Pedagogy Review

ISSN: 3025-6771 | Journal's DOI: 10.61436/pedrev

Homepage: https://imrecsjournal.com/journals/index.php/pedrev

Evaluation of Guest Lecturer Implementation, Challenges, and Perceived Impact in Higher Education

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 22 September 2026

Accepted: 01 November 2026

Published: 09 November 2026

Keywords:

Guest Lecturer program;
Learning motivation;
Students' perceptions;
International Collaboration;
English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the implementation of the Guest Lecturer (GL) program in higher education, particularly students' perceptions of its educational value, instructional delivery, learning motivation, and implementation challenges in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design with 35 university students and three visiting lecturers. Quantitative data were collected through a 19-item questionnaire, using a four-point Likert scale. Qualitative data were collected from three open-ended questions and structured written reflections by the guest lecturers. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank order correlation, and thematic analysis. The results showed that students viewed the program positively overall, especially regarding the relevance of the learning materials (M = 3.49) and exposure to international perspectives (M = 3.23). However, students also reported challenges with internet access, using digital platforms, presentation skills, and limited interaction. Spearman's correlation analysis revealed a significant negative association between difficulties switching between digital platforms and course-related learning motivation (ρ = -0.554, Bonferroni-adjusted p = 0.009). This finding highlights the link between digital education barriers and student motivation. The qualitative results also indicated benefits related to cultural exchange, language skills, and career progression, but also pinpointed technical issues, speech rate, and low engagement as key barriers to implementation. The study suggests that the GL program offers a great opportunity for worldwide academic involvement and meaningful educational experiences. However, to use it effectively, the program needs more technological support, better cooperation between visiting and local teachers, and more interactive learning activities to improve student participation and learning outcomes

To cite this article:

Nurindah, Uke, W. A. S., Muhammad, A. P. A., Atma, N., Amalia, H., Apita-Chavez, M., Antenor, M. C., & Gutierrez, M. C. L. (2026). Evaluation of guest lecturer implementation, challenges, and perceived impact in higher education. *Pedagogy Review*, *5*(4), 637-653. doi: https://doi.org/10.61436/pedagogy/v5i4.pp637-653

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■ INTRODUCTION

The globalization of higher education has led universities to adopt innovative teaching methodologies unconstrained by regional academic borders. One increasingly popular strategy is to use guest lecturer (GL) programs, especially those that bring in scholars and practitioners from other countries, to link theoretical knowledge with real-world job skills (Pepple et al., 2025). Guest lecturers are expected to provide authentic, professionally relevant content and global perspectives that local teacher-education and language-related programs, such as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), cannot easily provide (Qamariah & Hercz, 2025; Vereijken & van der Rijst, 2023). Research shows these programs increase student engagement, broaden academic horizons, and develop intercultural and professional skills. Quality of instructional design, alignment with course objectives, and the guest's ability to collaborate with local educators are critical factors for effective guest speaker programs in education (Jablon-Roberts & McCracken, 2023).

Guest lecturer programs can use different digital platforms, which can increase their cognitive load (Skulmowski & Xu, 2022).

Differences in accents, speaking speed, and communication styles across cultures can also make it difficult for students to comprehend the material and participate in discussions (Hauser & Ryan, 2021). Other problems may arise when instructions are not clear, or guest and local lecturers do not coordinate their teaching activities effectively (Mendoza et al., 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to consider how guest lecturer programs are implemented and how students evaluate their usefulness and influence on the learning process.

Higher education institutions recognize the educational value of guest lecturer programs. However, current research has mainly focused on perceived benefits, such as increased motivation and exposure to a global perspective, without thoroughly assessing implementation. Although many studies have explored guest lecturing as individual instructional events, they have not closely examined the complex interaction of instructional design, technological integration, language barriers, and multiculturality in digitally mediated learning contexts (Catalano & Barriga, 2021; Cownie & Gallo, 2021). Moreover, empirical data remain scarce on students' perceptions of academic importance, instructional clarity, technological efficacy, and emotional impact, especially in teacher education and TEFL (Choi et al., 2021). The lack of integrated evaluation frameworks that consistently link implementation processes to students' challenges and learning outcomes suggests a need for a more student-centered approach in research on this topic (Peimani & Kamalipour, 2022).

This study explores the implementation of guest lecturer programs in digitally mediated higher education and students' perceptions of them. Few empirical studies explain how instructional design, technology use, language and cultural differences, and coordination between guest and local lecturers shape students' ratings of a course's academic relevance and learning impact. This study aims to assess the implementation of a guest lecturer program in higher education by examining students' perceptions of academic benefit, instructional effectiveness, technology and logistical challenges, and learning motivation and engagement. This evaluative approach aims to provide evidence-based insights to improve and sustain guest lecturing in teacher education.

This study's distinctive contribution is a holistic, student-centered evaluation of Guest Lecturer (GL) programs that encompasses academic impact, instructional design, technological mediation, and linguistic-intercultural considerations within one coherent analytical framework. Building on prior research that emphasizes the perceived benefits of guest lecturers or focuses on discrete aspects of their implementation (Jablon-Roberts & McCracken, 2023; Phan et al., 2024), this study systematically explores students' perceptions of academic relevance and motivation and various implementation factors (e.g., digital platform integration, barriers to instructional coordination and communication).

Furthermore, this study specifically examines cross-cultural academic interactions between Indonesia and the Philippines conducted online through digital platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom. The evaluation instrument was adapted and modified from previously established instruments to align with the research questions and the theoretical framework underpinning this study. This study addresses students' experiences of a digitally mediated higher education context in teacher education. It argues for a holistic evaluative perspective on the benefits and disadvantages of GL programs. This study contributes to the pedagogical literature on internationalization and external expertise in higher education. It generates context-specific insights that could inform the development of more effective, inclusive, and pedagogically sound guest lecturer practices. More specifically, this study is guided by the following research question: How do students perceive the implementation, educational value, and challenges of the guest lecturer program in a higher education context?

■ METHOD

Research Design

This study uses an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2014) to investigate the implementation of the GL program in higher education. The study followed a sequential process. First, after the GL sessions, the researchers collected quantitative data through questionnaires completed by 35 students. The quantitative data were analyzed to identify patterns in students' perceptions of the program, including its perceived educational value, instructional design and coordination, and barriers to participation. Second, the quantitative findings informed the subsequent qualitative inquiry through structured written reflections completed by three guest lecturers. The questions focused on contextual and instructional factors that could help explain the patterns identified in the student questionnaire, particularly the perceived benefits of the GL program, implementation challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The qualitative findings were then integrated with the quantitative results during interpretation to develop a more comprehensive understanding of program implementation.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of this study were university students who attended the GL sessions in the higher education context. Students were eligible to participate if they had attended the GL sessions and voluntarily completed the study questionnaire. All students attending the relevant GL sessions were invited to participate. Of those invited, 35 students provided complete responses and constituted the quantitative sample for the study. Thus, the study used a voluntary response approach among students who had experienced the GL sessions. The demographic characteristics of the 35 student participants, including gender, age range, and semester of study, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Student Participants

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	7	20.0
	Female	28	80.0
Age	20–21 years old	35	100.0
Semester of study	3	35	100.0

This study also involved structured reflections from three guest lecturers (n = 3) from the University of Batangas, Lipa City, concerning planning, integration into course activities, perceived impact, challenges, and recommendations. Among the three guest lecturers, two had prior experience participating in guest lecturer programs, whereas one had no previous experience as a guest lecturer.

Research Instruments

Student perception questionnaire

Students' perceptions of the GL program were measured using a structured questionnaire developed from literature related to the implementation of guest lecturers, student engagement, and learning experiences. The instrument comprised 19 Likert-type statements assessed on a 4-point scale (1–4) and three open-ended questions. The Likert items assessed three domains. The first domain included perceived educational value, its relevance to teacher preparation, how well it presented information, how confident and motivated it made people feel, and how much it helped with speaking and vocabulary development. The second domain included planning and coordinating lessons, ensuring session flow, task instructions and rubrics, the quality of the learning materials, and the perceived compatibility between the guest lecturer and the local teacher. The third domain identified factors that made participation difficult, such as limited internet or device access, platform changes, accent or speaking speed, workload-time compatibility, lack of technical support, and cultural reluctance to ask questions. The validity of the items of the questionnaire was checked by corrected item-total correlation analysis before performing reliability analysis. Reverse coding was done for negatively worded statements, and the validity test was done for all 19 of the Likert-type items. Results indicated that most items had acceptable item validity, with corrected item-total correlation values above the suggested cutoff of 0.30. We retained several items with lower correlation values because they represented theoretically important aspects of the GL program, particularly those concerning technological and participation barriers. The open-ended questions asked students to share their thoughts on how to improve the GL program and to rate its strengths and weaknesses. To ensure consistent scoring for positive perceptions, the study reverse-coded negatively worded items.

The item validity analysis showed that 14 of 19 questionnaire items met the criterion of a corrected item-total correlation of 0.30, with values ranging from 0.327 to 0.703. However, five items (Q8, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q17) had coefficients below the threshold, ranging from 0.220 to 0.277, which suggests further evaluation is needed. These items were kept because they are theoretically relevant to instructional coordination, technological accessibility, and barriers to participation in the GL program. However, the relatively low item-total correlations indicate that these indicators should be interpreted with caution and reconsidered during future instrument refinement. The internal consistency reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha after the analysis of item validity, as shown in Table 3.

The reliability analysis indicated high internal consistency of the perceived value and design items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.880$ after reverse coding). The barrier set, however, showed moderate internal consistency for exploratory assessment (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.660$).

The guest lecturer reflection form

A structured written reflection form documented implementation viewpoints from three guest lecturers. The form included five questions asking for stories about how GL sessions were planned and carried out, how they were used in course activities, what effects they had on student learning and engagement, what

Table 2. Item Validity Test Results of the GL Program Questionnaire

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Decision	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Decision
Q1	0.486	Valid	Q11	0.274	Needs evaluation
Q2	0.703	Valid	Q12	0.702	Valid
Q3	0.610	Valid	Q13	0.571	Valid
Q4	0.447	Valid	Q14	0.241	Needs evaluation
Q5	0.600	Valid	Q15	0.442	Valid
Q6	0.653	Valid	Q16	0.264	Needs evaluation
Q7	0.580	Valid	Q17	0.277	Needs evaluation
Q8	0.220	Needs evaluation	Q18	0.327	Valid
Q9	0.527	Valid	Q19	0.368	Valid
Q10	0.646	Valid			

Table 3. Reliability Test Results of the GL Program Questionnaire

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Educational Value and Instructional Design	13	0.880	High reliability
Perceived Barriers	6	0.660	Moderate reliability

problems arose during implementation, how to solve them, and how to improve future GL delivery. These insights strengthened the student survey results by clarifying the contextual and instructional factors that support the quantitative trends and student responses.

Data Collection

After the GL was implemented, data were collected to capture how students felt and thought about the process. Course instructors facilitated participant recruitment by notifying all students attending the GL sessions about the study and inviting them to participate. An online questionnaire was given to students after the GL installation to collect quantitative data. Thirty-five students sent in complete answers. The questionnaire collected students' evaluations of 19 Likert-type items on a 4-point scale (1-4) and included three open-ended questions asking about perceived strengths, perceived weaknesses, and recommendations for improving future GL delivery.

Qualitative data were collected from two written sources: students' answers to three open-ended questions administered with the quantitative questionnaire, and structured written reflections from three guest lecturers (n=3) after the quantitative survey results were analyzed. The students' open-ended answers served as additional contextual information. The next qualitative explanatory phase was the guest lecturers' written reflections. The five reflection prompts were developed and refined based on the quantitative findings to further explain students' perceptions of the GL program. The five reflection prompts addressed planning, integration into course activities, perceived impact, implementation challenges, and recommendations.

Data analysis

The quantitative data analysis was conducted in the latest version of IBM SPSS Statistics. The dataset was checked for completeness and prepared for evaluation before the analysis. For each of the 19 Likert-type items, we calculated descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarise students' perceptions of the program in terms of perceived value and impact, instructional design and coordination, and barriers to participation. To ensure consistency in the direction of scores

for interpretation at the construct level, reverse-coded items were used.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyze qualitative data from students' open-ended questionnaire responses and instructors' written reflections. Data triangulation, by comparing students' responses to open-ended items in the questionnaire with their reflective accounts, enhanced the credibility of the qualitative results. An audit trail was kept to record the processes of data organization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. Additionally, peer debriefing was employed to examine the consistency of the coding process and the relevance of the themes identified. These procedures were used to enhance the credibility, transparency, and reliability of the thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). An inductive approach to analysis was employed, involving immersion in the entire dataset, generating initial codes, categorizing codes into broad themes, refining themes, and selecting representative quotes. Interpretation was the stage where integration was performed by juxtaposing quantitative patterns (e.g., items with high or low endorsement and frequently reported barriers) with qualitative themes that account for the underlying reasons for these patterns.

Ethical Clearance

The present study was carried out under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Universitas Halu Oleo (UHO), Indonesia, and University of Batangas Lipa City (UBLC), Philippines, as the basis for institutional collaboration in academic and research activities. In designing the research procedures, the rights, privacy, and confidentiality of the 35 student participants and the instructors involved were considered. Participation in the study was voluntary, and data collection was used only for academic research purposes.

■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis of the GL program used data collected from 35 students who completed the structured questionnaire. The results showed that students highly valued the GL sessions for the professional insights and global perspectives of guest speakers. Students who mentioned that the instructional design was clear and well organized liked the materials. However, they noted some issues with cooperation between the guest speaker and local teachers. Several barriers to participation also emerged, such as technological difficulties (internet access and platform changes) and linguistic limitations (accent and speech rate), which significantly hampered full engagement.

The descriptive statistics of students' responses to the Guest Lecturer (GL) Program questionnaire are presented in Table 4. The table summarizes the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores for all 19 questionnaire items.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Responses to the Guest Lecturer Program Questionnaire

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1	The material is relevant to my needs.	3.49	0.66	1	4
2	I get international perspectives on the program.	3.23	0.55	2	4
3	GL is useless.	1.54	0.74	1	4
4	The GL's presentation style was easy to understand.	3.20	0.87	2	4
5	I felt confident interacting with the GL online.	3.00	0.80	2	4
6	The GL experience increased my motivation to learn.	3.20	0.83	2	4
7	The objectives and sequence of activities during the GL session were clearly communicated.	2.00	1.01	1	4
8	The instructions and assessment rubrics for GL-related assignments were easy to follow.	3.00	0.91	1	4
9	Coordination between the GL and the local lecturer seemed inconsistent.	3.00	0.87	1	4
10	The slides and examples provided by the GL helped me understand the material.	3.00	0.87	1	4

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Min	Max
11	The platforms (Zoom, LMS, and Docs) were smoothly integrated throughout the activities.	2.00	0.82	1	3
12	The GL program increased my motivation to learn in this course.	2.25	0.44	2	3
13	The GL program motivated me to improve my speaking skills and expand my vocabulary.	3.20	0.83	2	4
14	Internet connection or device issues frequently hindered my participation.	3.20	0.82	2	4
15	Switching between platforms (Zoom, LMS, and Docs) disrupted my concentration.	3.40	0.74	2	4
16	Differences in the GL's accent or speaking speed made it difficult for me to understand the material.	3.20	0.83	2	4
17	The workload for GL-related assignments was disproportionate to the time available.	2.40	1.00	1	4
18	I had difficulty obtaining assistance when I experienced technical problems.	2.20	0.85	1	4
19	Cultural differences made me hesitant to ask questions or participate in discussions.	2.20	1.03	1	4

Based on Table 4, the responses generally indicated that students viewed the Guest Lecturer (GL) Program as a useful learning experience, especially regarding the relevance of instructional materials and opportunities for language development. Students' generally positive perceptions are also supported by the relatively low level of agreement with the statement that the program was useless (M = 1.54). However, this positive appraisal was not unanimous in all dimensions of the learning experience. A large discrepancy emerged between students' view of the GL experience as a source of learning motivation (M = 3.20) and their evaluation of the program's contribution to course motivation (M = 2.25). The variation suggests that students could enjoy the learning experience with the guest lecturer without necessarily seeing a consistent increase in their overall course motivation. The findings also suggest that students found the program's perceived advantages more salient in terms of learning relevance and language development than in motivational outcomes.

A close reading of the responses also reveals a disconnect between the program's educational potential and its actual use. Students generally acknowledged the value of the learning content and instructional delivery, but their responses reflected challenges in coordinating learning activities and integrating digital platforms. The relatively high mean scores for platform switching (M = 3.40) and technical disruptions (M = 3.20) indicate that technological arrangements were important challenges during the learning process. These challenges were coupled with concerns about understanding the guest lecturer's speech, indicating that students encountered both technological and linguistic barriers to participation. The results also indicate that the amount of work assigned to students, the availability of technical support, and cultural differences were among the factors that made it more difficult for students to complete their work. Collectively, these patterns indicate that the GL Program's impact depended not only on the academic content provided by international lecturers but also on the quality of instructional coordination, technological support, and opportunities for meaningful student interaction.

Finally, to better understand the quantitative results, Figure 1 presents the distribution of students' answers across the questionnaire's 19 items. Table 3 summarizes students' perceptions using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores), but the figures do not show the distribution of responses across the answer categories. Figure 1 thus complements the statistical results by showing the frequency distribution of responses in four categories: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. This visual display summarizes the

response patterns for each survey question, allowing identification of the extent to which students held similar or different perceptions of the Guest Lecturer (GL) Program. Furthermore, showing all 19 items in the same figure allows comparison across the questionnaire's dimensions, such as the program's academic importance, pedagogical methods, technology integration, learner motivation, and implementation obstacles. Analyzing these response distributions helps readers better understand the uniformity and diversity in students' perceptions of different aspects of the program. Thus, Figure 1 supports the quantitative results and provides a basis for a more detailed analysis of specific response trends. Figure 1 shows the frequency distribution of students' responses.

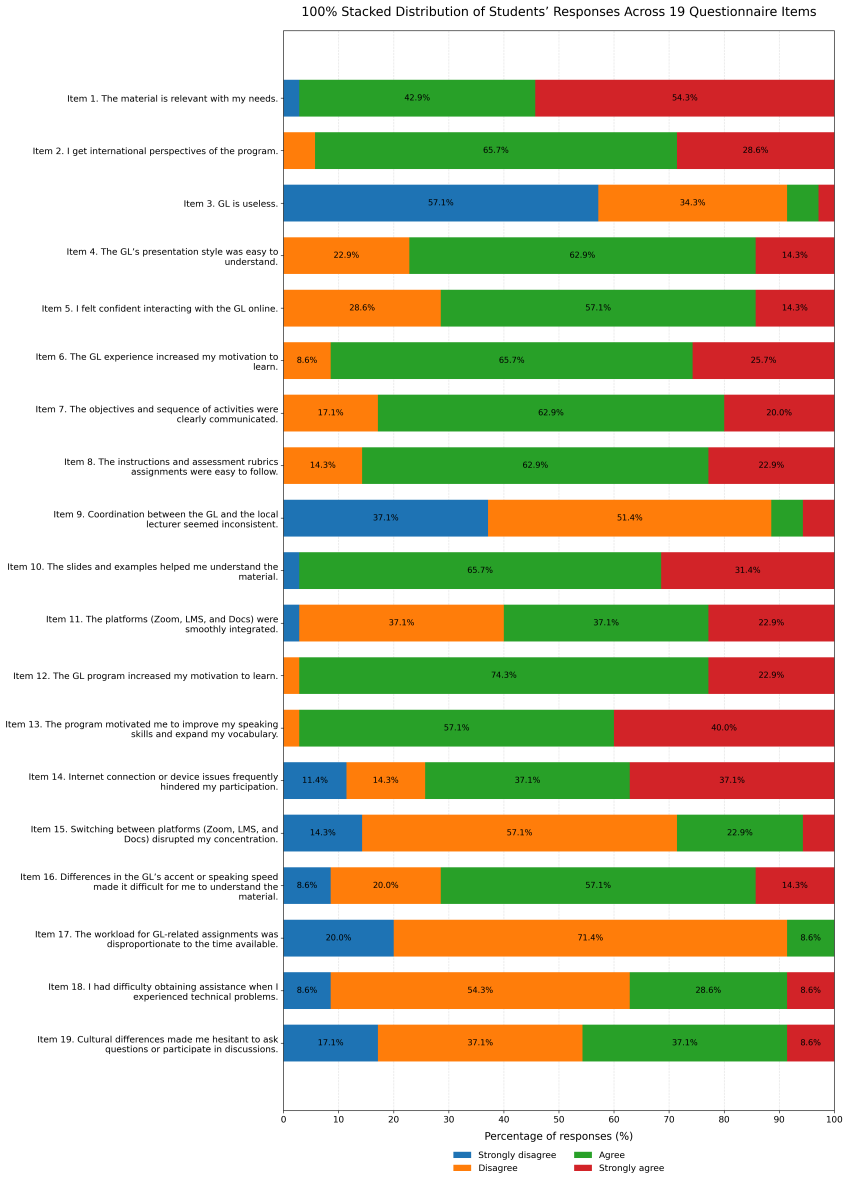


Figure 1. Percentage Distribution of Students' Responses Across the 19 Questionnaire Items

Spearman's rank-order correlation revealed several negative correlations between learning difficulties and students' motivation to learn. In particular, issues with internet connection or devices (Item 14) were moderately negatively correlated with motivation related to the GL experience (Item 6) ($\rho = -0.413$, $p = 0.014$). Similarly, problems switching between digital platforms (Item 15) were negatively associated with motivation related to the GL experience (Item 6) ($\rho = -0.444$, $p = 0.008$) and motivation for learning in the course (Item 12) ($\rho =$

Table 5. Spearman's Rank Correlation between Learning Challenges and Learning Motivation

Learning challenges	Learning motivation	Spearman's ρ	Original p-value	Adjusted p-value
Item 14	Item 6	−0.413	0.014	0.126
Item 14	Item 12	−0.236	0.172	1.000
Item 14	Item 13	−0.119	0.497	1.000
Item 15	Item 6	−0.444	0.008	0.072
Item 15	Item 12	−0.554	0.001	0.009
Item 15	Item 13	−0.277	0.107	0.963
Item 16	Item 6	−0.019	0.916	1.000
Item 16	Item 12	−0.124	0.477	1.000
Item 16	Item 13	−0.283	0.099	0.891

−0.554, p = 0.001). The strongest negative correlation was between platform-switching challenges and motivation to learn related to the course. However, after applying the Bonferroni correction to the nine correlation analyses, only the association between Item 15 and Item 12 remained statistically significant (Bonferroni-adjusted p = 0.009). This suggests that difficulties navigating different digital platforms were significantly associated with reduced motivation to learn related to the course, even after correcting for multiple comparisons.

Other learning difficulties: No statistically significant relations were found between the guest lecturer's accent or speech speed (Item 16) and any of the three motivation indicators (Items 6, 12, and 13). Similarly, internet connectivity and device problems did not show significant associations with motivation to learn course content (Item 12) or motivation to improve speaking skills and vocabulary (Item 13). The results show that the association between learning obstacles and motivation depends on the nature of the challenge students encounter. Platform-switching difficulties, in particular, showed the most consistent negative correlation with student motivation. One possible explanation is that continuous switching between digital platforms may disrupt the flow of educational activities and require students to expend more effort navigating different learning environments. Such interruptions can impede students' ability to maintain attention and engagement in the learning experience. These findings emphasize the need to integrate digital platforms successfully and align online learning initiatives to enhance students' motivation and engagement in international collaborative educational programs.

Comparison of Domain-Level Mean Scores

To compare the GL program's principal quantitative dimensions, the means reported in Tables 4–8 were aggregated by domain. Educational Value included Items 1–6, 12, and 13; Instructional Coordination included Items 7–11; and Technical Barriers included Items 14, 15, and 18. Items 3 and 9 were reverse-coded (5 minus the item mean). The technical-barrier scores were not reversed because higher values indicate greater difficulty. These descriptive domain means are based on published, rounded item means rather than individual-level data.

As illustrated in Figure 2, Educational Value achieved the highest mean (M = 3.13), followed by Technical Barriers (M = 2.93) and Instructional Coordination (M = 2.40). The comparatively low coordination score suggests that the perceived educational benefits were not consistently matched by clear sequencing, lecturer coordination, and platform integration. At the same time, the technical-barrier score indicates meaningful challenges, especially platform switching (Item 15, M = 3.40) and internet or device problems (Item 14, M = 3.20). Importantly, the technical-barrier score reflects the severity of obstacles and therefore should not be interpreted as a favorable performance score. Overall, the chart underscores the need to strengthen instructional planning and technical support while maintaining the educational value of international guest lectures.

Motivations for participating in the guest lecturer program

The qualitative data were analyzed to explore the motivations influencing students' and guest lecturers' participation in the GL program. The thematic map is shown in Figure 3.

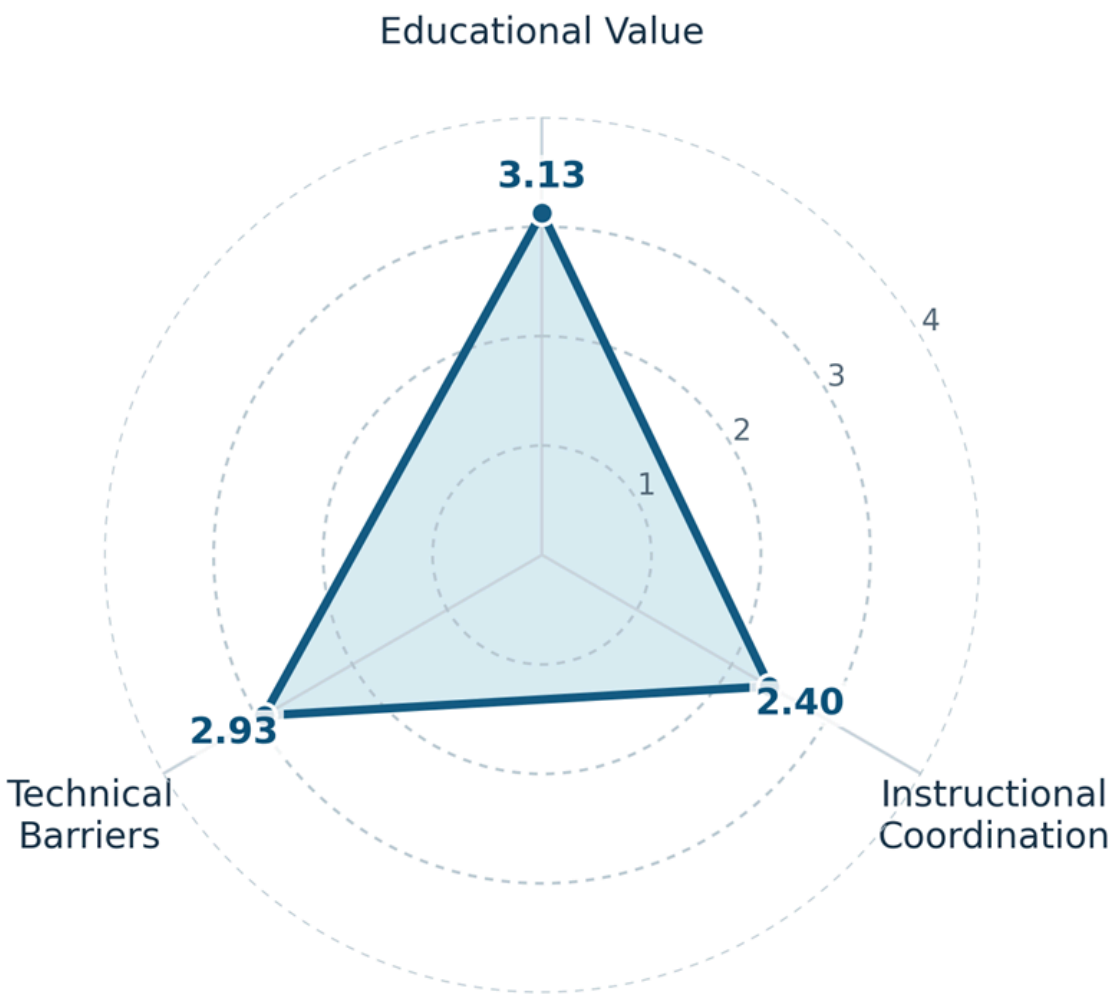


Figure 2. Radar Chart Comparing Mean Scores for Educational Value, Instructional Coordination, and Technical Barriers

Note. Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate more favorable perceptions of educational value and instructional coordination but more severe difficulties for technical barriers. Items 16, 17, and 19 were excluded from the technical-barrier domain because they assess linguistic, workload, and intercultural rather than technical difficulties (n = 35).

As shown in Figure 3, the qualitative analysis revealed that participants' motivation to engage in the GL program was shaped by three interconnected themes: Cultural Exchange, Improved Language Skills, and Professional Development (Figure 3). Rather than viewing the program merely as an additional academic activity, participants perceived the GL sessions as an opportunity to experience new perspectives, communicate across cultural boundaries, and connect classroom learning with broader professional contexts.

The Cultural Exchange theme reflects participants' interest in experiencing learning environments involving individuals from different cultural and academic backgrounds. Students viewed the presence of international guest lecturers as an opportunity to encounter different ways of thinking, teaching approaches, and professional perspectives that were not commonly available in regular classroom activities. One student stated, *"We can engage in a cultural exchange,"* indicating that cultural interaction itself became an important source of learning.

Another student highlighted the program's cultural benefits, which allowed students "*To know our culture and broaden our international perspectives through knowing cultures from abroad*." The response suggests that cultural exchange was valued not only as an opportunity to meet lecturers from other countries, but also to broaden students' understanding of cultures other than their own.

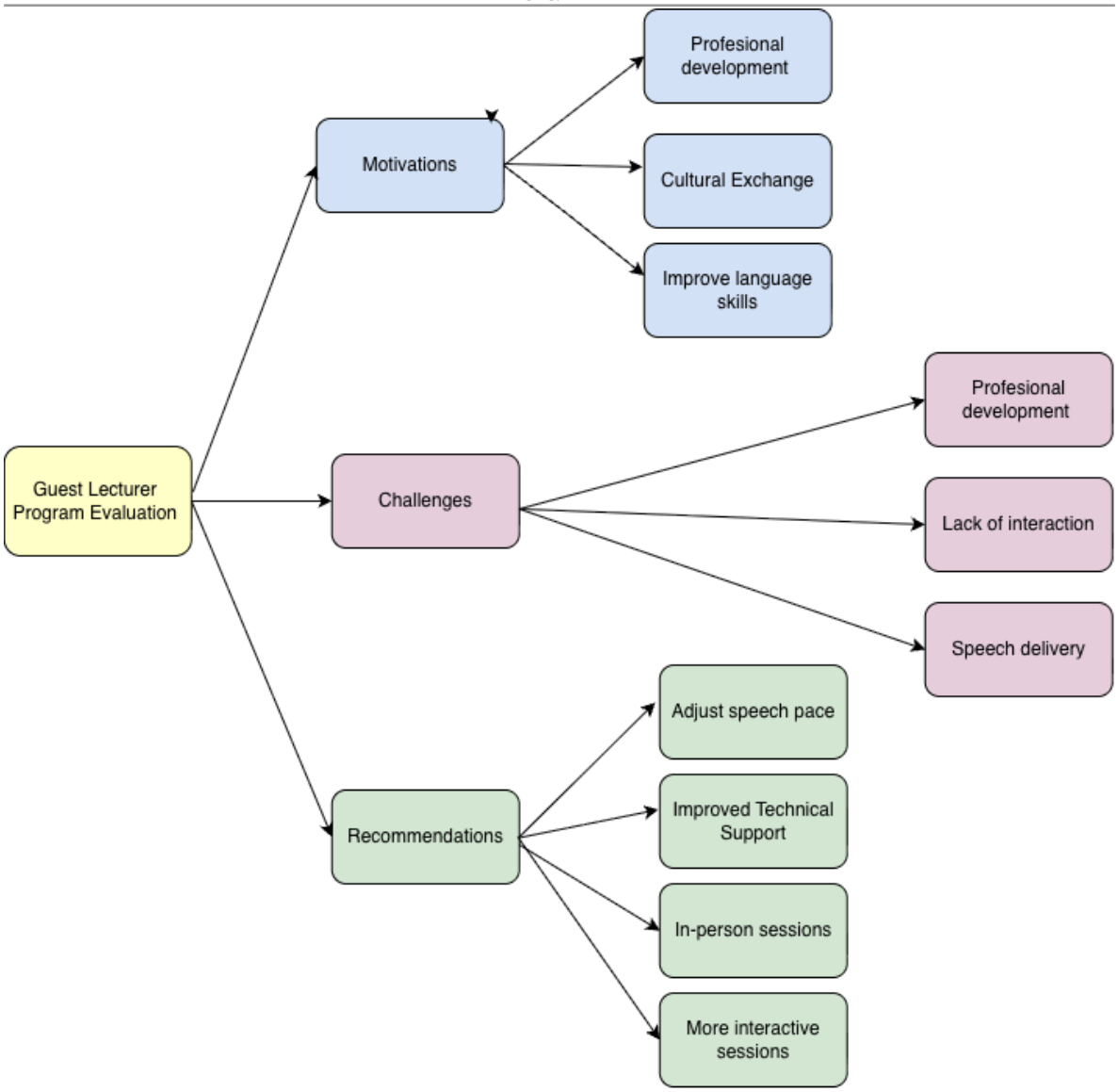


Figure 3. Thematic Map of Motivations, Challenges, and Recommendations in the Guest Lecturer Program

This perception was also reflected in the guest lecturer's perspective. MCL explained that the sessions allowed students to obtain "*Different points of view and insights from different professionals*." These responses suggest that cultural exchange occurred not only through exposure to another country or culture but also through classroom dialogue, where students encountered alternative perspectives on knowledge, teaching practices, and professional experiences.

The theme of Improved Language Skills emerged as another important motivation. Students considered the GL sessions as an authentic opportunity to practice English communication in a meaningful academic context. Compared with conventional classroom activities, interactions with guest lecturers provided students with direct exposure to different accents, expressions, and communication styles. One student described the personal benefit of this experience, saying that the program "*helped me be more confident in speaking English.*" This response emphasizes the role of the GL sessions in students' confidence in using English as well as their exposure to different forms of spoken communication

Several students felt the program helped them improve their speaking ability and comprehension because they were required to listen to and respond to speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. Another student said that using English throughout the session motivated them to learn and expand their vocabulary. This account suggests that using English as a medium of instruction triggered further

language development. This experience was not limited to language practice; it also encouraged students to become more confident using English for academic interaction. From the lecturers' perspective, MC emphasized that the program "*Bridges academic knowledge with real-world practice, motivating students, and preparing them for future professional environments*." Thus, language development was perceived as closely connected with students' confidence and readiness to communicate in professional settings.

The third theme, Professional Development, demonstrates that students were motivated by the opportunity to learn directly from professionals with international experience. The guest lecturers were perceived not only as sources of subject knowledge but also as models who provided insights into professional practices beyond the local classroom context. MCL highlighted that "*Having foreign guest lecturer sessions allows students to gain another perspective on how a lesson is learned*." This suggests that students' motivation was influenced by the opportunity to compare different educational practices and understand how knowledge could be applied in wider professional environments.

Overall, the qualitative findings indicate that students' and guest lecturers' motivations were multidimensional. Students were motivated not only by acquiring new academic knowledge but also by participating in intercultural interactions, developing communication skills, and gaining professional insights. The interaction between students and guest lecturers created a learning experience in which knowledge exchange occurred through dialogue, exposure to different perspectives, and engagement with authentic professional experiences. Therefore, the GL program functioned as more than a guest teaching session; it became a platform that connected cultural understanding, language development, and professional preparation.

Challenges in the Guest Lecturer Program

Qualitative data analysis revealed three major challenges during the implementation of the GL program. As presented in Figure 3, these challenges comprise Technical Issues, Speech Delivery, and Lack of Interaction. The Technical Issues theme refers to difficulties with internet connectivity and technological disruptions during virtual sessions. One student said the internet connection was bad and it was hard to concentrate on the lesson. This reflects a common issue that prevented students from participating fully. One student said, "*Sometimes the video froze, and we missed parts of the lecture*," which made the technical problems even worse. These difficulties were acknowledged by guest lecturers such as MLC. "*The students' internet connection was spotty, which made some of them have to leave the GMeet calls*." This shows that the sessions were severely hampered by the flaky internet connection.

The issue of speech delivery was raised, in particular, the speed at which the guest speakers spoke. Several students said the fast pace made it difficult to understand. A student said, "*The lecturer spoke too quickly, and I could not keep up*." Guest lecturers, like MCL, agreed, saying, "*Because of the online format, some students are not fully engaged, probably because of slow internet connections and other related issues*." Speed of speech and language problems are two of the biggest things that keep students from participating and understanding.

Finally, some sessions reported that the lack of interaction was a challenge. Some sessions were interactive but did not have enough student interaction. One student pointed out, "*Some sessions may be too short or lack interaction, making it difficult for us students to fully engage or ask questions*." This suggests more opportunities for interaction, such as Q&A sessions, discussions, or interactive activities, to better engage students.

The challenges identified under the general categories of Technical Issues, Speech Delivery, and Lack of Interaction indicate areas that need improvement to enhance the effectiveness of the GL programs. Addressing these issues, especially internet connectivity, modulating the speed of delivery, and adding more interactive elements, would help in creating a more inclusive and engaging learning experience for all participants.

Recommendations for Improvement in the Guest Lecturer Program

The qualitative data were analyzed to explore participants' recommendations for improving the GL program. As presented in Figure 3, four key recommendation themes emerged from the analysis: In-Person Sessions, Increased Interaction, Slower Speech Rate, and Enhanced Technical Support. The In-Person Sessions theme refers to participants' suggestions to shift from online to face-to-face learning environments. Many students stated that in-person classes would provide more opportunities for direct interaction and allow greater participation among students. One student said they were really looking forward to going in person. "*I hope the next class is in person*," they said. MLC expressed a similar sentiment: "*Even though the technology is there, I like to deal with*

the students directly." Therefore, it was important that everyone participate in the sessions.

A key recommendation was more interactive content, with students and guest lecturers calling for more engagement. To attract more people, students suggested activities like Q&A sessions, workshops and games. "*I think having more interactive sessions like Q&A or short workshops will be helpful*," said one student. This suggests they want a more engaging, dynamic learning atmosphere. The guest speaker, MC, agreed. She said: "*Students need to interact with each other to learn more deeply and also to keep their interest*."

Students also emphasized the need to control the speaker's pace. Some students mentioned that guest lecturers sometimes spoke too fast, which made it difficult to understand the material. A student suggested that the guest lecturer speak more slowly to make the material easier to understand. MCL said it was necessary to adjust the speech speed to suit students with different levels of English proficiency, making it easier for all students to understand during the presentation.

Finally, students viewed Enhanced Technical Support as essential to developing the GL program. Students said they often found it difficult to participate fully in the sessions because of internet connection issues. "*Students who do not have reliable internet at home often struggle to get involved*," one student said. Reliable technical support and better internet access will go a long way toward solving these problems and improving the experience for both students and guest speakers. The recommendations for in-person sessions, increased interaction, slower speech pace, and better technical support highlight key areas for improvement to make the GL program more effective. These recommendations will create a more engaging, inviting, and productive learning environment for all involved.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

To explain the survey patterns, Table 6 brings together selected item-level means from the 35 student respondents, the corresponding qualitative themes, and representative student and guest lecturer reflections. The joint display identifies areas of convergence, as well as complementary or divergent findings.

Table 6. Joint Display Matrix Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Survey items and mean scores	Qualitative theme and integrated interpretation	Student reflection	Guest lecturer reflection
Q1 Material relevance = 3.49 Q2 International perspectives = 3.23 Q3 "GL is useless" = 1.54	Cultural exchange; professional development. Convergence: High Q1 and Q2 means align with students' accounts of cultural exchange and the lecturer's emphasis on diverse professional viewpoints. The low Q3 mean indicates disagreement with the claim that GL was useless.	"*We can engage in a cultural exchange*," "*To know our culture and broaden our international perspectives through knowing cultures from abroad*"	MCL: "*Different points of view and insights from different professionals*."
Q6 Motivation to learn = 3.20 Q12 Motivation in this course = 2.25 Q13 Speaking/ vocabulary = 3.20	Improved language skills; professional development. Partial convergence/ divergence: Q13 supports perceived language development, consistent with the student's confidence	"*helped me be more confident in speaking English*."	MC: "*Bridges academic knowledge with real-world practice, motivating students, and preparing them for future professional environments*."

Survey items and mean scores	Qualitative theme and integrated interpretation	Student reflection	Guest lecturer reflection
	account. However, the lower Q12 mean indicates that perceived language gains did not necessarily translate into stronger motivation for the course. The lecturer frames the program as a bridge to professional practice.		
Q7 Clear objectives/ sequence = 2.00 Q9 Inconsistent lecturer coordination = 3.00 Q11 Smooth platform integration = 2.00	Instructional coordination; direct engagement. Complementarity: Q7 and Q11 indicate limited endorsement of clear sequencing and smooth platform integration, while Q9 (negatively worded) indicates perceived inconsistency in coordination. The reflections favor direct contact; they contextualize the need for stronger engagement but do not directly explain the low Q7 score.	"*I hope the next class is in person*."	MLC: "*Even though the technology is there, I like to deal with the students directly*."
Q14 Internet/device issues = 3.20 Q15 Platform switching = 3.40 Q18 Difficulty obtaining technical help = 2.20	Technical issues; platform disruption. Convergence: The high Q14 and Q15 means are corroborated by reports of frozen video and unstable connections. Q15 is the highest mean among these barriers, highlighting platform switching as a particularly salient disruption.	"*Sometimes the video froze, and we missed parts of the lecture*."	MLC: "*The students' internet connection was spotty, which made some of them have to leave the GMeet calls*."
Q4 Presentation style easy to understand = 3.20 Q16 Accent/speech speed difficulty = 3.20	Speech delivery. Complementarity: The student's quote directly explains the Q16 difficulty with speech rate. The lecturer's reflection adds online engagement and	"*The lecturer spoke too quickly, and I could not keep up*."	MCL: "*Because of the online format, some students are not fully engaged, probably because of slow internet connections and other related issues*."

Survey items and mean scores	Qualitative theme and integrated interpretation	Student reflection	Guest lecturer reflection
	connectivity constraints; it does not directly refer to speech speed.		
Q5 Confidence interacting online = 3.00 Q19 Cultural differences made participation hesitant = 2.20	Lack of interaction; participation. Convergence with nuance: Both reflections emphasize interaction. Q5 indicates moderate confidence in online interaction, while the lower Q19 mean suggests cultural hesitation was not strongly endorsed overall, even though limited interaction remained a qualitative concern.	"*Some sessions may be too short or lack interaction, making it difficult for us students to fully engage or ask questions*."	MC: "*Students need to interact with each other to learn more deeply and also to keep their interest*."

Note. Mean scores are based on 35 student responses on a four-point scale. Q3, Q9, and Q14–Q19 are negatively worded; higher scores on these items indicate stronger agreement with the stated difficulty, whereas the low Q3 mean indicates disagreement with the claim that the GL program is useless. Q11 is positively worded; its lower mean indicates limited agreement that platforms integrated smoothly. Quoted reflections are reproduced as presented in the manuscript; lecturer initials follow the original text.

Overall, students viewed the GL program positively despite linguistic and technical barriers. This positive perception might be explained by the pedagogical value of exposure to professional insights, global perspectives, and authentic English use offered by guest lecturers. Students particularly liked the clarity and organization of the instructional materials and the chance to interact with lecturers from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds. These features may offer learning experiences not as readily available through traditional classroom instruction and may help students connect English learning to authentic educational and professional contexts. Thus, beyond providing instructional material, the perceived value of the GL program seems to stem from students' opportunity to experience different perspectives and uses of English.

The qualitative data also show that students' positive perceptions were accompanied by challenges related to internet connectivity, adapting to digital platforms, accent, speech rate, and limited interaction. These barriers did not diminish the program's educational value; instead, they suggest that students still valued it and identified conditions that could limit their participation and understanding. For example, student recommendations for slower speech delivery, more interaction, and more direct engagement by the guest lecturers suggest that instructional modifications addressing students' proficiency levels and learning needs could enhance the program's pedagogical benefits. Thus, the effectiveness of the GL experience may depend on balancing the value of authentic international exposure with accessible instructional delivery. Despite these problems, students reported that the GL program significantly improved their interest and language skills, especially in speaking and learning new words (Spiegel & Nivette, 2023).

The findings also align with previous studies suggesting that global exposure and practical experience can improve students' academic engagement and motivation. The study helps us understand how to integrate technology and instruction in hybrid learning. Technology can help experts help everyone, but only when the technology is easy to use and enables effective communication between teachers and students (Garlinska et al., 2023; Zabeli et al., 2021). This study highlights the link between language barriers and student engagement, and the need to consider speech delivery, especially in an online environment. Successful integration of pedagogy

and technology is also a requirement to enhance student learning in hybrid settings (Leathwood & Read, 2022). Moreover, language issues in online settings have been linked to students' engagement and understanding (Varghese & Panigrahi, 2023).

Universities should focus on improving technical infrastructure to implement GL programs effectively, especially in online or hybrid learning environments. This upgrade is needed to run GL programs smoothly and efficiently in modern learning environments (Hoffman et al., 2021). To ensure all students are fully engaged in sessions, institutions must address issues such as insufficient internet access (Ali et al., 2021). In terms of policy, colleges should encourage guest speakers to engage students directly, e.g., through Q&A sessions or discussions, to improve student engagement (Angelaki et al., 2024). Moreover, the program lacks sufficient collaboration between the guest speakers and local teachers to fulfill its educational goals (Persson et al., 2023). Adequate technical support and institutional preparedness are important factors in the long-term success of online and hybrid learning programs (Fleischmann, 2021).

The study used a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative method involved surveys to collect data on students' perceptions. The questionnaire results provide a broad view of students' happiness but may not capture the intricacies of their lives. In contrast, qualitative data from surveys or written reflections would provide a deeper understanding of the problems faced by both students and guest lecturers. The two approaches reviewed show that combining quantitative data with qualitative perspectives provides a comprehensive picture of the challenges to student engagement, including technological difficulties and language barriers (Hilton et al., 2021).

An unexpected finding was the wide gap between students' high ratings of the GL program's relevance and usefulness and their reports of challenges attending sessions. Technical difficulties such as internet connectivity problems and platform interruptions significantly reduced overall student participation, even though students rated the content positively (Pepple et al., 2025; Yeh & Tsai, 2022). This shows that even when a program is considered useful, it does not necessarily lead to more engagement, especially when learning is delivered through technology. These programs must overcome technological and logistical challenges (Van Mol & Perez-Encinas, 2022). Similarly, other studies show that unresolved technical barriers can substantially reduce student engagement, even when students have positive attitudes toward the learning content (Klegeris, 2021).

There are several limitations to this study. The sample size of 35 students is relatively small and may not represent the larger student population. The study was conducted at one site, so the results may not be generalizable. Students' evaluations of the program may be biased, as self-reported data may make students feel obliged to give positive feedback (Akbari et al., 2022). However, the study does not assess the long-term impact of the GL program on students' academic and professional development, which indicates the need for a longitudinal approach.

Future research might examine the effectiveness of GL programs across different types of institutions and different academic disciplines to see whether the challenges and benefits identified in this study are generalizable to other settings. Longitudinal studies can also shed some light on the long-term impact of GL programs on students' academic performance, professional skills, and career paths (Carvalho et al., 2022). Additionally, Future research should seek the perspectives of guest lecturers and local instructors to better understand the challenges they face in coordinating and delivering GL sessions. Future research could also investigate hybrid learning models that combine face-to-face and online formats to improve student engagement and learning in guest lecturer programs.

■ CONCLUSION

In general, this research investigated students' perceptions of GL program implementation in a higher education context, focusing on perceived educational value, student engagement, instructional implementation, and barriers to participation. The results indicate that students had an overall positive attitude toward the GL program, especially regarding session relevance, exposure to professional and global views, and motivational value. The findings also showed that students felt the program offered chances to interact with English and gain insights from guest lecturers from varied professional and cultural backgrounds. However, the findings also outline several barriers that could affect student engagement in the sessions, such as technical problems, lack of internet connections, switching between digital platforms, differences in speech rate and accent, and limited opportunities for interaction. Thus, although students' perceptions of the GL program were generally positive, these challenges may influence their participation and engagement in the learning process. These results imply that universities must invest in improving technological infrastructure, increase

collaboration between visiting lecturers and local professors, and foster richer interactive learning experiences.

It is important to note that this study explores students' perceptions rather than their actual learning outcomes or academic achievement. Thus, the results should not be taken as direct evidence of the GL program's positive effects on students' language proficiency or academic performance. Further research should investigate the long-term effects of GL programs, especially in blended learning contexts, and combine insights from both guest lecturers and local faculty to address issues related to the effective organization and delivery of these sessions.

■ DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USAGE IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Claude AI and ChatGPT to assist with language translation, language editing, sentence refinement, and improving the manuscript's overall clarity and readability. All AI-generated suggestions were critically reviewed, revised, and validated by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the manuscript's accuracy, integrity, and final content.

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