Teachers and Multiculturalism in Turkey: An Evaluation of the Competency Perceptions of Teachers Regarding Multiculturalism and their Reflection of These Perceptions to the Classroom[i]

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Abstract

This study, aiming to determine the competency perceptions of teachers regarding multiculturalism of teachers working at the secondary schools in Tokat province, Turkey, employed a descriptive survey model. The study population was 341 teachers working at secondary education institutions in Tokat province in the 2014-2015 school year. Data was collected using a questionnaire consisting of seven questions to collect personal information, the "Multicultural Competency Perceptions Scale" developed by Başkaya & Kağnıcı (2011), and an open-ended question. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 20 program, and qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis technique. From the analyses, the scores regarding the multiculturalism competency perceptions of teachers were found to be positive and above the mean score. While the multiculturalism competency perceptions of teachers did not differentiate according to gender, workplace, faculty of graduation, age, or seniority, they differed according to the residential area, and subject. The findings obtained through the qualitative data showed that although teachers had positive perception of their competency regarding multiculturalism, this was not reflected to any great extent in the classroom.

Keywords: multiculturalism, multicultural education, teacher education, Turkey

1. Introduction

Culture can be defined as the sum of organized customs, ideas, and beliefs that forms the roles determining the expected behaviors of a society (Duverger, 2004), or the traditional values and beliefs that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit without any change through one generation to the next (Guiso, Sapienza & Zingales, 2006). Although societies generally have similar cultural characteristics, groups within a society may have their own cultural patterns. These patterns form the basis for multiculturalism (Cırık, 2008; Demir, 2005, p. 3).

In Sociology, multiculturalism refers to the existence of many cultures in the same country. Almost all today's national societies could be said to have a multicultural structure. For example, according to a survey conducted in Turkey in 2006, the main ethnic identities in Turkey were: Turkish 78.1%, Kurdish 13.4%, local identities 1.5%, Arab 0.7%, immigrant 0.4%, Caucasian origin 0.3%, Balkan origin 0.2%, Asian Turk 0.1%, Roman 0.1%, other countries % 0.07. In addition, the ratios of the mother tongues they spoke are as follows: Turkish 84.5%, Kurdish 13.0%, Arabic 1.4%, other 1.1% (Armenian, Greek, Hebrew, Lazuri, Circassian, Coptic) (KONDA, 2006). This ethnic structure does not include the nearly four million Syrian immigrants who have recently had to leave their countries due to the war in the Middle East (www.sozcu.com.tr). It is almost impossible to talk about the existence of a political society consisting of a community of people which is monocultural and homogeneous in terms of culture. According to Ethnologue, more than 7,000 languages are spoken around the world today. (https://www.ethnologue.com).

The Capitalist globalization process has a significant effect on the formation of the cultural structures of countries. Somel (2002, p. 207) defines globalization as the center of the capitalist world system, shaping the world economy

according to its own needs, Önder (2000, p. 29) as the effort of the capitalist system to become a world regime, Carnoy (2000, p. 46) and, Yeldan (2002, p. 20), as the articulation of the social and economic parts of the world economy with each other and with world markets, together with the increase in international competition. Neo-liberal policies, which constitute the economy-politics of this integration process, have brought about the redesigning or the transformation of political, social and cultural structures. In this process, especially the dynamism of the capital, conditions such as forced or voluntary migrations caused by wars and poverty etc. have led to the transformation of historically and socially multicultural countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia as well as other countries into multicultural societies. According to the 2010 annual report of the International Organization for Migration, if the number of immigrants in the world continues to increase at the present rate, it will exceed 400 million by 2050. (http://www.bbc.com). The number of international students in the whole world was under one million (0.8) in 1975. This increased to 1.3 million in 1990, 2.1 million in 2000 and 4.3 million in 2011 (OECD, 2013, p. 305). Although international higher education student mobility varies between countries, it is likely to increase much more rapidly especially in the coming years. This has brought about the international reorganization of cultural policies and educational systems and the emergence of accreditation systems (Aslan, 2015a, p. 142).

Although the concept of multiculturalism is relatively new, the state of multiculturality is not at all new. Various cultures co-exist together. Cultures have never been completely unrelated to each other in any period of history (Çelik, 2008). What is relatively new here is the differentiation of the function that the capitalist system imposes on a culture at its different periods. For example, Slavoj Zizek (2001) regards multiculturalism as the ideal ideology form of the multinational global capitalism. According to him, multiculturalism

is a type of reversed, "distant racism". He asserts that critical energy cannot touch the homogeneity at the basis of the capitalist world system, and that it substitutes fighting for cultural differences, since capitalism is universally accepted.

Multicultural education comprises the activities conducted for the purposes of respecting others, being sensitive to different ways of thinking and living, and moving away from an ethnic-oriented perception, from mono-culturalism (Parekh, 2002; Ramsey, 2008). The concept of multiculturalism involves race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, social class, and recognition of other cultures (APA, 2002). This educational approach is an approach that aims to create equal educational opportunities, and aims to restructure the school environment for all of the students coming from different race, ethnic, and social groups (Banks et al., 2001; Gay, 1994; Hsu and Thomson, 2010).

Sonia Nieto, a multicultural education researcher, says that the goal of multicultural education is to promote equal treatment and equal access to education, and that, with multicultural education, all students increase their success rate and are provided with a fairer and better-quality education. She argues that in a neo-liberal global world, the United States, by making educational content multicultural, will reduce cultural tensions and thus contribute to economic growth, with all segments of the society benefitting from it (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Nieto, 2012). A similar emphasis was suggested by Banks (2004; 2007; 2010) who claims that in the 21st century, all students will acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need in both the USA and in global economy through multicultural education. However, in contrast, Freire (2000, cited in Banks, 2013, p.123), argues that education should not educate

students as individuals who will only adapt to the existing (inegalitarian, oppressive and exploitative) labour force and social structure.

There are also views that link multicultural education directly with the capitalist system and neoliberal policies. For example, Mitchell (2003), in her article *Educating the National Citizen in Neoliberal Times*, emphasizes that the multiculturalism in education supports the privatization agenda of neoliberal politics, and aids the governments in the implementation of neoliberal policies by reducing the social production costs for governments. A similar emphasis was made by Charles R. Hale (2005), claiming that there is an inseparable relationship between neo-liberalism and multiculturalism. He expresses that policies related to multiculturalism give "neo" its true meaning. He states that he uses the concept of "neoliberal multiculturalism" to emphasize the inseparable relation between these new cultural policies and neoliberal policies because of this. According to Atasay (2014), multicultural education interprets "social justice" with the concepts of free market, and equates it with the market freedom.

On the other hand, there are also views criticizing multicultural education for supporting the culture of ethnicities, weakening the common culture, destroying social unity, being discriminatory, and changing the social, economic, and political structures of the countries (Parekh, 2002).

In the background of these views are the identity/culture policies in the capitalist globalization process. These views sometimes see multiculturalism as a significant source of instability, because, the local cultural demands have the potential to threaten the territorial integrity of the nation state and to turn into local conflicts in time. An important source of instability is the nation state, which is experiencing significant constraints on its traditional roles and

functions, not wanting to abandon the national cultural monopoly. The nation state, which has substantially lost its functions in areas such as economics and social security, seems to link the continuation of its existence to the national culture. At this stage, local/cultural demands arising from the concept of multiculturalism can be directly perceived as a threat to the existence of the nation state. This situation may cause panic especially in the underdeveloped or developing nation states. The local/cultural demands that should be recognized as natural and basic demands within the panicky atmosphere can be perceived as a threat to break up the territorial integrity and the response of the nation states to this perceived threat can be very severe. Of course, in the emergence of such a panicky atmosphere in the off-center/ periphery countries, the nation-state histories of countries in these regions, being recent, may be effective. However, in the central countries, local cultural demands are often recognized and cultural representation allowed. This is because the nation-state histories of these countries have a long history, and therefore there is far less security concern that could arise from the cultural demands of minority ethnic groups on the territorial integrity of the state (Ateş, 2006).

For this reason, the multicultural education approaches of the countries can also be different depending on the development level of the countries, the political regime that they take, and the history of nation state and democracy. The concept of multiculturalism finds either supporters or opponents in both center-right and left ideologies for different reasons. In Marxist literature, the concept is often subject to structural criticism, a criticism of `identity politics', as it lacks a class-based perspective. However, multicultural education can be used as a progressive and transforming force beyond neoliberal connotations and unlike in liberal western democracies. This is especially so in countries such as Turkey where inequalities in education are deep, differences in quality among schools are apparent, there are problems in the use of the right to education, class

distinctions in all segments of society are apparent, where Alevi, Kurdish, Atheist means being "the other", where being a woman is often disadvantageous.

Article 42 of the Turkish Constitution (1982) states that "*No language other than Turkish shall be taught as a mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institutions of training or education.*" However, the above statistics on Turkey's existing ethnic structure, excluding Syrian immigrant and/or refugee children, show that the children of the 15.5% of the population start schooling with another language other than their mother tongue. Despite the multicultural nature of Turkey, education policies are far from supporting this. In fact, a study examining the effects of social, cultural and family conditions on the education process in Turkey revealed findings about children leaving school before completing primary education in six cities (Istanbul, Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, Erzurum and Konya). One of the significant findings of the study; 51.9% of the children leaving school in six provinces speak another language other than in Turkish at home. This rate is 85% in Diyarbakır province. (Gökşen, Cemalcılar and Gürlesel, 2008).

When the aim is a quality education that every child in the country can access, the multicultural social structure of the country and the effects of the socio-cultural and familial conditions of the children on the educational processes should be taken into consideration. In the case of the education processes of the children who receive education in a different language from their mother tongues, they need to learn both the characteristics of the written language and a new language that represents a culture different from the culture they acquire from their families (Ceyhan and Koçbaş, 2009). However, the education union Eğitim-Sen, which has hundreds of thousands of members in Turkey, faced the threat of being shut down due to the Constitutional article given above, because

it defended education in the mother tongue and included it in the Union's regulations. The Union removed the substance from the regulations to avoid being shut down.

Article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (1982) states that

> "Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under State supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools...".

According to this provision, it is obligatory for all citizens who live in the borders of the Republic of Turkey and who attend primary and secondary education institutions to study religion and ethics according to the Sunni/Muslim sect regardless of their religious preferences. This prevents those who belong to other religions or sects, or those without any religious beliefs, to receive education according to their own beliefs, which may cause them to be subject to discrimination.

On the other hand, it becomes increasingly difficult for certain groups to receive a qualified education due to the very unequal income distribution in Turkey. Children coming from low-socio-economic level are obliged to receive poor quality education because of the quality differences between schools. (Aslan, 2015b; 2017; Kiraz, 2014; Küçüker, 2016; Ünal et. al, 2010; Yolcu and Polat, 2015). According to a study, 61% of the variance in PISA 2012 Mathematics scores of the students in Turkey was found to be due to differences between schools. The OECD average rate is 37% (Anıl, Özer-Özkan and Demir, 2012, p. 88). According to Bourdieu, success/failure of a person in the education process is a product of the social class she/he belongs to, rather than the product of her/his skills. The education system transfers largely the culture of the upper

social class. For this reason, Bourdieu says that individuals with such cultural capital are more likely to succeed at school (Güllüpınar and İnce, 2014).

Especially in countries like Turkey which is developing, and where democracy is often interrupted with coups, the concept of multicultural education is worth considering as a progressive and transforming force in order to emphasize pluralism, social justice in education, equality, and at the same time to provide diversity. However, it seems that it is also difficult to say that the multicultural educational goals are fully attained even in the liberal central countries we can name as the homeland of the multicultural education such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. The statement; "the concept of gender equality has become a showcase in the hands of the governments" used by Stromquist (2006) for gender equality could be used also for multicultural education.

In addition, it is seen in the studies conducted on textbooks and teacher attitudes in Turkey that a male-dominant, patriarchal-gendered viewpoint dominates in the textbooks and teacher attitudes (Arslan, 2000; Asan, 2010; Aslan, 2011; 2015c; Esen and Bağlı, 2003; Esen, 2007; Gürkan and Hazır, 1997; Gümüşoğlu, 2000; Helvacıoğlu, 1996; İnal, 1996; Sayılan 2012; Tanrıöver, 2003). This point of view can still be a barrier in girls' schooling, a barrier to them receiving a qualified education. However, teaching strategies that are consistent with the cultural characteristics of the students, culturally sensitive and enriched instructional techniques would motivate the students and give them the opportunity to be successful (Boykin, 2012). Schools should provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for individuals from different cultures to survive effectively. Today, the negative perceptions and expectations of teachers and administrators regarding different cultures may cause the failure of the students in most of the schools (Green, 2012).. Studies indicate that students come to school with many stereotypes, misconceptions, and negative attitudes

towards different racial, ethnic, and social class groups (Stephen and Vogt, 2004, cited by Banks, 2013, p. 122). If teachers do not intervene in this situation, the students may go to the more negative direction as they grow up, and it may become more difficult to change these negative attitudes. For this reason, in order for multicultural educational activities to be successful, teachers need to be developed, strengthened and energized. It is unlikely that weak-minded, alienated, low-paid, and disaffected teachers would help students who are victims of poverty victims and subject to discrimination to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Teachers would only have the desire and ability to act with respect and interest towards their students who are the victims of the society if they feel strong and respect themselves (Banks, 2013, p. 122-123).

Although there are arguments at cross-purposes, "multicultural education competencies" started to find a place in the competency areas that teachers are required to have today. For example, the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) in the United States of America accepts the "Working Experiences with Different Students" as one of the six basic standards in teacher education (Professional Standards, 2008). Also, in order for teachers to get credentials related to their profession, the teacher education programs should include courses on multicultural education (Kelm, Warring & Rau, 2001, cited in Başbay & Bektaş, 2009). Teacher competency in Turkey is defined in two dimensions by the Ministry of National Education as "Teaching Profession General Competencies" and "Subject Area Competencies". "Teaching Profession General Competencies" consist of six main competency areas covering knowledge, skill and attitude features that all teachers should have. These areas are; (1) individual and professional values, (2) acknowledging the student, (3) teaching and learning process, (4) monitoring and evaluation of learning and development, (5) school, family, and society relationships, and (6) program and content knowledge. In the "Individual and Professional Values"

competency area, there are sub-competency areas such as "Valuing, Understanding, and Respecting the Students", and "Giving Importance to the National and Universal Values"; in the second competency area "Acknowledging the Student", there is "Diversification of the Instruction by Paying Attention to the Individual Differences" sub-competency area (MEB, 2015). These main and sub-competency areas involve teachers getting acquainted with different cultures and universal values, respect them, and diversify the teaching process according to them. However, although the competency areas cover the competencies mentioned above, an examination of education faculty programs shows that there are not, in fact, any compulsory courses on multicultural education.

Creating multicultural education environments, increasing the awareness levels of the individuals, and conducting work towards multiculturalism are the collective responsibility of all individuals who take part in this process. However, the individuals who come into prominence in this process are the teachers (Başbay & Kağnıcı, 2011). The competencies, perceptions, or views that teachers should have in order to provide pluralistic and multicultural democratic educational environments have been the theme of a number of studies (Başarır, 2012; Demircioğlu & Özdemir, 2014; Demirsoy, 2013; Herron, Green, Russell & Southard, 1995; McCray, Wright & Beachum, 2004; McCray & Beachum, 2010; Özdemir & Dil, 2013 etc.; Sheets and Chew, 2000; Toprak, 2008). The common point of those studies is that the perceptions of teachers are, although at different levels, positive. The studies conducted with children show that the multicultural education has a positive effect on the development of the children (Sezer, 2017).

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collective responsibility of all individuals who take part in this process. However, the individuals who come into prominence in this process are the teachers (Başbay & Kağnıcı, 2011). Multicultural education view could be said to be nourished from a humanistic principle, in terms of values it tries to create, such as justice, equality, human rights, peace, and consensus, and is closely related to universal values. However, there is a need for change in education policies so that multicultural education can be passed on. In the central capitalist countries, however, the multicultural education seems to have been transformed into a tool used to reduce the anger of the "disadvantaged" groups toward the system.

In Turkey, the concept is much more complex; and is discussed as part of the non-pedagogical political processes. Hence, the multicultural education debates include aspects unique to Turkey. It is seen that Turkey has a multicultural society structure, but the multicultural education is kept at a distance and is not reflected in education policies for many reasons such as unitary state structuring, a significant part of its geography being in trouble with ethnic and sectarian wars, a conservative political party being in power, and the ideological dimension of the compulsory religious studies. For this reason, there are many dimensions to be discussed and investigated regarding the multicultural education in Turkey in both political and pedagogical senses.

The multicultural pedagogical perspectives of critical pedagogues could be a guide for both Turkey and other multicultural societies. Although there are a large number of studies on multiculturalism in the international literature, the concept has only started to be discussed in recent years in Turkey and thus there is a limited literature on multiculturalism in Turkey. A significant part of this literature covers the scale development or adaptation (Başbay & Kağnıcı, 2011; Toprak, 2008; Yavuz & Anıl, 2010; Yazıcı, Başol & Toprak, 2009). This study

aims to contribute to this limited literature in Turkey and share the current situation with international readers regarding this concept which has been studied so little in Turkey. The subjectivity of the situation of Turkey and the issues encountered regarding the topic are also new to the international literature. In the multicultural education process; the education policy of the country, education programs, educational contents and materials, and selected teaching methods are undoubtedly very important. However, the teacher factor has a central significance among them. In addition to presenting findings on teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes about the concept of multiculturalism, the present study could be regarded as one of the first studies in terms of presenting data from Turkey about the extent to which a multicultural perspective was reflected in the classroom.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the competency perceptions of teachers regarding multiculturalism and what they do to create a multicultural classroom environment with the consideration of the views of the teachers working at the secondary schools in Tokat province. Within the frame of this purpose, the study tried to answer the following questions:

1. What are the multicultural competency perceptions of the teachers?
2. Do the multicultural competency perceptions of the teachers differentiate according to gender, workplace, residential area, faculty of graduation, age, seniority, and subject?
3. What do teachers do in the classroom to create a multicultural learning environment?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

The study employed descriptive survey model. The survey model is a research model which "aims to describe a past or present condition as it is" (Karasar, 2011, p. 79); "conducted on large groups, views and attitudes of the individuals in the group regarding a case or a phenomenon are obtained, cases and phenomena are tried to be described" (Karakaya, 2009, p. 59). This study attempts to present the current situation the views of the teachers.

2.2. Population and Sampling

The study population comprised 2431 teachers working at the secondary education institutions in Tokat province in the 2014-2015 school year according to the Ministry of National Education statistics. The study was conducted through the sample selected from the population as it was not possible to reach all of the target population. Secondary education level was thought to be a level where the students are aware of their cultural differences, and those differences are reflected in the classroom experiences. Thus, the multiculturalism perceptions of teachers teaching at this level were thought to be worth studying. In the selection of the sample, sample size table was used, and it was assumed that 333 teachers could represent the target population of 2431 teachers at $\alpha =$ .05 significance and 5% tolerance levels (Balcı, 2005). However, the sample was formed with 350 teachers with the consideration that there could be losses in the returns at the scale application stage. The characteristics of the teachers participated in the study are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of teachers according to their various characteristics

Variable		N	%	Variable		N	%
Gender	Female	141	41.5	**Type of**	General Lycee	197	58.5
	Male	199	58.5	**school**	Vocational Lycee	140	41.5
	Total	340	100.0	**worked**	Total	337	100.0
Age	Below 30	64	18.8	**Subject**	Languages	76	23.6
	31-40	142	41.6		Science	81	25.2
	41-50	107	31.4		History/Geography	50	15.5
	51-60	25	7.3		Music, Arts, P.E.	31	9.6
	61 and over	3	.9		Religious Studies,Philosophy, Counseling	38	11.8
	Total	341	100.0		Vocational subjects	46	14.3
					Total	322	100.0
Seniority	1-5	60	17.8	**Residential**	Province	296	87.3
	6-10	48	14.2	**area**	Town	43	12.7
	11-15	77	22.8		Total	339	100.0
	15-20	71	21.1	**Fac.**	Ed. Fac.	188	55.1
	21+	81	24.0	**of grad.**	Others	153	44.9
	Total	337	100.0		Total	341	100.0

2.3. Data Collection Tool

Data Collection Tool consisted of two parts. In the first part, there is a Personal Information section comprised of 7 questions for obtaining personal information about the teachers. The second part consisted of the "Multicultural Competency Perceptions Scale" developed by Başkaya and Kağnıcı (2011), and an open-ended question. The Multicultural Competency Perceptions Scale comprised of 41 items in three dimensions. In the scale, the teachers were asked to rate their perceptions for each item using a five-level Likert scale changing between 1 to

5 where 1 is "Strongly Disagree", and 5 is "Strongly Agree". In the Scale, 16 items were at "Awareness" dimension, 16 items were at "Skills", and 9 items were at "Knowledge" dimension. The "Awareness" dimension measures the multicultural awareness perceptions of the teachers. The maximum score to be obtained from this dimension was 80, and the minimum score was 16. The "Knowledge" dimension measures the knowledge levels of the teachers about multiculturalism. The maximum score to be obtained from this dimension was 45, and the minimum score was 9. The "Skills" dimension measures the multicultural teaching skill levels of the teachers. The maximum score to be obtained from this dimension was 80, and the minimum score was 16. High scores show high levels of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Totally "10" items were rated in reverse as they contained negative statements about the multiculturalism. The teachers were also asked an open-ended question about *what they do in their classes to create a multicultural learning environment.*

The reliability of the scale, internal coefficient of consistency was .91 for the skill dimension, .85 for the "Awareness" dimension, and .87 for the "Knowledge" dimension in the research where the scale was developed. The internal coefficient of consistency was .95 for the whole scale. In this study, it was found .91. Factor analysis was performed to verify the validity of the scale, and to measure it determining the factor loads. The construct validity of the scale was examined using the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and a three-factored structure explaining 43.94% of the total variance was obtained as a result of the EFA. The findings obtained with EFA showed that thefactor loads of the items included in the scale changed between .341 and .746. It was seen that the structure revealed in EFA was confirmed with the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Başkaya & Kağnıcı, 2011).

2.4. Data Analysis

The questionnaires received from the participants were coded by the researcher and transferred to a digital medium. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 20. Since the data related to the personal characteristics of the teachers were in nominal scale, they were analyzed using frequency and percentage. The data collected using "Multicultural Competency Perceptions Scale" in the second part of the tool was determined by calculating primarily the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores as these data were continuous and in interval scale. Independent Samples *t*-Testwas used in the comparisons made to determine whether the multicultural competency perceptions of teachers differed in terms of some of the personal variables of the teachers, and One-Way ANOVA was used for the Independent Samples when the number of variables was more than two. When the F test was significant in the variate analysis result, Scheffe test was used to determine the group that caused the difference. The significance level in the statistical analyses used in the study was adopted as.05. The answers to the open-ended question included in the measuring/assessment tool were transferred to a computer, grouped, and analyzed using percentage.

3. Results

In this section, the findings on the multicultural competency perceptions of the teachers, and the analysis of this perception according to various variables are presented based on the study questions.

3.1. Results on the Multicultural Competency Perceptions of Teachers

In order to answer the first question of the study, the multicultural competency perceptions of the teachers were analyzed, and the results are given in Table 2. It could be seen from the Table that the multiculturalism perceptions scores of

the teachers are higher in the awareness dimension ($\overline{X}$=3.98) than the other two dimensions of knowledge ($\overline{X}$=3.72), and skills ($\overline{X}$=3.64).

Table 2

Arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of the teachers' multicultural competency perceptions related to dimensions (N=341)

Dimensions	X	ss	Agreement Level
Awareness	3.98	0.53	Agree
Knowledge	3.72	0.65	Agree
Skill	3.64	0.59	Agree

3.2. Differences in the Multiculturalism Competency Perceptions of Teachers According to Various Independent Variables

In this part, whether the multiculturalism competency perceptions of teachers differentiated in terms of some independent variables was examined. In the comparisons of which the discriminate analyses were done through two variables, Independent Samples T-Test was used, and when the number of variables was more than two, One-Way ANOVA was used for Independent Samples. When the F test was significant in the variate analysis result, Scheffe test was used to determine the group that caused the difference. The significance level in the statistical analyses used in the study was adopted as .05.

In Table 3, t-Test results of the teachers according to the variables of gender, type of school, residential area, faculty of graduation, and subject are given. Multicultural competency perceptions of the teachers were examined according to gender, type of school, and faculty of graduation, and no significant difference was found. However, the mean scores of the teachers working at

general high school were higher than those of the teachers working at vocational high schools in awareness and skill dimensions.

Multicultural competency perceptions of the teachers were examined according to the residential area variable. While there was no significant difference between the teachers living in the province and towns in the awareness dimension [t(337)= .75 p > .05], a significant difference was found in skill dimension [t(337)= 2.51 p > .05]. In this dimension, the competency perceptions of the teachers working in the towns ($\overline{X}$=3.85) were higher than those working in the province ($\overline{X}$=3.61) (Table 3).

Table 3
T-Test results of multiculturalism competency perceptions of teachers according to various independent variables

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Awareness	Female	141	3.96	0.57	338	.48	0.633
	Male	199	3.99	0.51			
Skill	Female	141	3.63	0.60	338	.21	0.834
	Male	199	3.64	0.59			
Knowledge	Female	141	3.66	0.61	338	.27	0.206
	Male	199	3.75	0.68			
Dimensions	School worked	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Awareness	General Lycee	197	4.00	0.53	335	1.05	0.296
	Vocational L.	140	3.94	0.54			
Skill	General L.	197	3.64	0.58	335	.23	0.821

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
	Vocational L.	140	3.63	0.61			
Knowledge	General L.	197	3.70	0.65	335	.53	0.597
	Vocational L.	140	3.73	0.65			

Dimensions	Residential area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Awareness	Province	296	3.97	0.54	337	.75	0.454
	Town	43	4.04	0.53			
Skill	Province	296	3.61	0.60	337	2.51	0.013*
	Town	43	3.85	0.47			
Knowledge	Province	296	3.72	0.66	337	.04	0.969
	Town	43	3.71	0.57			

Dimensions	Faculty of Graduation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Awareness	Ed. Fac.	188	4.03	0.53	339	1.78	0.077
	Other	153	3.92	0.54			
Skill	Ed. Fac.	188	3.66	0.60	339	0.65	0.514
	Other	153	3.62	0.57			
Knowledge	Ed. Fac.	188	3.74	0.62	339	0.83	0.409
	Other	153	3.69	0.68			

Do teachers' multicultural education perceptions differentiate according to age, seniority, and subject variables? ANOVA results related to teachers' age, seniority, and subject variables are given in Table 6. In the analysis done according to age and seniority, no significant difference was found in the awareness, skill, and knowledge dimensions. Multicultural education perceptions of the teachers did not show a significant difference according to subject variable in awareness dimension [$F_{(5-316)}$= 1.733, p < .05]. However, a significant difference was found in skill [$F_{(5-316)}$= 3.418, p < .05], and

knowledge [$F_{(5-316)}$= 3.619, p < .05] dimensions. According to the results of the Tukey HSD test conducted to find that the difference between the units was between which groups, the perceptions of the teachers who teach the Philosophy group (Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Counseling $\overline{X}$=3.97) were higher than the perceptions of the teachers who teach the Science group (Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics $\overline{X}$=3.50) in the skill dimension. In the knowledge dimension, Philosophy group teachers ($\overline{X}$=4.13) had greater perceptions than the teachers of Science group ($\overline{X}$=3.60), vocational subjects ($\overline{X}$=3.64), and languages (Turkish, English, and German) ($\overline{X}$=3.68) (Table 4).

Table 4

ANOVA results of multiculturalism competency perceptions of teachers according to various independent variables

Dimensions	Age	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Difference
Awareness	Between Groups	.965	3	.322	1.126	
	Within Groups	96.351	337	.286		
	Total	97.316	340			
Skill	Between Groups	.483	3	.161	.461	
	Within Groups	117.660	337	.349		
	Total	118.143	340			
Knowledge	Between Groups	1.112	3	.371	.879	
	Within Groups	142.158	337	.422		
	Total	143.270	340			

Dimensions	Seniority	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Difference
Awareness	Between Groups	.028	2	.014	.049	
	Within Groups	96.155	334	.288		
	Total	96.183	336			
Skill	Between Groups	.658	2	.329	.948	
	Within Groups	115.930	334	.347		
	Total	116.588	336			
Knowledge	Between Groups	1.298	2	.649	1.560	
	Within Groups	138.889	334	.416		
	Total	140.187	336			

Dimensions	Subject	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Difference
Awareness	Between Groups	2.433	5	.487	1.733	
	Within Groups	88.723	316	.281		
	Total	91.156	321			
Skill	Between Groups	5.647	5	1.129	3.418*	Science, and Philosophy, Religious Studies
	Within Groups	104.424	316	.330		
	Total	110.071	321			
Knowledge	Between Groups	7.436	5	1.487	3.619*	Philosophy Group, and Science, Vocational and Language subjects
	Within Groups	129.853	316	.411		
	Total	137.290	321			

3.3. Results on What Teachers do to Create a Multicultural Classroom Environment

The open-ended question of "*What do you do to create a multicultural classroom environment?*" was asked to the teachers in order to find the reflection of their multiculturalism perceptions to education. The question was answered by 320 of the teachers who participated in the study (Table 5). Of these teachers, 80% stated that they do not do any activities other than their routine activities whereas 20% stated that they changed the teaching method. Some of the teachers who responded that they changed their teaching method stated that they could attract the interests of students with different learning styles by this way.

Table 5

Views on what teachers do to create a multicultural educational environment

Dimensions	f	%
Do not do different activities	256	80.0
Change teaching method	64	20.0
Total	320	100.0

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, which aimed to determine the multicultural competency perceptions of teachers, the scores related to teacher perceptions were found to be above the mean value, and positive. There are also other studies supporting this result (Özdemir & Dil, 2013; Ponteratto et al., 1998; Renko & Yoder, 1994; Yazıcı, Başol & Toprak, 2009). In the scale where multicultural competency perceptions were evaluated in three dimensions, the scores of the teachers related to the awareness dimension were found to be higher than the scores related to knowledge and skill dimensions. This may mean that teachers are

aware of the concept, but they do not feel equipped enough in the knowledge and skill dimensions. On the other hand, when examining the items related to the skills dimension of the scale, it is seen that the items are related to the applications towards the class. The fact that the skills dimension scores are lower than other dimensions may mean that teachers do not apply sufficient activities in the classroom though they are aware of the concept. This finding is consistent with the qualitative data of the study. This result is consistent with the results of the study conducted with 415 teachers by Yazıcı, Başol & Toprak (2009). They found that teachers who work in secondary and primary schools had a positive attitude regarding multicultural education. It is possible to say that this positive attitude that teachers have results from the information they obtain by their own efforts because it could be seen that there is still no compulsory subject on multiculturalism or multicultural education at the education faculties in Turkey. Teachers, however, need to be trained to ensure that they have the skills and sensitivity necessary to bring out the abilities of students from different income groups and mother tongues (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Some of the studies on multicultural education (Valentiin, 2006; Middleton, 2002) found that the pre-service teachers who take the multicultural education subjects are more welcoming towards cultural differences, and have positive attitudes. In a qualitative study by Ünlü and Örten conducted in 2013 with pre-service teachers of the Education Faculty, it was found that the pre-service teachers generally had the right information about multiculturalism and multicultural education, but there were also few pre-service teachers with incorrect information about those concepts. Those pre-service teachers had negative attitudes towards both concepts. However, educators and researchers should know and examine their own prejudices against cultural, racial, ethnic and other social differences (Banks, 2013, p. 148).

In this study, the multiculturalism perceptions of teachers did not show a significant difference according to the variables of gender, workplace, faculty of graduation, age, and seniority, whereas a significant difference was found in the skill dimension according to the residential area. The teachers living in urban areas, in towns, had more positive perceptions than the teachers living in the rural areas, the provincial area. This result contradicts that of McCray, Wright and Beachum (2004). The authors, in their study where they examined the perceptions of administrators about multicultural education, found that the perceptions of the administrators differentiated according to the school size; and the administrators in the regions with low socioeconomic level had negative perceptions regarding multicultural education. In the study conducted by Özdemir and Dil (2013) with 204 teachers at ten public high schools, the attitudes of teachers regarding multicultural education did not show any significant difference according to the variables such as gender, marital status, education level, union membership, and seniority while it was significantly different according to the faculty of graduation. The attitudes of the teachers who graduated from the Education and Science and Literature Faculty were found to be more positive than the attitudes of the teachers who graduated from the Technical Education Faculty.

Another difference between the perceptions of teachers was found in some of the subjects. While there was no difference between the teachers in the awareness dimension, there was a significant difference between science (Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) teachers and Philosophy, Religious Studies and Counseling teachers in the skill dimension. It was seen that the teachers in the second group had higher scores related to *skill* dimension. On the other hand, a significant difference was found between philosophy, religious studies and counseling teachers and science, vocational subjects and language subject teachers in the knowledge dimension. The

teachers in philosophy, religious studies, and counseling subject group had higher scores in knowledge dimension. This difference could be related to the knowledge of the teachers about their subject area. Neuharth-Pritchett, Reiff and Pearson (2001), in their study where they examined the knowledge level of pre-service teachers related to multicultural education suggested that the knowledge and understandings of the pre-service teachers related to multicultural education, race, and ethnic origin were insufficient. Clarke and Drudy (2006) conducted a study in Ireland with 128 teachers with different professional experiences, and found that although teachers had extensive values about general matters and issues, their knowledge about the local was inadequate.

Teachers' having awareness or knowledge about multiculturalism may not necessarily mean that they would reflect it to the classroom. In fact, Acquah and Commins (2013), in a study conducted with 38 pre-service teachers from 17 different countries who attended the ERASMUS program, found that there was increase in the awareness levels of the pre-service teachers who took courses on multicultural education and education with minority groups for one semester, but they were worried about how they would reflect what they learned to the classroom. The present study aimed to ascertain, not only the views of the teachers related to the concept of multiculturalism, but also the reflection of their perceptions to the classroom. In this context, teachers were asked the question "What are you doing to create a multicultural learning environment in your classroom?" Of the teachers, 20% answered that they changed their teaching methods, but 80% said that they did not do any different activities about this. However, research show that there is a relationship between the learning styles of students and the culture they grow in. For example, Woodrow and Sham (2001, cited in Cırık, 2008) examined the learning preferences of Chinese students and found that the traditional Chinese behavior patterns were effective even in those who were born in England. It was found in the study that

the students preferred authority, found memorizing important, preferred studying alone to group work, and did not like asking or being asked questions. It was found that the traditional culture of the families were effective in the provision of this culture. A similar study was conducted with the Korean students who live in the USA. The study revealed that cultural and linguistic factors affected the academic successes of the students; the students preferred learning strategies based on memorization rather than meaningful learning (Lee and Carrasquillo, cited in Cırık, 2008). According to Borich (2014, p. 48), there is a continuous increase in the individual differences regarding the groups with special education needs as a result of the linguistic and socio-economic diversity in the classroom. Teachers need to plan their teaching and diversify the lessons by taking this difference/diversity into account. Ladson-Billings (1994) suggests that students fail at school not because cultural deprivation but because they have a culture different than the culture that is accepted at school and in the general population.

According to Furman (2008), in the examination of multicultural education, race and ethnicity are more often the focus, whereas the other differences/diversities such as social class, language, religion, gender are generally neglected. There are studies not only on culture and language but also on the differences in the learning styles according to gender. Dickman (1993) found evidence about male students benefiting more from teaching techniques based on competition and reward whereas female students benefitted more from teaching techniques based on cooperative learning. Schwartz and Hanson (1992) also stated that girls had "conversation style" learning style while boys were more inclined towards "discussion based" individual activities.

When the result of the present study is evaluated as a whole, it could be said that the teachers in Turkey had positive perceptions about multiculturalism but

they do not do much regarding multicultural education activities in the classroom. This result needs to be evaluated with caution because there is limited number of studies about this in Turkey. A significant number of research studies on this using a scale were conducted using "Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey" developed by Ponterotito, Baluch, Greig and Rivera (1998), and adapted by Yazıcı, Başol and Toprak (2009). The most important characteristics of this scale is that it measures the multicultural education not according to the ethnic base but in cultural base which is more holistic (Yazıcı, Başol & Toprak, 2009). The same statement can be made for the scale used in the present study.

On the other hand, it can be seen that the concept of multiculturalism is new in Turkey, and the discussion about it is highly political, because of the demand of Kurdish people for "education in mother tongue". Teachers' perceptions related to all of the items in the scale generally being above the mean value might be because there are very few statements (2 items) related to the ethnic elements and those are questioned not through a certain ethnic group, but through general statements.

The path to the intercultural dialogue is that, students, teachers, school administrators, and society should recognize different cultures, respect them, and that the political powers should create environments for those cultures to maintain their existence, and produce the necessary legal regulations. According to Banks, a multicultural education has five different dimensions which are content integration, knowledge construction process, decreasing biases, equalitarian pedagogy, and empowerment (Banks, 2004). Creating a positive school climate, and minimizing the educational inequalities would be possible with the acceptance of the intercultural differences, the welcoming of diverse cultures, as steps towards the elimination of the inequalities produced because

of those differences. Respecting human rights, welcoming cultural differences, analyzing different points of views and thoughts are the professional competencies necessary not only for teachers but for all of the professions related to human beings. Thus, providing equality in education, creating democratic education environments reflecting the cultural diversity, and respecting the differences and accepting them as treasure are inseparable parts of being a human. It is essential for our teachers who shape our future to be trained with this perspective.

It could be seen that the multicultural education studies in Turkey are frequently conducted using attitude scale data collection tools (Günay & Aydın, 2015). However, a multi-sided issue such as multicultural education needs to be examined in more detail by qualitative research. In fact, in the present study, changing the two categorical dimensions as "I do not do any different activity" or "I change my teaching method" to the open-ended question "What do you do to create a multicultural education environment in the classroom?" could be implemented, as qualitative studies conducted face-to-face. By this, the results regarding the multicultural education could be enriched with the data regarding the teaching/learning processes in the classroom. These data could be used as a guide in the development of multicultural education policies, and the development of the necessary regulations. A country needs to be sensitive to the multicultural education if its education policies are based on democracy, pluralism, and equality. The structure and the level of multicultural education in the education programs are closely related to the sociological structures of the countries. It is not possible to discuss about a single model for every country. Education policies sensitive to multiculturalism could be developed according to the sociological reality and historical background of every country. Multicultural education is to construct the learning and teaching processes in a way to encourage cultural pluralism. In this process, it is important to form an

environment in which different cultures would be respected and at the same time mutual understanding would be provided.

Notes

[i]This study is the extended version of the paper "Evaluation of the Teachers' Perceptions of Competence RegardingMulticulturalism" presented at the 5th International Conference on Critical Education, 15-18June 2015, Poland-Wroclaw.

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