated into her professional practice. On deeper reflection, Rene was acutely aware of her thinking and related actions:

> The way I think that people would learn in Africa, I think because I have my assumptions about that, but I have no idea if that's true. Also, we receive content from them (the client), which I was extremely shocked in a negative way about. So, that also formed some assumptions that I created. So, then I had maybe a different picture in my mind than what's the reality.

Her reflection on her assumptions connected to her experience has helped to decentre her common learning paradigms and enabled Rene to consider new thinking. This suggested that there is value for learning developers in understanding our epistemic biases that are propagated in practice. However, it requires a critical lens to identify hegemonic practices and to break the contextual restraints that shape accepted thinking and the behaviours that inculcate our assumptions about 'Others'.

The data analysis has revealed how learning developers are pedagogically aware and have questioned essentialised practices for addressing the challenges of intercultural difference and yet continue to apply essentialised approaches in intercultural practice. The contradictory thinking surrounding essentialism for intercultural learning falls under the paradoxical logic that is embedded within Western learning developers' universal approaches for mitigating intercultural diversity. Whether undergirded by Eurocentrism, universalism, neutrality, neoliberal efficiency, essentialism or a combination of paradigms, these approaches elucidate that intercultural approaches in edu-business need to be challenged. They add further insight to the question surrounding pedagogical challenges that frame intercultural education in edu-business.

Hence, the findings suggest that edu-business would be strongly confronted by 'pedagogical alternatives' due to the paradoxical logic that is embedded in learning practice. It emphasises the salience of being open to alternatives for decolonising intercultural education in edu-business by disrupting our unquestioned Western ontologies and Eurocentric hegemonic traditions (Pal and Kim, 2022). Shahjahan et al., (2022) advocated that being open to alternatives also required the establishing of a space for alternatives that needs to come from *localised* contexts. "geographical, disciplinary, institutional, and/or stakeholder contexts" (p. 73) … "that shape, drive, and/or underpin the various manifestations of meanings, actualizations, and challenges related to DCP" (p. 76). Exploring the localised issues surrounding the actualising of decolonising alternatives in curriculum and pedagogy are discussed in the following chapter. These involve (1) issues related to critiquing and probing the positionality of knowledge, (2) issues related to cultivating an inclusive curriculum beyond prevailing knowledge systems, (3) issues related to integrating relational approaches to teaching and learning, and

(4) issues related to connecting to external relations for the coproduction of knowledge.

Chapter Seven: Issues Related to Concepts in Actualising a Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy

Following the framework analysis of the DCP framework, the concepts relating to the actualising of a decolonising curriculum and pedagogy point to the importance of knowledge production within their local indigenous communities and actively seeking ways to decolonise practice outside of conventional spaces. Shahjahan et al., (2022) underscored the need to be relevant for and across diverse disciplines, cultures, communities and movements for the coproduction of knowledge. These actualising DCP concepts resonate with de Alba et al., (2000) who also emphasised an enduring learning process in a globalised context. They stated that "what is important pedagogically is the process of construction, and not the object constructed" (Alba et al., 2000, p.140). This notion of constructing and reconstructing based on the everchanging global flows is captured in the DCP framework (Shahjahan et al., 2022).

From the analysis of DCP actualising concepts, I compared their relevance to the actualising of practice for intercultural education in edu-business. As previously outlined, the four main DCP actualising concepts are described as: (1) critiquing and probing the positionality of knowledge, (2) cultivating an inclusive curriculum beyond prevailing knowledge systems (3) integrating relational approaches to teaching and learning, and (4) the connecting of external relations for co-production of knowledge. From the data analysis, I identified several key issues that further challenge the decolonisation of intercultural education in edu-business. These key issues include the decisive geopolitical context of edu-business, the integration of culturally safe learning spaces are integral to knowledge sharing, the fostering of authenticity and affective considerations for inclusive spaces, the development of self-knowledge in relation to 'Others', the instrumental role of the learning developer in actualising praxis, the apprehending of social relations for co-constituting intercultural knowledge, and the acknowledging of social power within intercultural external relations. In the following sections, I explore these related issues for actualising a decolonising pedagogy in intercultural education in edu-business.

7.0 Issues Related to Critiquing and Probing the Positionality of Knowledge

A crucial component in actualising a decolonising intercultural curriculum and pedagogy is cultivating the learners' ability to question accepted knowledge systems and their relevance for 'Others'. Shahjahan et al., (2022) described how learning developers must activate and promote the capacity of learners to critically analyse and uncover dominant assumptions. As previously argued, learning developers in edu-business have assumed a Eurocentric bias that overshadows a co-constitutive process for knowledge production. Therefore, a decolonising practice involves learning developers approaching alternative knowledge production in new ways. However, as Szkudlarek (2009) argued, "the constructivist approach is rarely put into practice in the world of intercultural corporate training, where the ultimate objectives are formulated by top managers and intercultural trainers" (p. 978). This is reified by learning stakeholders who are often powerless to challenge the static educational approaches and methodologies (Szkudlarek, 2009).

The importance of challenging the learning priorities in edu-business cannot be understated. The power relations embedded in intercultural education are connected to different ideologies that make assumptions about the world that frame how developers approach their practice. According to Shahjahan et al., (2022), it is the geopolitical environments, relative to their socio-political, socio-historical, sociocultural and geographical context that have a bearing. Icaza and Vasquez (2018) referred to the geopolitics of knowledge production as the interdependent relationship of education with its context. This has implications for curriculum and pedagogy in formal and nonformal learning environments such as edu-business.

Our different nation-state capacities and inequalities need to be recognized to help illuminate the varied logic and socio-political approaches and their impact on knowledge (Dodd, 2004). Dodd (2004) assumes a critical pedagogical view of conventional approaches to geopolitics that disregard the underlying assumptions of power that work to sustain socio-political and geographical contexts. He contends "that expressions of geographical difference contribute to a politics of identity formation" (p. 52).

In favour of Dodd's view, I argue from this geopolitical stance that some nation-states are better positioned to impact the educational discourse regarding production, dissemination and geopolitical understandings of knowledge. Shahjahan et al., (2022) advocated that the establishing of a space for alternatives needs to come from *localised* contexts. "geographical, disciplinary, institutional, and/or stakeholder contexts" (p. 73) ... "that shape, drive, and/or underpin the various manifestations of meanings, actualizations, and challenges related to DCP" (p. 76). Delgado & Romero (2000) agree that knowledge is contextually situated, but they underscore that the presence of local histories may not be easily transferred to the global space. This frames one of the inherent challenges associated with education and contextual considerations.

Furthermore, in Western education, the dominant Eurocentric paradigm has framed social concepts that replicate the colonial blueprint in the production of knowledge that discounts the socio-cultural positionality and knowledge of Others. Mignolo (2007) argues that "it is necessary to fracture the hegemony of knowledge and understanding" (p. 459) that currently order the world through our political, economic, sociocultural, technological and ethical systems. Rizvi (2007) also advocated the disruption of theory and geopolitical practices that continue to invade the positionality of knowledge through dominant structures of power (Rizvi, 2007) which have implications on society and by extension the sector of edu-business in the Western European zone.

Following this DCP conceptual focus, the data analysis revealed the issue surrounding *the decisive geopolitical context of edu-business* that shows how intercultural learning decisions and practices have not explored these geopolitical dimensions. Rather, learning developers have only surfaced the implications for their direct learning audiences. Often, they have side-lined the broader socio-political implications of intercultural learning in edu-business. Ursa, for example, considered the immediate impact of the global social context concerning its impact on the immediate learning space:

> Due to the media and what happens out in the world not just diversity, but the wars which are coming closer [sic] and all these things are more there, there was more urgency for someone to raise these (issues)... Especially

now with the virtualisation, I would say in any training centre, it brings (learners) well, even closer in one room together… So, you really have, literally, people sitting in a training virtually- (from) any continent and any culture. I would say the kind of, you know, guidelines… How do we communicate with each other? How do we look at each other? How do we, you know, deal with each other in breakout sessions or whatever, to be really open and allow the situation to be positive?

Ursa's comments suggest that she has limited awareness of the geopolitical dimensions in her learning space. Rather than probing the deeper socio-political intersections, she employs practical guidelines for supporting safe and positive interactions. Her strategies set norms for working behaviours based on the dominant cultural view of what is acceptable (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). She does not include the possibilities for the geopolitical dimensions that intersect in her learning space or how these learners have come together at this time that affects their interaction.

Rather, Ursa's approach to geopolitical challenges concerns the need to connect flows of information in the current learning environment. In so doing, she sidesteps the more complex intercultural strategies that question the positionality of knowledge in diverse contexts which may harbour issues of dominance and control within the intercultural learning space. Her learning practices reflect Martin & Pirbhai's (2016) findings on institutionalised violence that is often driven by Eurocentric object-based norms of practice rather than the important "loci of their enunciation" (Martin & Pirbhai, 2016, p.369) which impact the process of meaning-making and knowledge production.

Equally, it suggests that Ursa does not recognise her position as a vehicle through which to influence the direction and interpretation of information for her culturally diverse learners. Her choice to exercise her power for consensus rather than confrontation of intercultural issues overlooks 'Other' ways of processing information and inhibits alternate voices. It suggests an attempt to minimise cultural discomfort or disagreements. Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009) claimed that there is a need for "a nuanced understanding of power as a social, political and institutional construct" (p.67). Ursa's consideration to include a more geopolitical

approach would enable a more effective response to intercultural diversity that works towards overcoming resistance rather than sustaining dominant practices in the learning process.

Further insights drawn from Max's perspective also echoed Ursa's practical sentiments regarding the geopolitical approach. However, she framed her perspective as an organisational-centred response: "With everything that's been going on, you cannot design a '*not (emphasis added)* culturally appropriate' training for (XXX organisation) when they are also very politically active and active promoters of cultural difference- that wouldn't make any sense". Max responded to the clients' intercultural needs in terms of organisational commerciality for market appeal and relevance. Her experiences underscore Shi-xu's (2001) views on the overlooked hegemonic structures that infiltrate intercultural approaches at the broader level. It suggests her keen awareness of the power embedded in her intercultural messages that framed the organisation's global positionality in relation to Others. It also demonstrated her reluctance to challenge organisational priorities in favour of intercultural learning needs. Both Ursa and Max have assumed a Western-dominated approach to exercising their decision-making power in the actualisation of knowledge production and distribution.

In sharp contrast, Moe acknowledged the dominance of geopolitical elements that may cause division and discord in the negotiation of daily interactions. She viewed the Western political position as pervasive in its intercultural effects:

> The people that have *this* politics and the people that have *that* politics (emphasis added) ... So, I think that has created far more divisions which I think is dreadful for deepening cultural development or understanding. It's a globalised world and we're all in it together. And I think that it has taken us backwards. Very, very much the West. Yes, very much 'us' than them.

Moe has underscored the power in the dominant Western geopolitics that can be divisive in the dissemination of knowledge. She has linked the inherent geopolitics with intercultural knowledge to the established historical systems. She has recognized how geopolitical dimensions can impact how information is produced and shared. Moe explained what she considered to be oppressive rather than open information streams:

I mean, I think you can see stuff in the press, even today that it, depending on the country or the culture, whether it's Hong Kong or China or the systems that were put in place in order to keep people *safe, (emphasis added)* could be perceived to also have an edge of… we're going to do this because (sic) it means we can control you. And some of these controls haven't shifted or changed. They're still in place because it means greater control of people.

In contrast to Max and Ursa's views, Moe's comments take a deeper perspective that locates the geopolitical realities from systems of socio-historical control that continue to impact the thinking and actions of society. She likens the dissemination of information to a shifting commodity and refers to an illusion of a liberal society. By framing her perception as 'us' in a dominant context over 'them' in the subordinate context, she challenges the local dissemination of information that frames knowledge production. Moe's insights reflect Foucault's (1977) concept of 'governmentality' that rationalises power and knowledge as a resource for constructing and controlling society and people as a collective entity. Her thoughts echo Foucault's (1977) theory that governance is sustained through networks of communication and people which convey a capacity for influence over society. Particularly relevant to Moe's views are how the geopolitics of Eurocentric thinking patterns are aptly described under the guise of democracy as "both the seed of emancipation and the seed of regulation and oppression" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 459).

Shahjahan et al., (2022) also described the significance of emancipatory lines of thought for critiquing and the probing of the positionality of knowledge in actualising decolonisation. The decolonising of geopolitical realities, therefore, lies in understanding the political dimension that has shifted the notion of decolonisation from an independent insular context to an external perspective that has broader transformative potential (Mamdani, 2016). For edu-business, this means that learning developers must interrogate their Eurocentric positionality relevant to its broader contextualised hegemonic factors to mediate the assumptions about culture (Shi-xu, 2001) and knowledge production. In this light, the issue of geopolitics of knowledge provides a decisive component to how contextual factors and external interests influence pedagogical and curriculum development in edu-business. Intercultural learning in edu-business harbours a

geopolitical context in which learning developers sanction hegemonic narratives. These geopolitical issues require further consideration in the production and dissemination of intercultural knowledge in edu-business.

7.1 Issues Related to Cultivating an Inclusive Curriculum Beyond Prevailing Knowledge Systems

For extending the learning value related to geographical context, Shahjahan et al., (2022) also emphasised the constructing of an inclusive curriculum beyond prevailing knowledge systems. They emphasised that educators need to involve learners in the identification and interpretation of knowledge practices that comprise an inclusive decolonising curriculum (Shahjahan et al., 2022). Mngomezulu & Hadebe (2018) agreed that inclusive learning experiences allow for excluded knowledge and perspectives without dismissing one knowledge system in favour of another.

In cultivating an inclusive curriculum in edu-business, the data analysis revealed themes that were more inward facing rather than outward towards the unique situations of 'Others'. In other words, the participants acknowledged their dominant Western approaches to inclusive curriculums which raised two issues: *the integrating of culturally safe learning spaces is integral to knowledge sharing,* and *the fostering of authenticity and affective considerations for inclusive spaces* which are discussed in what follows.

Shahjahan et al., (2022) noted that the literature was limited in reference to learning environments that explored the affective elements in the decolonising experience. They described the challenge of navigating authentic and affective environments that can be stifled by Western learning approaches. They posited that "discussions on affect and temporality would help foreground the invisible forces at play in the enactment and actualization of DCP" (p.103). Interestingly, what stood out in the data was how the participants interpreted and actualised inclusive spaces differently.

The participants agreed on the importance of inclusion in learning environments, but they identified different aspects in the creation of those environments. A sense of safety in a learning exchange was important for promoting learner interaction

because learners felt that they could contribute their experiences and knowledge freely; this is essential for developing an effective culturally diverse environment. For example, Max underscored inclusion and the need for a positive and safe learning context that transcended all organisational levels: "...the training and the content and the leadership for that matter, it should be for everybody. And, and it shouldn't matter. Yeah. Not even more inclusive, inclusive *period*" (emphasis added). His comments suggest that inclusive environments have the potential to foster a sense of equality and power sharing. Drew also supported this sense of equality in the individual context as an essential component for validating individual knowledge and experience. She stressed the need to attend to different comfort levels in workspaces for meaningful exchanges to take place:

> So, you always have to cater to everyone, but there's so many different factors backgrounds, knowledge, experience... inclusion is, I think, the key to the biggest training successes. If everyone feels included and feels part of it, then the group success will be bigger... I think that's something very important in inclusion because that can be based on gender race but also ability or disability. And you want everyone to come out with the same positive feeling.

> So, with activities, you have to be mindful of the fact that people don't want to say what's truly on their mind or say something that they haven't shared with their colleagues before. Yeah, I have to be mindful of the fact that especially in a work setting, it is a training for people who work together. For instance, you know, there's a relationship within these people... and what they find acceptable to share and not share in that work situation.

Knowingly, Drew underscored how workspaces can hold diverse interpretations of inclusion as well as affective conditions related to their context that further challenge their shared expression. Her views reflect Paige and Martin (1996) who believe that educators need to focus on emotional well-being and learner comfort levels when creating ethically sound intercultural learning environments.

In contrast to building culturally safe learning spaces for learners, a sense of comfort was connected to the learner developer's sense of pedagogical safety. Jo's

approach to creating safe learning spaces revealed a preference for accepted conventional practices. She expressed comfort with creating equality and safety in the learning space by utilising established practices. Jo shared:

> "So then for me, it's safer to focus on different learning styles. If I follow the complete cycle, for me, it feels like *I'm safe* (emphasis added) and without any judgment related to cultures or making assumptions related to culture".

However, what stands out in Jo's response was her preference for the learning developer's sense of safety with accepted practice. Arguably, earlier research shows support for the connection between learning styles and bridging cultural differences. Desmedt & Valcke (2004) describe the learning styles models as "accommodate(ing) individual differences in learning... are generally defined as relatively stable and consistent." (p. 459).

It suggests that Jo needs to curtail the risks of cultural bias in the learning space and indicates a reluctance to confront differences directly. Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009) believe that changing methods, pedagogies and roles can be a source of discomfort for both educators and learners. It might also indicate an avoidance of learning conflict and intercultural confrontation that may lead to teaching challenges beyond common pedagogical practices. Moreover, research from other contexts has shown that educators have taken comfort in familiar content and predictable outcomes that may lack intrinsic drivers (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). This indicates a human complexity to the contextual elements that comprise an individual's sense of inclusion and acceptance in the culturally diverse learning space which may constrain knowledge sharing and production.

Furthermore, Jo's sense of professional caution and tendency to *play it safe* may also be construed as complicity. By not addressing the barriers to intercultural development and learning, she forfeits any potential decolonising opportunities. The implication of complicity can also be extended to the organisational context. As Arday, Belluigi & Thomas (2021) claimed, educational institutions are implicated in replicating privilege in the 'White' curriculum and pedagogy by maintaining complicity as much by what it leaves out as what it includes. Complicity, cognisant or not, perpetuates power dynamics that facilitate learners in their thinking about the 'Other' (Bosma, 2012). In this sense, complicity is a salient aspect to consider

in the development and actualisation of decolonising approaches. It raises pedagogical challenges at diverse levels. Therefore, educators need to encourage the sharing of diverse cultural realities to disrupt and destabilise the complicity and acceptance of power relations located in Western approaches to intercultural education.

Learning developers who practice pedagogical caution may be connected to the educators' sense of safety. It may explain Jo's complicity as well as the learning developers' propensity for conventional, universal and conflict-free approaches revealed earlier in the data analysis. Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) referred to how educators "need to be prepared to acknowledge and examine their own subjectivities, to understand how they are complicit in the violence committed by westernised education systems, curricular and pedagogy, and to understand how this affects their positionality in intercultural interactions" (p. 369). They referred to complicity that encompassed institutional violence and the implications of the institutional context. They suggested that the educators' intercultural positionality involves complicity concerning their unearned privileges that surround the norm of 'whiteness'.

Thus, the actualisation of an inclusive curriculum begins with identifying the diverse interpretations of what culturally diverse safe spaces look like and for whom. It indicates that developers need to challenge the status quo and the pedagogical assumptions that prevent more meaningful exchanges. This highlights developer complicity as a relevant challenge in responding to the extended question of what pedagogical challenges frame intercultural education in edu-business. The data analysis has extended educator complicity as an issue that occurs at both the pedagogical and practice levels in edu-business.

Surrounding the cultivation of safe learning spaces, an additional issue was revealed in the data analysis. This issue concerns *the fostering of authenticity and affective considerations for inclusive learning spaces*. Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009) advocated authenticity for building trust and respect as an important element in establishing inclusion at the outset of a learning exchange. This strongly aligns with Rori's insights which promoted authenticity

and highlighted the nurturing of a culture where people are open to receiving the value of another story or experience:

> Giving a voice, seeing the reality as it is, and not being afraid to hear the criticism that you know that these people might have and on how we can improve things.

> So, it should also be in the right context. So, if you bring people on stage... that people are prepared to hear their story, they come with open mind(s) (Rori).

Her views suggested the need for a sense of safety that allows authenticity to occur. She stressed how authenticity includes welcoming others' contributions with genuine openness that builds trust and respect. This underscores authenticity as a crucial element for framing emotionally safe learning spaces. Burgess, Bishop & Lowe (2022) also found that engendering cultural safety in the co-construction of knowledge, requires the cultivation and activation of authentic relations to disrupt power through sharing and respect.

Szkudlarek (2009) claimed, however, that the lack of authenticity is common in the Western context, particularly in the management and corporate training arena which would have an impact on edu-business. This was evident with Rori's insights. She warned that the work environment does not always promote a learning context that supports the authenticity of 'Others':

> And you will never reach this perfectly inclusive culture because there will always be an exception. There will always be a situation where somebody felt left out. But we do our very best to improve on that, and we learn new things about it. So, I think speaking from the people's experience. If you know the person was struggling all of their life, suddenly being brought on stage and is being heard by the rest and can share their story.

> And then you see that people create layers of resistance or defence, and you don't know where it's coming from. And then they say, yeah, because I needed to fight harder all my life... to prove myself. So, they also bring that to work. Should we discuss it? Do I have time now?

Rori's experiences align with Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009) who posited that when "our authentic selves are endorsed" (p.76), it responds to our fundamental sociocultural needs for connection. This acknowledgement inspires more authentic exchanges and increases the potential for meaningful learning. But when there are feelings of disconnection, others may seem guarded, protective and reluctant to share knowledge (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009).

Further support for authenticity in the inclusive edu-business learning exchange, was provided by Moe. She extended the need for authenticity in the learning space to not only the need for a sense of inclusion for the learner, but also for the educator. She empathised with 'Others' and the feeling of being 'Othered' linked to her status as an outsider to the dominant Dutch culture:

> So, I have felt that (being Othered) as an individual and having taught international students. That was the feedback that I got from them as well, that they felt very much 'Other'... I think I distinctly and wholeheartedly remain feeling like an 'Other'.

Despite her physical identity as part of the 'White' majority, she experienced a sense of alienation from 'not belonging 'to the dominant culture. Her feelings of being 'Othered' served not only to authenticate feelings of Otherness but at the same time increased her capacity to empathise with 'Othered' individuals and communities. Moe's experience aligns with Ginsberg & Wlodkowsi (2009) who explained that educator and learner resistance often mirror each other resulting in their disconnection. It emphasises the need to attend to affect considerations for both learners and educators. Giroux (2004) stresses:

> "the role that affect and emotion play in the formation of individual identities and social collectivities. Any viable approach to critical pedagogy suggests taking seriously those maps of meaning, affective investments, and sedimented desires that enable students to connect their own lives and everyday experiences to what they learn" (p. 44).

Hence, the data analysis has revealed the importance of emotions that undergird authentic and affective considerations for both the learner and the educator's sense of safety. Hundle (2019) connects to an emotional approach to decolonisation that challenges the dominant discourses of diversity through affective responses. Mason & Clark (2010) agreed that affective considerations are an integral part of practice in line with poststructuralist approaches. Boler (1999) also described emotions as part of our collaborative knowledge construction process that has socio-cultural and historical effects. She described our capacity to harness our emotions releases us from the social control that is "achieved as well though 'shaping' or 'winning' the consent of the oppressed" (Boler, 1999, p.6).

Based on these insights, I strongly argue the importance of human-centred approaches on two fronts- the learner and the educator in the decolonisation of learning spaces. Human-centred experiences are relatable and directly contribute to believability, emphasising "the relationship between social control, hegemony, and emotions" (Boler, 1999, p.6). As such, learning developers need to consider the affective side of authenticity as well as allow culturally diverse learners the time and occasion for authenticity to occur. In order to engage learners at a deeper more meaningful level, learning developers need to understand the link between affective considerations which otherwise "make them complicitous with oppressive ideologies" (Giroux, 2004, p. 44). They must genuinely welcome and respect the authenticity of 'Other' contexts. The data analysis supports authentic and affective approaches as salient considerations for fostering culturally safe learning spaces and decolonising curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business. Moreover, they promote the integration of positive relations for the decolonising of curriculum and pedagogy which is explored further under the final DCP actualising concept.

7.2 Issues Related to Integrating Relational Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The final concept of the DCP framework centres on integrating relational approaches to decolonising teaching and learning. It seeks to uncover the distinctiveness of 'Other' experiences for knowledge production and informs a decolonising approach to pedagogy and curriculum (Shahjahan et al., 2022). For the production of intercultural knowledge, Shahjahan et al. (2022) described the

integration of collaborative relational approaches between communities, institutions, and larger socio-political movements. Along similar thought lines, Giroux (1997) focused on the importance of a holistic approach to social, political and historical influences in a critical pedagogy. He believed in the value that can be gleaned from 'lived cultures' which offer more meaningful accounts and expressions of diverse attitudes and values that are grounded in cultural relations of power (Giroux, 1997).

Lived experiences contain diverse attitudes and values. Hundle (2019) justly promoted lived experiences to help materialise the emotional side of exclusion. This included the contradictions that are present in 'lived experience' when related through the voice of 'Other' (Ferri, 2022). These lived contradictions help to challenge our dominant ways of thinking. Thus, educators need to be open to producing and valuing knowledge linked to the 'Other' perspective (Shahjahan et al., 2022). For the actualising of a decolonising practice by integrating relational approaches, the data analysis revealed two prominent issues for edu-business: *developing self-knowledge as a critical component in relation to 'Others',* and *the instrumental role of the learning developer in actualising a relational praxis.* These themes are explored further in the following sections.

Shahjahan et al., (2022) articulated the essential function of self-knowledge for decolonising, understanding and relating to others. Previous research suggests that self-knowledge is a relational process that "involves co-orientation – with an attendant focus on "interactions and the construction of self and other" (Dervin and Hahl, 2015, p.97). It is also in line with the literature review for this research which described the *unfolding of critical subjectivity* and *employing reflexive agency* as prominent themes. For actualising a decolonising curriculum and pedagogy, the data analysis revealed the theme of developing self-knowledge as a critical component in relation to Others.

Based on the data analysis, developing self-knowledge is critical to actualising a decolonising pedagogy because it promotes learners to critically examine the cultural lens that shapes their perspective and understanding. Specifically, the self-reflective element in the construction of self-knowledge is an important facet.

Drew recognised the salience of fostering self-reflection, noting that multiple lenses need to be considered:

> I think they should always be aimed at improving your own vision of a culture. So, knowing what is expected in the culture. Knowing how to work together from your own perspective, not just pinpointing that this person is different because... but really understanding yourself before you can teach others how you are perceived by others as well... And if we teach them how not to label, view themselves through their own eyes first, you can change that a little bit.

She has acknowledged the importance of her subjective lens for understanding 'Other' lenses that may be present in the learning context. Mead (1934) advocated that one's conception of self is an evolving constructive process through interactions with others. In support of self-development, Bereday (1964) also posited learners who develop self-knowledge about Others find value in the mitigating of intercultural challenges. Additionally, learning developers who attend to "the subjectivity of self" (p. 369) within relational approaches help to uncover new ways of thinking and being (Martin & Pirbhai, 2016)

Jo also prioritised developing self-awareness for individual growth. She explained the importance of connecting the benefit of self-awareness that promotes a deeper exploration of self-knowledge. She suggested, "Start with the awareness, then let people understand that there's a need for them to change or develop themselves and grow and think about what's in it for them" (Jo). It suggests that the benefit to self comes from the dual process with others' growth process. Her remarks reflect Molnar & Lindquist (1989) who posited that intentional changes in the interactional social system allow for the possibility and perception of altered 146roletiours to be appropriate. From this perspective, "a cultural misunderstanding between people is an opportunity for learning rather than a reason for estrangement" (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009, p.84).

An additional benefIt to the role of self-knowledge was situated in the greater social discourse. By first "taking stock of one's epistemic locus and the

multiple discourses that constitute it and second, working through the limitations of each of these discourses in order to transform them into something more productive" (Menezes de Souza, 2019, p. 31), learners are able to situate their self-knowledge in the greater social scheme of knowledge production. Drew further reflected on this notion of growth from changes in the social dynamic. She stressed the individual's self-awareness and situatedness in the larger context as an integral and influential part of that system:

> And it should teach you something about yourself and about the glasses you have on, the view you have towards the world as well... But it should also be about, well, how do you view the world? The team around it and why. That's what I think is missing because it's always based on how to deal with other cultures and it's not, it never reflects on you, your view on them. It's also what you make of it and what your view in the world is. And I think that lacks in a lot of trainings, right?

Drew has extended the idea of self-awareness to the broader learning opportunity for both sides of the learning exchange, not the changing of 'Other' perspectives. Martin & Pirbhai (2016) indicated that the practitioners' increased awareness and their acknowledgement of positionality are a relevant place to examine positions of self-awareness and self. By contextualizing the lens of the educator, self-development and self-awareness lead to a more transparent discourse in the production of knowledge. In support of the critical role of self-knowledge, Wringe (2015) emphasised the intimate connection between the process of self-development and the social context.

> "The notion of the social self is the way in which attitudes and values, both aesthetic and ethical, largely derived from the individual's social context, are seen as an essential part of the self, though they may be modified by critical reflection or further experience. An understanding of persons and relations between them is essential to the development of the social and cultural self (Wringe, 2015, p.37).

Rori strongly supported this notion of contextualised perspectives by linking her self-awareness to her positionality in the wider system. "And I will add to that... I think it's less about where a person is coming from. I think that now I feel it's more with all the developments around the world" (Rori). Her views align with Shahjahan et al., (2022) whose findings on the need to incorporate the multifaceted aspects of practice included the "affective, cultural, and political dimensions" (p. 77). It suggests the salience of broadening the learning context to encompass external elements framed by the global imperative.

Therefore, based on the data analysis, I argue that the notion of self-knowledge is central to the learning developer's role and efficacy in actualising a decolonising intercultural practice in edu-business. Specifically, what stands out in the data analysis is the understanding of subjectivity and self-development as contextualised representations of culture (Taylor, 1989). They entail the material, perceptual and relational aspects of where one aspires to be in relation to others. This indicates that self-knowledge is not only critical to 'Other' but also in the understanding of the learning developer's positionality in effecting a decolonising pedagogy and curriculum. It relates to the extended research question of how the context of the learning developer's position greatly impacts intercultural learning in the broader global context.

For Shahjahan et al., (2022), it is the learning developer's relational context that is important for actualising and integrating relational approaches to teaching and learning. Insights from the data analysis narrowed this issue to *the instrumental role of the learning developer in actualising a relational praxis*. This completely supports Shahjahan et al.'s, (2022) emphasis on the need for educators to assume an active role in promoting and relocating the intercultural knowledge process. They describe the decolonising of pedagogy and curriculum by involving 'Others' as leaders, educators and stakeholders in the decolonising process. Freire (1972, 2006) also believed that by breaking down barriers of traditional learning approaches, educators become collaborators and co-constructors in facilitating decolonised learning exchanges. Shi-Xu (2001) advocated the significant function of the educator in stimulating interactions for alternative discourse and knowledge

production. Rene's insights back this notion of the learning developers' collaborative role in empowering learners:

> We, as Land D (learning and development) professionals, also have a responsibility to empower others, to be able to facilitate these things themselves and be able to do that. Yeah, based on their culture, whether it be an organisational culture or a country and culture of people.

This suggests that the learning developer role involves not only being an activator of social connections but also an activator of learners as agents in their own decolonising journeys. Her words resonate here again for transforming learners:

> But what I would like to see is that people become empowered to be able to set these transformations forth based on their own cultural knowledge and expertise and not based on someone else's perspective and expertise (Rene).

Her views point to the learning developer's role in activating connections as well as for stimulating individuals as catalysis in the decolonising process. By exercising agency and accountability in the decolonisation of curriculum and pedagogy, Rene suggests that learning developers are able to mitigate dominant ways of thinking by drawing from their own experiences.

A sense of agency is also advocated by Smith (2021) by focusing on commonalities while remaining cognisant of individual assumptions that underly the culturally diverse space. It may include emotional commonalities tied to the decolonising process which can be surfaced by learners. Such feelings include shock, guilt, shame, anger or remorse that arise in the decolonising process. The emotional aspects of agency add further weight to the issue of fostering authentic and affective cultural exchanges previously discussed. Highlighted in this study's literature review, Lemaire (2020) also stressed the emotions tied to the reconciliation process in Canada which conjured feelings of shame and guilt for the participants of the dominant culture. Gilbertson et al.'s (2021) findings from their research study tour in India revealed the feelings of 'White Saviour' linked to positions of privilege and exploitation of 'Others' which emphasised the

commonality of emotional experiences in the decolonisation of intercultural education.

The learning developer's responsibility for activating and illuminating meaning in the actualisation of decolonising pedagogy was strongly echoed by Val. In her view, the importance of defining the purpose behind intercultural knowledge serves to connect and facilitate the actualisation of decolonising practice.

> I just think that there are a lot of gaps in terms of action. Yeah, call to action. I think it's important to educate people on these and why it's important, but also what it is that we all should be doing... otherwise, nothing is going to change because if you put people through this XXX training... there won't be any change.

Interestingly, Val described her ideas using the pronoun 'we' to qualify the actualising process. It suggests a need for collective responsibility involving both the learner and the learning developer as accountable for spanning the gaps in intercultural relations. Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009) believed that feelings of connection to 'Others' means individual concerns become collective concerns instead of being the issues of 'Others' or just problems for those who are directly affected.

Based on the data analysis, the issues of developing critical self-knowledge and the instrumental role of the learning developer in the actualising process are powerfully related to the actualising of relational approaches to teaching and learning. The participants' insights suggest that her learning and development role is intertwined with her self-development, but also in the mitigating of cultural ambiguities that require agency and accountability for the relating and the receiving of 'Other' knowledge. I argue, therefore, that the decolonising of curriculum and pedagogy must stretch beyond common practices and involve the instrumental role of learning developers in the engaging of 'Other' knowledge. Learning developers serve as activators and agents of decolonisation who bear collective accountability (Shahjahan et al., 2022) in transforming pedagogical approaches both internally and externally. This collective perspective brings the connection to external relations for the coproduction of knowledge into the fold of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy.

7.3 Issues Related to Connecting to External Relations for the Coproduction of Knowledge

Shahjahan et al., (2022) argued for a cohesive approach to knowledge production and they have underscored the value of 'Other' knowledge as an integrated part of the process. They explained the concept as the "strengthening collaborations between community, institutions, and larger socio-political movements" (Shahjahan et al., 2022, p.87). Burgess, Bishop and Lowe (2022) agreed that the collective decentring of Western knowledge requires agency in the constitution of new knowledge, and they encouraged the building of external relations between institutions and the associated peripheral areas and communities. For Hooks (1994), a collaborative approach to knowledge production fractures current educational practices that retain closed knowledge systems and subjugate marginalised groups. A true decolonising change, therefore, must challenge these closed Eurocentric models of knowledge production by including "marginalised voices from systems of knowledge production and critical dialogues about that production" (Clark & Lewis, 2016, p.135). The results from the data analysis revealed two issues that strongly support the connection to external relations for the coproduction of knowledge: *apprehending social relations for the co-constituting of intercultural knowledge* and *acknowledging the social power within intercultural external relations*.

Based on Shahjahan et al.'s, (2022) DCP framework, they have underscored the knowledge drawn from the community rather than knowledge sanctioned by educational institutions. This aligns with Long, Linabary & Wilhoit-Larson (2022, p.555) who theorised that relational approaches are based on the belief of our intimate connected network. Rogoff (2007) concurs that the individual's sociocultural position is constructed with others as an active contributing member of social communities. Thus, social relations increase opportunities for enhancing an understanding of one's perspective and how ideas are named and framed "as universal but are actually very much bound by specific ideas about individuals their role in the world that are not universally shared" (Davies, Sant, Schultz & Pashby, 2018, p. 50).

Based on past theoretical work, the nurturing of social relations is a critical component for external relations in the production of knowledge. The data analysis revealed a refinement of this concept in actualising and connecting to external relations for the coproduction of knowledge. This issue described the apprehending of social relations for the co-constituting of intercultural knowledge. In other words, intercultural knowledge is purposely pursued as a collective social endeavour. However, this study's participants held different conceptions of the social learning process for knowledge production relative to the context. In the place of dedicated or assigned learning exchanges, social connections need to be purposely sought for their potential to enrich the intercultural exchange. Rori's strongly advocated a purposeful but continuous intercultural knowledge exchange:

> (Learning) doesn't happen only in the classroom. It happens in some different spots. With the culture you move from this very old-fashioned way of looking at things to a more inclusive, like, it's bigger, it's more abstract.

According to Jones et al., (2005), this is an important point for institutions that contain their learning spaces and disconnect with their local communities, adding weight to Rori's views on a gradual learning process through shifting social spaces. Fullan (2001) also argued that efficacy in educators means attending to the development of relationships that foster knowledge building.

Jo also advanced the connection of social relations to the development of intercultural knowledge as a bigger collaborative undertaking in learning organisations. She postulated: "Then it should be like a collective thing because you cannot change the world all by yourself. Right? So, everybody participates in the system and it's a hard time to really change the system". Her comments emphasised the role of social cooperation in knowledge sharing and production, which is particularly important in a conventional or closed organisational system. Her comments resonate with Von Krogh, Ichijo & Nonaka (2000) who stated that "knowledge creation puts particular demands on organisational relationships. For people to share personal knowledge, individuals must rely on others to listen to their ideas" (p. 45).

In the building of external relations for the coproduction of knowledge, a final issue was revealed in the data analysis – the issue of *acknowledging the social*

power within intercultural external relations. Edwards and Usher (1994) posited that individuals need to be knowledge producers but with consideration to 'Other' knowledge in the context of power relations. This means that power relations denote how one's sociocultural positioning is constructed *with* Others. In particular, Western learning exchanges are considered to be coloniality-based interactions that are grounded in relations of power. Cheah (2016) agreed that exploring power relations from a decolonising lens allows self-development in relation to one's colonial foundations.

Some of the participants readily acknowledged their cultural power or lack thereof within external relations. Rene not only recognised but questioned her cultural position in relation to Others. This was central to her intercultural understanding and knowledge:

> A lot of times, my perspective of how things should be are different to the reality. And that's what's causing this gap. And I'm not sure what the reality then is because I'm not part of that literal (Other) culture. Whether it be the African culture or the culture within the Middle East, I'm still an outsider... Kind of like, I have my toe in the water (Rene).

It suggests a limitation to her influence in attending to the needs of a culturally diverse learner community of which she is not a part. By acknowledging and confronting her lack of 'Other' knowledge, she was able to critically assess her cultural position. This aligns with Von Krogh, Ichijo, and Nonaka's (2000) views of power in the organisational context. They explained that sociocultural tension often equates power and influence with information acquisition. The "creation and justification of concepts is influenced by the strength of relationships and the extent to which organisational members feel they can suggest new concepts and ideas, as well as convey and receive constructive criticism" (Von Krogh et al., 2000, p.46). Their views add further support to the argument for *integrating culturally safe learning spaces for knowledge sharing* in edu-business. They also indicated a hierarchical aspect to the constitution of knowledge on which one must cast an adjudicating eye on the inherent power within social relations.

Rene's acknowledgement of her limited cultural knowledge in culturally diverse contexts has exemplified her dominant Western perspective. It suggests that her

Western perspective pervades her professional approach to intercultural pedagogy. Her comments also indicated that an authentic understanding and knowledge of Others may be achievable when one is immersed or part of 'local' relations. Her insights resonate with Fullan (2001) who believed that local networks are underutilised, and they matter because culturally specific knowledge is context relevant. Hence, the data indicates that the actualising of a decolonising pedagogy requires learning designers to acknowledge and confront their Western intercultural limitations. This finding reflects Schultz, Abdulla, Ansari, Canli, Keshavarz, Kiem, Prado de O. Martins, & Vieira de Oliveira (2018) who describe a type of practitioner impostership:

> Academics and designers are adept at mimicking the representational dimension of movements – "political or otherwise" – without necessarily generating or supporting the substantive changes... This is less a problem of individual failing than it is a design of the institutions that we work for (p.82).

Their insights are in line with Bhabha's (1994) previous concept of mimicry for coping with and bridging intercultural knowledge gaps. Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016), also advanced similar ideas of knowledge production associated with critical relationality founded on collaboration, and engagement. They advocated spaces of critical relationality that promote 'being with' (Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, 2016, p.269) which are comparable to Bhabha's (1994) 'third space' or cultural hybridity.

Williams (2003) raised a finer point with contexts of coloniality regarding how "relations of power and ideology call into question the underlying assumption of the personal assignment – that it will allow students to speak with authority and authenticity about their experience and culture" (Williams, 2003, p. 593). This assumption of learner agency that is cultivated from social power is an integral part of promoting external relations that are purposefully pursued. Thus, the pedagogical potential of decolonisation lies in exposing nuances in culture and power relations that are beyond the imaginings or scopes of present perception. Social relations that promote knowledge sharing can expose the levels of social power and make:

> "...visible other organizing principles of social life that exist not in isolation but in their engagement with dominant models. A recovery of *alternative rationalities* disrupts not only our ontological realities but also the Eurocentric intellectual tradition that subjugates the *native/ indigenous/other* forms of organizing within organizational research (Pal, Kim, Harris, Long, Linabary, Wilhoit, Larsen, Jensen, Gist-Mackey, McDonald, Nieto-Fernand, Jiang, Misra & Dempsey, 2022, p.548).

Pal et al.,(2022) agreed that a recovery of alternative rationalities needs to disrupt these Eurocentric frames of reference at the institutional level and the cultivation of external relations at a wider level is important for realising substantial decolonising change. The need for expansive external relations resonated with this study's research participants. Moe's views promote the need for learning developers to develop deeper social relations:

> So, I think, I think there could be professional development, but also developing social networks and trust and empathy... and we work at that, and we work at sustaining that, and this is how we do it... to build that knowledge.

Moe's remarks supported the importance of expanding social relations for building connections that lead to new channels of information for transforming education. Her ideas promote the purposeful cultivation of social relations as a valid channel for accessing 'Other' knowledge. Her point is directed at learning developers' need to connect in multifaced ways with external relations to activate more meaningful learning spaces for constructing a decolonising pedagogy. Rori's comments also indicated that it would take a community to evoke expansive change and it required multifaceted ways of thinking and doing:

> So, keeping it complex, understanding the challenge and understanding it's not black and white... So, once you acknowledge the complexity level, you create a bigger discussion that people take more seriously. So, that's where I think you should create that diversity and inclusion... all this cultural inclusiveness. Because you do say to people, there is no easy solution for this, but we will work together towards a better place.

Her comments echoed Gale de Saxe & Trotter-Simons (2021) who described the need for relationality to frame decolonising educator-learner interactions as a 'collective resistance' (p. 8). Arday et al., (2021) also underscored "a collective and concerted effort is required to redesign our curriculum to provide something that engages inclusively, as these differing histories are required for successful navigation in a truly multi-cultural global society" (p. 310).

However, Martin & Pirbhai-Illich (2016) cautioned that for "a relational pedagogy the aim is not to resolve differences, but to recognise the tension between alternative epistemologies and to accept that there may be some differences that are beyond understanding" (p. 369). This is backed by the research of Clark & Lewis (2016) on transformative education processes for decolonising practices that advocate reflecting and learning from diverse life experiences and being cognisant of barriers posed by Eurocentric models.

Val recognised a gradual decolonising shift and the need to accommodate Other cultural needs in daily practice. As an example, she remarked on her edu-business's recent decision to transfer workloads from the head office to outpost offices: "…it seems to me that we're still finding our way of doing. But there are some things that grow organically". Her edu-business's organisational shift included the use of the local language to become the official working language rather than English. It suggests that the process of decolonisation in edu-business may be activated by changes that respond to the greatest organisational need. One might argue that her edu-business responded to neoliberal motivations driven by operational cost-saving decisions rather than truly prioritising learners' localised intercultural needs which may have been a secondary consideration.

With this understanding that intercultural tensions may obstruct pedagogical transformation, the substantive change required of a decolonising pedagogy in edu-business involves a gradual process of shifting Western thinking and doing. But the idea of a slow sectoral shift may also be connected to a *substantive* perceptual change. Rene referred to a collective shift in thinking that encompasses a revaluation of the learning developer role:

> Culturally, I think we're on the edge of this change. I can feel it. I know this is very abstract and very nice, but I think we're on this like cult shift and

how, in global dynamics, and how things are done. And I think that more people are getting interested in L and D (*learning and development*) and see it as more of a very valuable asset to an organisation.

Her comments convey a type of reimagining of the learning developers' role and their contribution to the broader decolonising project of intercultural education in edu-business. It invites learning developers to reflect on how they fit into the bigger picture and how they will shape that future in the evolving global context. This also amplifies how the actualisation of decolonisation in edu-business is a process that is transformed collectively with the knowledge and perspective of external relations. Hence, the decolonisation project should not be considered an isolative experience for the dominant group, but it is always implicated in social relations of power. This aligns with Giroux's (2004) ideas on pedagogical transformation as part of a continuous and extended social and political challenge for educators and learners in concert with Others:

> "This implies that any viable notion of pedagogy and resistance should illustrate how knowledge, values, desire, and social relations are always implicated in relations of power, and how such an understanding can be used pedagogically and politically" (Giroux, 2004, p. 34).

At its essence, intercultural education in edu-business should be viewed as a collaborative project in liaison with 'Other' external relations. Learning is a mutually constituted activity (O'Neill & Viljoen, 2021) where learning exchanges are framed spaces of critical relationality" (Martin, F. & Pirbhai-Illich 2016). As such, knowledge production must be contemplated as a social endeavour on which every intercultural exchange is socially connected and contextually contingent.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This qualitative research study focused on the unexamined sector of edu-business. It was initiated by the primary research question: What are the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe? I discovered a lack of research in the edu-business context in comparison to the abundance of decolonising research for higher education. Although there are considerable decolonising issues that parallel higher education, I found both consistencies and contradictions that support and counter the intercultural learning experiences in edu-business. I argued that the contextual conditions of edu-business are unique and have implications for a decolonising approach to intercultural knowledge in edu-business. These issues are valid points for initiating a decolonising dialectic for pedagogy and curriculum in edu-business.

For the analysis of data, I applied an adapted framework analysis following Goldsmith (2021) on which to structure and frame the Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy framework concepts (Shahjahan et al., 2022). From the data analysis, 13 issues were revealed for edu-business. In this final chapter, I summarise these key findings followed by the attention to the study limitations which provide possible future research directions for initiating a dialectic on decolonising intercultural education in edu-business. As well, I share how these findings have shaped an altered professional perspective that has impacted my practice.

I conclude this research study and connect the decolonisation of curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business to the related role of the learning developer in this process. In response to my primary research question exploring the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-business in Europe, I argued that current approaches inadequately address the pedagogical challenges of globalisation. In support of this position, I have critically analysed the 13 findings for edu-business in relation to the extended research questions that underpin this study. In the following sections, I revisit these questions in relation to the key findings framed by the limitations of this research study which connects to future research directions. I close this study with a look at how this research has already impacted my professional practice and add my concluding remarks.

8.0 Key Findings Related to the DCP Contextual or Cultural Challenges

Research Question: What pedagogical challenges frame intercultural education in edu-business?

Based on the data analysis, I argued that two key issues emerged related to the DCP contextual challenges for edu-business. The first contextual issue placed the organisational global priority at odds with the educational priorities of edu-business. The participant's experiences highlighted *the realignment of edu-business priorities in the global context* due to the pressures of globalisation. Their experiences suggest that the neoliberal philosophy upon which edu-business operates has influenced learning directions in favour of the organisation's economic priorities. This has challenged the educational ambitions of edu-business learning developers who must keep pace with the challenges of the knowledge economy and the constantly evolving educational landscape. This finding supports Szkudlarek (2009) who underscored that the commercial pressures of globalisation have undermined educational goals. Moreover, it provides a clear response to the extended research questions concerning the pedagogical challenges and how intercultural content decisions are realised in edu-business. Based on the research findings, the economic priorities of edu-business challenge intercultural education and steer the content decisions to support the financial bottom line.

The data analysis also revealed the cultural challenges for edu-business are related to *the hegemonic influence of Western Leadership in Edu-business.* The participants' insights revealed how the leadership capacity to oversee intercultural changes is confronted by a lack of knowledge and intensified by leaders' intercultural uncertainty in the forging of intercultural relations in edu-business. It suggests that hegemonic structures and behaviours of leadership may inhibit 'Other' sites of knowledge production both internally and externally. These participant insights indicated that edu-business is greatly impeded by hegemonic organisational structures. The lack of leadership and the re-alignment of edu-business priorities thereby form a clearer picture of the cultural and contextual challenges for learning developers.

8.1 Key Findings Related to the DCP Concepts of Interrelated Interpretations of Decolonisation

Research Questions:
How are cultural content decisions realised in edu-business and by whom? Whose interests are served in edu-business?

From the data analysis, three issues were revealed related to the DCP concepts of interrelated interpretations for recognising decolonising constraints. I found the predominant issue of *neoliberalism as a powerful mitigating driver in edu-business*. The finding suggest that learning developers are challenged by balancing the intercultural needs of learners against the economic demands and expectations of their organisational priorities and client needs. Their learning decisions must cater to the paying client rather than the learner. As Szkudlarek (2009) submitted: "If issues are perceived to assume the ethical high ground, or are understood to conflict with managerial efficiency, they are often either quietly dropped or they are only ritually mentioned. No radical analysis of the dominant, hegemonic discourse occurs" (p. 976). Therefore, the neoliberal global context in which edu-business is embedded has not only influenced learning directions but there are coloniality effects which operate through this context and influence learning decisions. Learning developers are hindered by the lack of sanctioned learning authority for meeting the intercultural learning needs of learners. Rather, Western hegemonic structures remain firmly grounded in edu-business learning directions. It has raised issues of professional integrity and created a clearer response to the extended research question of how global conditions have affected learning content decisions and whose interests are served. These neoliberal conditions support the interests of the edu-business and its paying client.

Furthermore, the participants largely communicated the issue of Eurocentrism. From the data analysis, this issue was captured as *problematising the permeation of Eurocentrism in Edu-business*. The participants' comments focused on how the dominant Eurocentric thinking for intercultural education pervades both internal and external cultural contexts. However, they also revealed incongruities related to the Western-centred approaches to 'Other' contexts. In particular, several participants expressed challenges with the application of dominant Western

approaches to knowledge production in Other contexts. One possible reason connected to how Western ideals have extended to 'Other' groups who seek to emulate globally accepted ideals (Ritzer, 2004). This was evidenced by Rene's client who wanted to globally position its organisation and assumed Western-oriented learning goals. This finding has framed Eurocentrism as an external condition that has pervaded content decisions for intercultural education adding increased insight to the pedagogical challenges for learning developers in edu-business. I have argued that for edu-business there is not only a misalignment with intercultural learning goals but a pervasiveness of the dominant Western ideology that is driven by neoliberalism which further hinders a decolonising approach to edu-business.

However, the DCP concept of being open to alternative models for decolonising pedagogy raised two significant issues for edu-business: *the paradoxical logic of universal approaches in edu-business* and *the essentialism rationale for intercultural education.* These research findings revealed the use of universal paradigms for intercultural learning environments utilised to create conflict-free and culturally neutral learning spaces. I argued that this logic creates a contradiction in practice. The conflict lies with how the learning developers' approach of neutrality does not support the decolonisation of intercultural education. Rather it minimises or negates the cultural differences that Othered groups seek to defend. Thus, universal approaches sustain coloniality by stripping culturally diverse groups of their unique identities. Based on these findings, the use of universal approaches and essentialism add further insight into the pedagogical challenges that frame edu-business and how content decisions are realised.

The concept of being open to alternative models for decolonising pedagogy also exposed the issue in the data analysis of the *essentialism rationale for intercultural education.* Participants acknowledged the common use of the cultural orientations model for its learning simplicity and efficiency. This fits the neoliberal prerogative and economic motivation in the global context (Ronaldson, 2000). However, essentialism was a contentious model in principle but accepted in the learning developers' practice. The data analysis revealed that the essentialist approach to intercultural education is bound up in the learning developers' naivety or blindness to Western dominant discourse supported by the universal practices

which permeate the edu-business context. I argued that simply replacing one intercultural model with another does risk an over-simplification and disregard for the subtle nuances of diverse ways of learning and knowledge production. I highlighted how there is value in exploring essentialist descriptions for how they are produced and propagated, and emphasised the impact of their situated geopolitical and sociohistorical contexts following Shi-xu (2001). These findings of universalism and the essentialism rationale practised by learning developers have amplified the argument for how content decisions are realised in edu-business further challenging a decolonising approach to edu-business.

8.2 Key Findings Related to the DCP Actualising Concepts for Decolonising Pedagogy and Curriculum

Research Question: Are there external conditions that influence content decisions in edu-business?

Under the broader concept of critiquing and probing the positionality of knowledge, Shahjahan et al. (2022) emphasised the uncritical perspective and use of Western concepts in knowledge production. Based on the framework analysis, the issue of *the decisive geopolitical context of edu-business* was highlighted and related to the global context as an vital part of intercultural learning and programming directions. However, the participants described an unpreparedness for addressing the complex sociocultural global context. Their insights revealed a trepidation with confronting the geopolitical landscape and its diverse value-laden environment. It points to the existence of external power relations in the geopolitics of knowledge to the degradation of 'Other' knowledge systems (Mudimbe, 1988). I argued that the learning developers' perspectives revealed a sense of intercultural uncertainty tied to the diverse geopolitical challenges. I emphasised the need to explore the hegemonic factors that sustain 'cultural difference' rather than avoid the challenges that come with confronting 'Other' knowledge. These insights illuminated that some pedagogical challenges are not just external but also internal for the learning developer in realising cultural content.

The DCP actualising concept describing an inclusive curriculum beyond prevailing knowledge systems was strongly supported by two issues revealed in the data

analysis: *integrating culturally safe learning spaces for knowledge sharing* and *fostering authentic and affective considerations for inclusive spaces*. The participants were aligned in their insights for attending to a sense of safety and comfort at all levels of an organisation. However, the data analysis also revealed that learning developers hold diverse perceptions of realising safe learning spaces. They endorsed a sense of safety and comfort because of the importance they placed on social connection, knowledge sharing and learner acceptance. Yet, for some learning developers, safe learning spaces equated to the familiarity of conventional learning paradigms. This suggested that there is an issue of complicity that encompasses pedagogical caution. In this light, I argued that learning developer complicity inhibits inclusive learning spaces by perpetuating hegemonic learning paradigms and thus, forfeits decolonising opportunities.

In addition, the notion of learning developer complicity also revealed the issue of *fostering authentic and affective considerations for inclusive spaces*. Participants underscored the development of their intercultural capacities for cultivating authenticity in the learning context. Based on the data analysis, it suggested that the learning dynamic and the labour behind authentic and affective intercultural exchanges must be enacted by both educators and learners. Some participants encouraged the integration of learners' histories and experiences which reflect the normalisation of authentic spaces through trust and equal participation as advocated by Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009). This encompasses the consideration of affective elements that are an essential part of fostering authentic experiences in the learning space.

I argued that by integrating the human factor into culturally challenging spaces, emotions make the learning space more relatable. They contribute to the believability and connection to 'Other' perspectives and knowledge. When learners are able to confront the discord and the emotions involved in culturally intense exchanges, "they eventually arrive at a more integrated perspective" (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009, p.332), and suggests that the communication of ideas conveys respect for Others by sharing the emotional burden of the intercultural challenge. The issue of fostering authentic and affective considerations for inclusive spaces, therefore, expands the pedagogical challenges related to edu-business and to realising intercultural content decisions.

Authenticity and affective considerations in the learning exchange also directly support the DCP concept of integrating relational approaches to teaching and learning. The data analysis unveiled two issues: *developing self-knowledge in relation to Others* and *the instrumental role of the learning developer in actualising a decolonising praxis*. The development of self-knowledge in relation to Others is connected to one's situatedness within the sociocultural system and is a powerful element for fostering relational approaches in teaching and learning. Based on the research findings, the participants emphasised an introspective lens that critically dissects their knowledge of Others, but also their self-knowledge for how they understand and why. According to Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2009), self-scrutiny has been a critical step in helping to understand "the limitations of our own perspectives and the need for those of Others" (p. 330).

The issue of developing self-knowledge in relation Others is directly connected to the issue of *the instrumental role of the learning developer in actualising a decolonising praxis*. This finding revealed how learning developers can be mitigators of intercultural ambiguity in the broader decolonising project. The importance of the educator role was believed to be an integral part of transformation. Her transformed perspective and interactions with external relations for decolonising pedagogical practice are key. Her efficacy and professional sense of self include an openness to reconstituting and repositioning her educator role in concert with 'Other' realities and epistemologies. Both her self-knowledge and her instrumental role in decolonising praxis heighten the pedagogical challenges for the learning developer in intercultural education. Thus, her self-efficacy and proficiency greatly impact her capacity to facilitate the decolonising process beyond the accepted frame of Eurocentric structures and approaches.

Lastly from the data analysis, the integration of relational approaches for the coproduction of knowledge emphasised issues that concern *the apprehending of social relations for co-constituting intercultural knowledge* and *the acknowledging of social power within intercultural external relations.* Participants agreed that social relations must be pursued for their potential to enrich learning relations. However, their experiences were also challenged by their limited intercultural literacy. This resonated with Giroux (1997) who underscored the complexity and

the value that can be gleaned from exploring "multiple, porous, complex, and shifting" (p. 299) identities and social relations. I argued that the learning developer's recognition of her limited perspective opens her thinking to the diverse conceptions of the social learning space. It allows her to pursue social relations for the purpose of knowledge production with Others.

Moreover, her social awareness connected to her social position helps to forge external relations more faithfully and confront intercultural constraints which inhibit the process of building intercultural knowledge. Her *acknowledgement of the learning developer's social power within intercultural external relations* comprises the global social learning space. The participants were in partial agreement on the need for a perceptual shift. They described the reimagining of the learning developer's role in edu-business for mitigating power in external relations. It suggests that learning developers are not fully aligned with how the dominant paradigms and power relations impact social relations and thereby knowledge production, complicating the pedagogical challenges in the edu-business context.

I argued that the learning developers' subjectivity plays a critical role in the decolonising process. Her reflection demands a deeper inquiry into her social position that asks: From what position of power am I developing content? And how does that position affect my learning decisions? How does my unique perspective impact the learning for Others? I also argued that to actualise an authentic decolonising discourse, it must extend to the pedagogical challenges that frame the learning developer. Thus, a substantive change must engage the learning developer's decolonising of herself from her dominant ideologies as an embodied decolonising act.

8.3 Research Limitations

This qualitative research has been framed on its credibility, transferability and confirmability following Guba and Lincoln (1994) who indicated that qualitative study cannot be framed as objective knowledge or research trustworthiness. As such, the limitations of these findings pertain to the size and scope of the participant sample, the conditions of data collection, the research context and the timeframe. These research limitations impact the findings connected to the

primary research question: What are the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe? They also frame the extended research questions and insights drawn from the data analysis which raised issues concerning the pedagogical challenges of intercultural education in edu-business; how cultural content decisions are realised in edu-business; whose interests are being served and what external conditions influence content decisions in edu-business.

Firstly, the size and scope of the participant sample limited the findings which are not transferable to the broader context of intercultural education. At the same time, the smaller sample size contributed to consistency in the participant data relevant to the expertise of learning developers in edu-business located in the European zone. This contributed to the depth and exploration of insights specific to edu-business which increased the trustworthiness of the findings. By controlling the sample size to the European region, I may overlook themes that have relevance for the broader context of edu-business and nonformal education. Locke, Silverman & Spiriduso (2010) stated that a reduced sample size limits the transferability but may not account for variables of a larger more heterogenous sample size. In other words, by controlling for the research variable of sample size or an element of sample scope such as the participants' years of experience, they posit that additional sample controls might lessen the conditions of trustworthiness for future research and their applicability.

Second, the sample condition involving participants who have worked for edu-businesses in the European zone was a limitation on the participants' profiles. I readily acknowledged that the participants may have drawn their insights from a host of diverse cultural experiences in their personal and professional lives. This has had implications for how the participants' insights were drawn concerning the pedagogical and geopolitical challenges that frame Western intercultural education in edu-business. It limits transferability to edu-business beyond the European sector including the findings related to the use of universal approaches which are connected to the issues of complicity and essentialist representations of 'Other' groups. This research condition might be addressed by extending the participant sample to communities outside of the European zone. For example, research studies could be conducted to examine edu-business in China, Mexico or India in comparison to the data findings from the European edu-business sector.

There were also research limitations surrounding the timing of data collection which occurred over six months during a pandemic context. These limitations were intensified by the regulations and safety protocols related that restricted access in a fixed time period. As a result, these contextual conditions framed the parameters for data collection and impacted the extent to which the research findings could be revisited. Without the protocols in place, there might have been increased opportunities for further investigation of the emerging research issues and the optimisation of the collection of data. Therefore, the limited timeframe and conditions did not permit further exploration of the interpretation of data and the clarification of the emergent issues in potential collaboration with the research participants.

Notwithstanding the fluid nature of qualitative design, the findings are presented as contingent on poststructuralist reasoning that derives meaning from contextual considerations for data collection and its interpretation. As stated at the outset of this study, my researcher's point of view framed the study approach and interpretation of data. It included the assumptions that frame edu-business as immersed in a neoliberalism environment as well as the assumption that intercultural knowledge production and dissemination are subject to the pressures of global geopolitics. By acknowledging my theoretical perspectives and knowledge biases which framed my research positionality, I have theoretically situated the approaches applied in the framing and interpretation of the research data and related findings.

With the nature of qualitative design, there is also some flexibility to the qualitative research findings and by extension their indefiniteness. I agree with Locke et al., (2010) who emphasised that qualitative research and its related findings are set apart from quantitative research by the intersection of culturally diverse contexts, people and entities. This underscored the human aspect of the researcher-to-participant interaction which has grounded this research. Hence, the qualitative design choice for this research was an appropriate approach for exploring the evolving global context of intercultural education in edu-business on which the findings are based.

8.4 Future Directions for Decolonisation Research

The impetus for this study was in part prompted by the void of research specific to the realm of edu-business. In comparison, the trove of decolonising research in higher education, on which the DCP framework (Shahjahan et al, 2022) was based, is indicative of how hegemonic structures in higher education may influence the proliferation of research in Western academic directions. It matters in a globalised world how research is conducted, and how learners are mentored to value specific research paradigms. When they are skewed to perpetuate, perhaps unknowingly, coloniality and the marginalisation of Othered knowledge and theoretical approaches (Smith, 2021), they limit the Western research context and solidify hegemonic structures and value systems. It suggests that current Western research paradigms need to be constantly challenged and Othered knowledge systems or assemblies for framing research need to be included as part of an expanded and comprehensive understanding of intercultural research. I argued that research in edu-business as well as 'Othered research' perspectives form an imperative approach in the decolonising process for intercultural knowledge production. For nonformal learning sectors, this research has shown the importance of research in edu-business that holds nuances and variances that set it apart from decolonising research in higher education.

Under the current Western understanding and dominant research foci, researchers need to acknowledge and actively shape decolonising directions for future research. Based on this study's findings, the research issues suggest that opportunities exist for future research in intercultural education for edu-business that point to 'Othered' areas of research interest and opportunity. These directions include: (1) extending research to other nonformal learning disciplines beyond the edu-business context (2) connecting future study as interdisciplinary research for the coproduction of knowledge (3) research investigating sites of knowledge production for activating and actualising practices (4) research that investigates the affective dimensions of decolonising practice, (5) research involving the notion of professional ethics in the nonformal education sector and (6) research exploring the conditions surrounding universal practices and professional complicity with intercultural knowledge production.

Firstly, researchers might investigate the cogency of this study's findings to related areas of nonformal or private sector learning engagement by extending research directions beyond edu-business to other sectors of nonformal learning engagement. For example, an exploration of non-government organisations or philanthropic organisations for their 'non-profit' conditions might include religious educational institutes. These nonformal learning environments merit exploration because of their unique, sociocultural, proletarian and coloniality contexts in which their educational approaches are imbedded. For example, faith-based sectors of diverse intercultural environments might include the examination of existing power relations that undergird religious education. History has shown that religion and education are direct channels for the colonial civilising mission that shaped a formative part of the Western colonising project. Thus, a more comprehensive approach to the production of knowledge seeks to bridge 'Other' epistemologies in a globalised landscape.

There is also value in connecting research across fields of disciplines which invites interdisciplinary sectors to build knowledge as a co-constitutive process between business and academia for meeting the intercultural needs of learners. Asher (2005) promoted the value of "examining the particular interstices" (p. 1080) which have the potential to 'decolonise' the multidisciplinary exchanges and varied knowledge spaces. This opens research opportunities that attend to the interrelated "theories and frameworks for understanding the linkages among culture, perceptions, actions, organizations, and structures" (Earley, 2006, p.928). It involves research as instrumental for building a recognisable purpose in decolonising research as well as mitigating the after-effects of coloniality such as economic globalisation that infiltrates all aspects of our daily lives (Young, 2012).

In the global edu-business sector, there is evidence of positive partnerships between academic institutions and edu-business for curriculum expansion, standardisation and policy reform by global edu-business players like Kaplan, Pearson, Harcourt and McGraw-Hill (Hogan, Thompson, Sellar and Lingard, 2018). They offer new pathways of collaboration between edu-business and academic knowledge curators with decolonising content in diverse contexts through improved curriculum offerings. For example, Pearson introduced The Learning Curve (TLC) (EIC, 2012) to offer increased accountability through data driven value framework

of efficacy in its services and products. What is significant here is the collaboration of people that informed this project. They offered a diversity of perspectives and voices representing "an array of organisations, institutions, businesses and government agencies" (Hogan, Lingard & Sellar, 2016 p.254).

This type of research collaboration demonstrates the possible channels by which decolonising research might be approached at the European edu-business level as a co-constituent process with external relations for the production of knowledge. Ball (2012) agrees that the expansion of academics and private education providers must be explored, and edu-business must be "understood as part of, broader societal shifts that have occurred through the spread of neoliberalism and processes of globalisation" (Hogan, 2016 et al., p. 245).

Thus, future research that connects across disciplinary fields is an important point for interdisciplinary analysis in the coproduction of intercultural knowledge. It serves to explore public trepidation surrounding private providers and the impact on the provision of the public good which may be of sociocultural and political interest to national or state education policy practices, public education services and democratic process (Hogan, et al., 2016). Bjarnason, Patrinos, Tan, Fielden & LaRocque (2008) encouraged private education provision to meet global education demands but with sensible regulation. They claim that with the diversity of nonformal private sector providers, there is a shared interest regarding their positioning in the educational field that "assures the quality of private provision is also key to ensuring the longer-term sustainability—both economic and political" (Bjarnason et al., 2008, p.10).

Thirdly, research that investigates sites of knowledge production for decolonising research might examine the potential sites of interaction that activate and impact the decolonisation of curriculum and pedagogy. In other words, research from a critical pedagogical position that is not only interdisciplinary and contextualised but studies how to "engage the complex relationships between power and knowledge, (to) critically address the institutional constraints under which teaching takes place" (Giroux, 2004, p. 43). This entails a protracted critical interrogation that would study dominant global cultural narratives to locate, decentre and

disrupt where they may lie undetected in educational hegemonic structures of governance.

Research in sites of knowledge production could extend to internationally recognised educational systems at the global level. For example, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations are internationally recognised and active organisations that have an unquestioned reputation for sustaining and regulating the inequities between the West and the underdeveloped and emerging nations. Grosfoguel (2011) claims that incidents have occurred under the monitoring of world organisations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, where resources were disproportionately taken from subaltern nations framed as a neo-liberal and democratic distribution. It is evidence that a comprehensive research study across disciplines is needed and would include these recognised sites of global knowledge regulation particularly where they fall within the dominant Western Eurocentric frame of reference. Therefore, an active research interrogation would not protect sites of knowledge from the scrutiny of the very governing policies they set. Such research directions would seek to reveal hegemonic practices that may be universally accepted or remain undetected by their global veil of authority.

Fourthly, future research may be beneficial in the area of affective dimensions related to decolonising practices in education. The DCP framework (Shahjahan et al., 2022) has highlighted the interrelatedness of diverse conceptions of decolonisation in the cultivation and practice of decolonisation. This study's findings connected these DCP concepts to distinct issues surrounding how knowledge is shaped by the emotional aspects of how we view and interpret our understandings of Others. Future researchers might delve deeper into the affective dimensions of decolonising practice which include the emotional effects on learners as well as educators. Boler (1997) emphasised the importance of the emotional "particulars" in educational transactions that require a paradigm for framing emotional themes in their cultural and historical specificity. He points to the importance of "historicised ethics (that) depends upon recognising the selectivity of one's vision and emotional attention. As one learns to recognize

patterns of emotional selectivity, one also learns to recognize when one "spectates" versus when one "bears witness." (Boler, 1997, p. 182).

Included under research on the affective dimensions of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy is the potential for future research in the field of professional ethics in nonformal education. This sensitive research direction reiterates the challenge of ongoing ethical challenges in professional practice which concern the hegemonic relations of power between learning developers and the organisational learning context. For edu-business operating in a neoliberalist global environment, there are worthwhile research questions surrounding what organisations are saying versus what they are doing that focus on how learning priorities have been repositioned in favour of the edu-business or client organisation. This study's research findings suggested an emerging theme between the ethical dimensions of pedagogy and the affective consequences for learning developers. It signals a call for research that explores the need for an ethical paradigm (Krishna, 2009) which is an intriguing and perhaps contentious area for future research. However, it reflects the upward movement of social responsibility present in both academic and business sectors.

Finally, by building further on the need for research that connects to these affective dimensions and ethics of professional practice, future research possibilities include an exploration of the conditions surrounding universal practices and professional complicity in intercultural knowledge production. This study's research findings focused on the neoliberalist environment as a mitigating driver in edu-business and revealed the strong connection with universal practices. It raised the issue of learning developers' complicity embedded in the Western dominant conditions of edu-business. Thus, future research would benefit from further exploration of the hegemonic structures surrounding professional practice which engender trepidation, complicit behaviours and compromised learning developer positions in edu-business. This extends to the examination of their underlying motivations with complicit behaviours and may shed light on the hegemonic structures that exist within edu-business to sustain complicity in learning practice. Faul (2021) points to addressing how educators' and learners' behaviours contribute to sustaining socio-cultural and historical inequalities and the learning processes that support these behaviours (Faul, 2021). These human elements encompass future research concerning how societies question their cultural

assumptions and practices which is at the heart of decolonising education, people and communities. With a focus on the human aspects, I agree that "the aim of future research is not to decipher or resolve differences, but to recognise the tension between alternative epistemologies and to accept that there may be some differences that are beyond understanding" (Martin & Pirbhai, 2016, p. 369).

8.5 Research Impact on Professional Practice

I began this EdD dissertation research, with a deep interest in the field of intercultural education which remained a steadfast driver as my research progressed. It stemmed from my professional interest and experience with intercultural training programmes in formal and non-formal education sectors, and a strong personal significance related to my cross-cultural identity. From a pedagogical view, the ubiquitous 'cultural orientations' theory was a confusing approach both personally and professionally. I did not recognise my blended identity in cultural theory for developing intercultural knowledge especially surrounding issues that aimed to explain cultural differences. Thus, I felt an unease when sharing these theoretical models in the intercultural programmes that I developed and facilitated. I frequently offered my cross-cultural identity as a clear exception to the standard cultural models that framed essentialised understandings of 'Other' groups.

However, I had never challenged the theoretical models as an approach to intercultural education because I could not provide an alternate cultural approach for mitigating the challenges of culturally diverse contexts. Moreover, the 'cultural orientations' theory is presented as a simple solution which is an easily conceived and consumed learning model (Szkudlarek, 2009). It fits the solution-based approaches of edu-business and the economic 'for-profit' operational model. Admittedly, I have also remained somewhat complicit in the use of cultural theory for intercultural education programmes in edu-business. As initially declared, my intention was not to discredit the theoretical value of 'cultural orientations' but to build on its merits and underscore the need for alternate models that may better reflect 'Othered' knowledge in the evolving cultural contexts of global learners.

Therefore, this research study provided an opportunity to delve into the current state of intercultural education and to explore the context of edu-business from a

decolonising lens for knowledge production. Based on my research findings, three key areas impacted my professional practice: my professional perspective of intercultural education in edu-business, my altered professional practices related to intercultural education development and my transformed personal commitment to decolonising intercultural pedagogy and practice.

8.5.1 The Impact On My Professional Perspective of Intercultural Education in Edu-business

This research has had a profound impact on how I view professional practice in edu-business. Specifically, it has highlighted the decolonising constraints for sustaining intercultural learning within the neoliberal context of edu-business and it has altered my perspective of edu-business. The data analysis revealed that learning developers are constrained in their ability to make learning choices that sustain long-term learning in the interest of their learners. This was linked to the research issue of realigned priorities for edu-business that support short-term gains over the challenges of intercultural contexts. This insight resonated with my experience and struggles with the edu-business environment. I acknowledge that I have participated in promoting a Western neoliberal ideology as a learning developer in edu-business which is geared to economic efficiency. Edu-business continues to operate on the neoliberal model but under the semblance of addressing the intercultural challenges of diverse contexts. In line with the findings of this research, intercultural learning decisions sustain the economic priority and suggest that the current approaches to intercultural education in edu-business context do not support the global challenges of European edu-businesses or a decolonising approach in the production of intercultural knowledge.

It indicates that coloniality is still a deeply embedded part of professional practice in edu-business. Moreover, the participants are complicit in the use of universal approaches and static intercultural content that challenges learning developers' ability to make ethically sound learning choices. The hegemonic structures and leadership practices have also framed my professional experiences. I believe they have contributed to my own complicit behaviours with intercultural curriculum development. It has elucidated my ethical struggles with the edu-business context, which constrained my ability to offer alternative intercultural learning approaches.

It has led me to question the edu-business environment as conducive to my long-term personal and professional aspirations.

I have further reflected on this professional conflict in the edu-business context. I believe there is a lack of recognition by edu-business in the value of 'Other' knowledge outside the dominant forms of Western representation. My professional experience supports how edu-business firmly participates in an increasingly pervasive Western ideology (Ritzer, 2004). The edu-business context maintains an economic operational model that compounds the constraints to a decolonising practice and pedagogy. In the long-term, I believe that edu-business does not justly serve my professional practice, nor does it provide a human-centric and globally relevant intercultural approach to pedagogy and curriculum. As a result, I sought to change my professional working context to explore professional fields that are more conducive to my altered professional views.

8.5.2 My Altered Professional Practice Related to Intercultural Education Development

As indicated at the start of this research, I support and continue to build on cultural orientations theory for its illuminative value rather than as the solution-based approach used for intercultural education by edu-business. My research findings have also clarified my support of a human-centric approach as a critical lens for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy in intercultural education. This approach steers away from universalism and essentialist thinking revealed as prevalent issues in the research. These research findings have helped frame the professional environment and intercultural ethic in which I aspire to work. As a result, I have experienced a gradual transition in my professional roles marked by two distinct changes: the shift towards a more meaningful professional context and work ethic, and the application of decolonising content translated into practice

8.5.3 The Shift Towards a More Meaningful Professional Context and Work Ethic

By moving towards more meaningful work contexts, I experienced gradual changes on two levels. I first transitioned to the context of a start-up work environment in the field of food sustainability. Its core philosophy of improving food production in

an environmentally sustainable way appeared to be a better fit. It also involved a globally diverse work environment and its related intercultural challenges. As a start-up, this organisational context relied on external investment. However, with the organisation's rapid growth, the pressures to follow more capitalist strategies increased and eventually overshadowed the environmental and learning priorities that were declared in its cultural mission. As a result, I found myself making concessions with not only with the intercultural programmes but learning decisions overall due to organisational priorities that were redirected away from education and towards food science production and drivers towards economic efficiency. Consequently, the neoliberal pressures associated with globalisation have complicated efforts to meet the intercultural challenges. The establishment of an intercultural curriculum pedagogy was based on accepted Western models. Any ambitions outside that Western curriculum and pedagogical approach were beyond my learning scope or authority.

My second transition followed a shift to a non-government organisation (NGO) work environment. This context is a closer fit to the human-centric learning approach that I had been seeking. Its *not-for-profit* operational model prioritises the learning needs for non-violence education in pursuit of greater community well-being. It operates within a global context, but the neoliberal model is not the primary driver. Rather, the educational focus follows the greatest learner needs and underscores the learning priorities for underdeveloped countries. As such, the focus is on building a culture of learning around nonviolence education which involves intercultural challenges related to accessibility and geopolitical constraints. This means that underdeveloped nations which have higher incidents of violence coupled with poor educational access, such as Uganda, receive educational programmes cost-free. Moreover, it takes an inclusive approach by involving family, community members and learning facilitors at the source level. This includes working with communities to raise funds for sustaining programmes and increasing educational reach to outlying communities. It reflects a learning model that more closely aligns with a decolonising approach and a professional ethic that I seek to emulate in professional practice.

At the same time, I am fully cognisant that the educational programmes provided by this NGO are founded on a Western knowledge framework. The comprehensive

approach to knowledge production involves local experts and the community to help mitigate the culturally diverse approaches to knowledge production and the geopolitical conditions under which knowledge production is situated. In this way, programmes are adapted to align with culturally sensitive issues and disparities. For example, learners in Uganda receive programmes related to gender-based violence which are linked to locally relevant cultural issues allowing programme changes in collaboration with local facilitators and community members. This also reflects an awareness and approach to decolonising curriculum and pedagogy that works in liaison with external local relations for the co-production of knowledge.

8.5.4 The Application of Decolonising Content Translated to Practice

Looking forward, I not only aspire but support the possibilities for integrating a decolonising curriculum and pedagogy as an active part of professional praxis. In this effort, a significant change to my professional practice concerns the application of decolonising content for intercultural education. This has included the promotion of decolonising practices that activate sites of knowledge with Others in the process of intercultural knowledge production. My research study has affected how I activate intercultural curriculum and pedagogy and disrupt and dismantle dominant ideologies in practice.

Recently, I was involved in developing a non-violence programme for a specific global cohort of country managers and learning facilitators from the United States to South Africa to Japan. I initiated a dialogue by cultivating safe learning spaces for identifying dominant knowledge paradigms. I immediately questioned the Western approach in the online environment as conflicting with the participants' diverse learning paradigms. Rather than promoting the cultural orientations theory for this programme, I introduced the theory as a point of departure upon which learners were invited to share 'Other' knowledge in both conventional and abstract forms of knowledge representation. I aimed to deepen trust and respect across culturally diverse contexts by involving participants in the knowledge-production process. Following the Council of Europe (2008), I used dialogue to derive "benefits of new cultural openings, necessary for personal and social development in a globalised world" (p. 16). It also aligns with Shahjahan et al.'s (2022) views on knowledge production as a constitutive and emerging process that is ever-evolving.

Firstly, by drawing from the research theme of safe learning spaces that support alternate voices for intercultural knowledge production, I was able to increase content relevance. Several learners had voiced feeling conflicted with the content which stimulated the questioning of their accepted ideas and knowledge biases. The cultivation of a safe learning space promoted a dialogical process for learners to question dominant approaches freely and safely. For example, learners were invited to connect to a relevant violent issue impacting their community. The intention was for learners to contextually situate the issue to increase content meaning and relevance. Shi-xu (2001) clarified the use of cultural contexts as situated constructions "from a particular geopolitical place and historical time, and where practices are constituted in historically situated, social, largely discursive, interaction" (p.283). The learning intention was for participants to consider the dominant thinking and intercultural differences in their relevant communities in order to expose cultural assumptions.

A poignant example from the feedback I received drew my attention to gaps in the cultural content. A participant from Japan noted two issues that would raise cross-cultural challenges: language and conceptual transfer. He indicated that some terminology did not translate directly into Japanese, and he was struggling to find terms that captured the same meaning in Japanese. He suggested he could find a term that closely represented the ideas, but he would have to provide context to make sense for nonviolence in Japanese culture. He pinpointed this to diverse cultural contexts between the West and the East- specific to Japan. He also underlined how the theoretical models conceptually challenged him and potentially his future Japanese learners. This was not connected solely to an issue of cognitive processing which was anticipated. Theoretically, physical violence is not an issue, but rather emotional violence in the form of bullying and harassment is recognised. However, this type of emotional violence in the domestic environment is culturally not acknowledged or discussed publicly. His feedback presented cultural barriers to conceptual content that I had not considered. It underscored how the Western conceptual frames of reference upon which this course was structured highlighted contextual relevance and tested learners' comfort zones. This important feedback provided valuable insight for reflecting on how my Western dominant frame and assumptions had unknowingly pervaded my intercultural curriculum and structured

my pedagogical approach. It resonated with Said (2000) who advocated fostering a disposition of criticality to cultivate 'openness' for alternative thinking and doing rather than sustaining the complicity and scepticism with 'Other' knowledge.

The second facet of my altered practice has involved the dismantling of coloniality embedded in the learners' context and subjectivity. With globalisation, a critical approach to knowledge production connects the broader cultural flows of information 'scapes' (Appadurai, 1990). I recently integrated the notion of global flows of information in connection with an identified issue of violence in the communities. I invited learners to consider not only the connection to their local context but also how the issue is impacted by the broader political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological elements of society. Learners initially struggled with these ideas which underscored how some concepts and learners are not positioned to successfully receive culturally diverse ideas. However, it promoted the introduction to an interrelated and deeper level of critical analysis. It enhanced the learners' frames of reference by broadening their perspectives of elements that impacted localised cultural issues.

As an initial approach to decolonising the learning space, I emphasised not only the geo-political issues but how these learners are situated in relations of power, and how they might influence learning directions. These issues raised the potential for bias that can take the form of prescribed learning agendas or predetermined learning outcomes. I engaged learners by asking them to consider their identities as facilitators and their feelings of resistance from diverse perspectives. This allowed them to contemplate how they were not only embedded in hegemonic structures but also how they may be subjecting their learners to relations of power. Learners began to reflect on their dominant practices and how coloniality exists in their approach to content. As a result, these learners were confronted by their roles as facilitators in promoting dominant perspectives in intercultural curriculum and pedagogy.

These recent professional experiences evidenced how I have initiated changes in my practice and integrated a decolonising perspective into the curriculum and pedagogy. By critically challenging my practice resonates with Giroux (2004) who promotes a pedagogy that not only "recalls how knowledge, identification and

subject positions are produced... but also how they become part of an ongoing process... of mediating and challenging existing relations of power (p.45).

8.5.5 My Transformed Personal Commitments to Intercultural Pedagogy and Practice

As a result of this research study, I now strive towards a deeper critical pedagogical approach to decolonising intercultural education and knowledge production. I feel a greater sense of commitment and social responsibility to cultivate spaces where a deeper dialectic is possible to stimulate alternate thinking and cultivate intercultural relations and learning spaces for social change. I align with Giroux (2004) who described pedagogy as "a moral and political practice that is always implicated in power relations and must be understood as a cultural politics that offers both a particular version and vision of civic life, the future, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment" (Giroux, 2004, p. 33).

These small decolonising changes are significant because they transform my practice incrementally allowing time for reflection, but more importantly, require consistency and commitment. I feel I am better positioned to critically assess not only why and what knowledge is promoted, but to interrogate with increased professional confidence whose perspective is promoted in the process of intercultural education and knowledge production in general. Thus, I feel enabled to activate a decolonising practice that challenges contextual power relations and the accepted pedagogical norms. I draw from Williams (2003) who noted the importance of problematising pedagogical approaches that confront the complex issues of power in accepted practices from a coloniality perspective. I do not claim to have all the answers nor am I able to reverse the effects of coloniality that are embedded in Western learning approaches. However, I am more prepared and committed to arguing in support of a decolonising model that is human-centric for learning development that diverges from the essentialism models and universal practices that are currently a part of intercultural education models in non-formal learning environments.

These shifts in my professional practice speak to my transformed commitment to a decolonising pedagogy that reiterates the decolonising issue of knowledge

ownership in learning practice. The issue of Western ownership remains unquestioned especially "in terms of the veneration and respect for wisdom and authority" (Williams, 2003, p.588). However, I believe there are increased risks associated with this type of professional transformation which presumes that both sides have the capacity to empathise and navigate the 'Other' experience. Recent feedback that I received from a learning programme has allowed me to view the content from diverse levels of learner engagement connected to their different levels of individual perception and cultural understanding. This reinforced the importance of involving Others in the sharing and co-constitution of knowledge. Overall, the non-profit NGO context has afforded more possibilities for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy by providing the context and space to explore alternative approaches for intercultural education. Ultimately, the insights from this dissertation research have already impacted not only the professional contexts in which I have chosen to be involved but also how I approach intercultural learning directions and involve Others in the decolonising process.

Finally, I feel compelled to describe how this research process has impacted the progress of my research insights. During my research analysis and writing of this dissertation, I became increasingly aware of how I interpreted and formulated ideas constructed from the dominant Western paradigm. The impact of my geo-political context and my research positionality have had implications on how I produced knowledge for the writing of this dissertation. I noticed the need to qualify my views by their Western frame of reference informed by my cross-cultural identity. Pindi's (2020) words struck a chord for me when she referred to her academic transnational self as "embedded in colonial practices and histories surrounding forms of knowledge production" (Gutierrez-Perez, 2018, p. 412). This also resonated with my research experience and has underscored how immersed I am in a Western frame of reference that contributes to my production of Western knowledge. My Western lens remains a critical element in the filtering of ideas and the interpretation of research findings, which reflects the qualitative approach of this study. I cannot underestimate the impact of my Western lens in the production of knowledge and how I apply this in practice, but I can endeavour to identify its influence and continually aim to deconstruct it.

8.6 Concluding Remarks

I can describe this research journey as a revealing and affirming exploration of the field of intercultural education in the relatively unexamined context of edu-business. The absence of research literature in this nonformal learning context indicated a large research gap compared to its substantive participation in the private sector and significant participative relations with education and the state (Ball, 2012). This study sought to interrogate the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education of edu-businesses in Europe, and intended to enrich a dialectic in the field of decolonising research for intercultural education in edu-business. Specifically, I explored issues related to 'quality of content' understood as 'fit for purpose' (Krishna, 2009) related to intercultural curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business.

The decolonising curriculum and pedagogy (DCP) framework of Shahjahan et al., (2022) in higher education provided a meaningful scaffold of decolonising concepts. By applying a framework analysis, I compared the DCP concepts and their relevance to the nonformal learning context of edu-business. Based on the data analysis, the research findings partially supported the main concepts of the DCP framework delineated as (1) the overall contextual and cultural decolonising challenges, (2) the interrelated interpretations of decolonisation and (3) the actualising of decolonising practice. The data analysis also revealed related issues particular to the edu-business context for intercultural knowledge production.

From the lens of learning developers, the research findings brought into sharp contrast the overall contextual challenges for edu-business and their effects on the intercultural programmes in Europe. Specifically, the neoliberal context of edu-business and its economic prerogative was a prevalent theme across the participants' experiences. These pedagogical constraints for the context of edu-business have illuminated a response to the extended research questions of how intercultural content decisions are achieved, whose interests are served and the conditions surrounding intercultural education in edu-business. For edu-business, the learning content decisions serve the client organisation which supports the economic health of the learning organisation over the intercultural learning challenges and approaches to intercultural education. It has exposed the

heightened pressures from the knowledge economy that pit the organisational economic 'for-profit' model against the learning developers' ability to make sound learning decisions.

These findings have highlighted the central challenge facing learning developers within a neoliberal context concerning the need to cultivate conditions where learners and educators are enabled to recognise the relations of power that constrain self-identity and agency (Giroux, 2004). Thus, I advocate a more human-centred focus that provides possibilities to confront the intercultural learning challenges in edu-business. There is potential to expose the intercultural nuances of diverse relations that are beyond the imaginings of learning developers' current use of universal approaches and essentialist representations of 'Other' groups. Moreover, these research findings have raised several significant considerations connected to the learning developer and how she inserts herself into the 'coloniality of power' Grosfoguel (2011).

Firstly, the decolonising of the learning developer requires acknowledging her complicity in the use of dominant Eurocentric approaches that are not inclusive in content or process. Her ability to acknowledge her complicity in propagating Western Eurocentrism in curriculum and pedagogy is critical for understanding how coloniality pervades her pedagogical approaches and practices in the neoliberalism context of edu-business. This was revealed in the data analysis by her propensity for universal approaches and essentialist representations in intercultural education that sanction relations of power and their pedagogical consequences for learners. The findings revealed the learning developers' complicity with content development and a reluctance to test the constraints of safe and accepted pedagogical practices. It is a strong indication that the learning developers' dominant learning paradigms sustain coloniality which are filtered through the intercultural curriculum and pedagogy in the edu-business organisational culture.

Secondly, the connection to the learning developer's subjectivity and self-development for decolonising her pedagogical practice implicates her in the knowledge formation process. In the actualising of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy, her subjectivity is contextually relevant and frames what and how intercultural knowledge is produced and transferred. Equally, her recognition of

the power relations in which she is embedded is constrained by the conditions linked to the neoliberal global context. The edu-business operational model prioritises client-organisational economic needs. Her participation in the economic model, reluctantly or not, frames her accountability in the processes of coloniality and Western knowledge production.

However, the development of the learning developer's self-reflective lens has the potential to deconstruct her professional practice and contribute to the authenticity of her learning exchanges. It implicates her *human* role in decolonising the pedagogical experiences and requires a confronting of power relations and intercultural challenges which are often punctured with the learning developer's uncertainty and trepidation. These affective elements are particularly important in contexts where her authority to make sound learning decisions can be undermined by the economic priority of edu-business. Harcourt (2013) included emotional considerations as a means for moderating ambiguity in the process of meaning-making and ethical choice. Zembylas (2007) also rightly describes the affective *process of becoming* as flows between educators, learners and 'Others' that are part of a transformative ontology. This requires the learning developer's ability to recognise the salience of decolonising herself before she can effectively support the actualisation of a decolonising practice.

Finally, the learning developer occupies an instrumental role in decolonising relations involving her agency as a critical part of the greater decolonising project for intercultural knowledge. Her perception of how the learning developers' value frame is perceived in edu-business involves a more inter-relational role and cohesive vision for edu-business. This vision involves apprehending learning spaces that welcome the contractions of diverse narratives and lived experiences of Others (Ferri, 2022). According to Grosfoguel (2011), expansive relations entail the need for "broader alliances along not only racial and gender lines but also along class lines and among a diversity of oppressed groups" (p. 29). Further insight by Mignolo (2007) offered an idealistic view of a decolonising movement and "a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ" (p.459). This vision included the unconceived human dimensions of Other knowledge which have not been fully considered by Western approaches to decolonisation as well as the ethical

dimensions (Szkudlarek, 2009). I fully support the decolonisation of intercultural curriculum and pedagogy which requires a continuous process of knowledge inquiry that embraces "the categories with which we make, unmake and remake, and thereby apprehend, the world" (Mamdani, 2016, p.79). It demands an accounting of operational models that are 'just' for learners of nonformal learning environments like edu-business.

For the learning developer, the significance of her role lies in her enabling learners "to become critical agents capable of linking knowledge to social responsibility and learning to democratic social change" (Giroux, 2004, p.41). Learning developers must serve as critical conduits between learners and their complex and contradictory global flows of information. I endorse a decolonising approach to intercultural education that would deconstruct and dismantle dominant knowledge and theories but not delete them. Porto & Byram (2022) have stressed how learning needs to be inclusive so that we can benefit from "an inclusive approach which neither excludes a 'Northern' perspective nor accepts it uncritically" (p. 405). It speaks to the quality of intercultural education for sites of knowledge production such as edu-business that can be an opportune and diverse space for furthering a decolonising dialectic.

These delineated conditions of the learning developer's complicity, subjectivity and pedagogical agency have an impact on the quality of intercultural programmes in edu-business. Gale de Saxe & Trotter-Simons (2021) appropriately described "an intimate interconnectivity between education, dialectics, and the cognitive dissonance that often occurs when engaging with content that asks one to challenge a 'common sense' understanding of the world in which we live" (p.17). Without confronting the relation of these elements, the learning developer participates in the sociocultural and political histories that continue to participate in presenting specific views of reality based on dominant global views (Pike, 2008).

Learning developers of edu-business are uniquely positioned to actualise how edu-business fits into the greater system of intercultural knowledge and global development. Her epistemic position is pivotal for the expansion to Other perspectives and knowledge as well as to the interdisciplinary reach of intercultural education (Ferri, 2022). It frames her critical role in the

decolonisation and transformation of intercultural knowledge into more critically relevant pedagogical practice for learners. Her subjectivity must be less derivative of coloniality and more constitutive of the multitude of understandings and approaches to intercultural knowledge. Hence, a decolonising curriculum and pedagogy in edu-business initiated from a more human-centric priority is an 'act' of decolonisation. It encompasses a larger decolonisation movement for learning developers as a collective conscience to underpin their vision not only for edu-business but for the greater good of all individuals, groups and societies.

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Appendix A: Exploratory Research Question Flow

Exploratory Research Question Flow
Main Research Question: 1. *What are the pedagogical approaches to intercultural education for edu-businesses in Europe?*
If yes: ◦　How do current programmes meet the needs of learners? ◦　Why are these needs important for learners?
If not: ◦　What needs are not being addressed for learners? ◦　Why are these needs important?
2. Do you think intercultural learning/programmes have changed in Edu-business have changed?
If yes: ◦　How have programmes changed? ◦　Why did they change and to what effect?
If not: ◦　Why have they not changed? ◦　Is there anything that needs to change? ◦　How has no change affected the development of intercultural programmes?
3. Are there political, economic, social or technological (PEST) concerns/issues with the development of programmes?
If yes, what political, economic, social or technological, could you expand on or give an example of this? ◦　Why do you think this issue exists? ◦　How have these political concerns affected the cultural programmes? ◦　Who has benefited from this issue? Who has not?
If not, what political, economic, social or technological changes need to occur? ◦　Why do they need to happen? ◦　What barriers to change exist?
4. Have you explored different approaches in the development or facilitation of programmes?
If yes: ◦　What type of change did you explore? ◦　Why was this change important? ◦　Was this change accepted or resisted and by whom?
If not: ◦　Would alternative approaches to intercultural programmes be worthwhile/viable? ◦　What kinds of changes would be valuable for intercultural programmes in Edu-business and why? ◦　How realistic is it to implement change in the development or facilitation of intercultural programmes in Edu-business?

Appendix B: Edu-business Related Issues to the Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy Framework

DCP Concepts of Contextual Challenges (Shahjahan et al., 2022)	Related Issues to the DCP Concepts of Contextual Challenges
Institutional Context or Cultural Challenges	The realignment of edu-business priorities in the global context
The Systemic or Structural Barriers	The hegemonic Influence of Western leadership in edu- business
DCP Concepts of Interrelated Interpretations of Decolonisation	**Related Issues to the DCP Concepts of Interrelated Interpretations of Decolonisation**
Recognising Decolonising Constraints	Neoliberalism is a powerful mitigating driver in edu-business
The Disruption of Pedagogical Constraints	Problematising the permeation of Eurocentrism in edu- business
Being Open to Alternatives in DCP	The paradoxical logic of universalism in edu-business
	An essentialism rationale for intercultural education
DCP Concepts in Actualising a Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy	**Related Issues to the DCP Concepts in Actualising a Decolonising Curriculum and Pedagogy**
Critiquing and probing the positionality of knowledge	The decisive geopolitical context of edu-business
Cultivating an inclusive curriculum beyond prevailing knowledge systems.	Integrating culturally safe learning spaces is integral to knowledge sharing
	Fostering authenticity and affective considerations for inclusive spaces.
Integrating relational approaches to teaching and learning.	Developing self-knowledge in relation to 'Others'
	The instrumental role of the learning developer in actualising praxis
The connecting to external relations for the coproduction of knowledge	Apprehending social relations for co-constituting intercultural knowledge.
	Acknowledging social power within intercultural external relations.

Appendix C: An Extract of Colour Mapping of Participant Data

There is a dominant Western perspective.

There is no consideration for contexts outside Europe.

Global representation is not reflected in practice.

The content does not provide learning relevance or practical ways to support cultural content.

Cultural bias does not link to the impact on Others.

There is an impact of globalisation on the organisational context.

Culturally diverse content is absent.

Cultural relevance is not addressed

There is not activation of cultural understanding.

The learning approach lacks diversity of lenses.

There is some cultural representation, but it is not internally recognised.

There is an inattention to the human consequences.

Leadership lacks inclusion and favours the dominant society.

Working practices favour the dominant society.

The prevalent belief is that Others must assimilate into the dominant society.

The dominant Dutch society is less flexible in spirit and practice.

The pace of globalisation has caused scalability issues for cultural practice.

Cultural adaption may be an organic natural process that is contextually responsive.

Organisational needs are prioritised over diverse learning needs.

Cultural content and directions are not in pace with organisational growth.

Culturally relative perceptions are not considered.

Your cultural lens shapes your understanding of Others.

Colour Mapping Key Code

The Realignment of Learning Priorities in Edu-business

The Hegemonic Influence of Western leadership in Edu-business

Neoliberalism is a Powerful Mitigating Driver in Edu-business

Problematising the Permeation of Western Eurocentrism in Edu-business

The Paradoxical Logic of Universalism in Edu-business

An Essentialism Rationale for Intercultural Education in Edu-business

The Decisive Geopolitical Context of Edu-business

Integrating Culturally Safe and Inclusive Learning Spaces for Knowledge Production

Fostering of Authenticity and Affective Considerations for Inclusive Spaces.

■ Developing Self-knowledge in Relation to 'Others'.

■ The Instrumental Role of the Learinng Developer in Actualising DCP.

■ The Apprehending of Socio-relations for Co-constituting Intercultural Knowledge.

■ Acknowledging the Inherent Social Power of External Relations

Appendix D.1: Aggregation of Issues Related to the DCP Contextual Concepts

DCP Contextual Concept: Institutional Context or Cultural Challenges
Data related to the issue: The Realignment of Learning Priorities in Edu-business
The pace of globalization has led to scalability issues for cultural practices.
Cultural adaption may be an organic natural process that is contextually responsive
Organisational and individual learning needs do not always align
Organisational learning reflects the organisational cultural values.
Organisational culture defines the prioritisation of cultural diversity
Cultural transformation of an organisation must be holistic.
Corporate culture is focused on the customer first and the individual second.
To be sustainable, cultural knowledge needs to be an engrained part of the organisational structure.
DCP Contextual Concept: The Systemic or Structural Barriers
Data related to the issue: The Hegemonic Influence of Western leadership in Edu-business
Leadership lacks inclusion and favours the dominant Western society
Leadership values must support the organisational values for cultural change to happen.
Leaders set the bar for the level of diversity reflected in an organisational culture
Leadership lacks inclusion and favours the dominant Western society
Stakeholders play a determining role for diversity in practice.
Leaders set the bar for the level of diversity reflected in an organisational culture
Leadership values must support the organisational values for cultural change to happen.
The 'us and them' thinking divides and conquers the learning context.
Leaders need to model cultural empathy.
The dominant Dutch leadership culture defines the exclusionary practices
Cultural values and leadership are inextricably linked to sustainability.

Appendix D.2: Aggregation of Issues Related to the Interpretive DCP Concepts

DCP Interpretive Concept: The Disruption of Pedagogical Constraints
Data related to the issue: Problematising the Permeation of Western Eurocentrism in Edu-business
There is a dominant Western perspective in learning content directions.
Western learning goals do not fit others' diverse learning needs.
The Western lens is embedded in the shaping of learning content.
Content development based on dominant cultural perspective.
Prevailing Western perspective dominates LD in practice
The Western Learning and development approach has culturally embedded assumptions that do not consider others' reality.
Conventional Western company approaches frame content development.
Content development is based on dominant Dutch Western thinking.
Content is based on dominant Dutch Western thinking.
DCP Concept: Being Open to Alternatives
Data related to the issue: The Paradoxical Logic of Universalism in Edu-business
Learning assumes a universal purpose.
The Western Learning and development approach has culturally embedded assumptions that do not consider others' reality.
Culturally relevant content is under prioritised
Learning assumes a universal purpose.
Cultural trainings are generically written
Culturally relevant content across a broadly diverse audience is not realistic
Diversity cannot be a formula driven (generic) approach
Diversity and inclusion learning is not a perfect process.
The Western melting pot (generic) approach is a common approach.
Common (generic) working approaches are facilitated.