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How is Multicultural Education Perceived in Elementary Schools in Turkey? A Case Study

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Abstract: This research aims to examine the current situation of multicultural education in elementary schools. Therefore, the views of the classroom teachers on multicultural education have been examined and multicultural education activities have been observed in the classes. Having a case study research method which is considered as one of the qualitative research designs, the study hosts a total of 15 classroom teachers who worked in the province of Elazig during the 2016 and 2017 academic year. The maximum variation sampling method has been used in the research. The research has employed semi-structured interview and observation forms. The research data has been analyzed through content analysis. Research results have revealed that most of the teachers perceive multicultural education as education presented to the individuals with different ethnic identities. Teachers' perceptions towards multicultural education have been identified to be similar in terms of their gender, seniority and educational status. Teachers mostly do student-centred activities related to multicultural education, use drama and case studies in their classes. While practising multicultural education, teachers mostly encounter with student-related problems. The majority of the people have recommended that parents be trained on the relevant subject. Similar results have emerged in the observations made by the researcher. Based on the research findings, several recommendations have been provided. Primary school curricula should be organized taking multicultural education into consideration, and the problems identified by teachers should be eliminated by those concerned.

Keywords: *Multiculturalism; multicultural education; qualitative research; classroom teacher.*

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Introduction

Constituting the identity of society and approving its distinctness from other societies, culture is a concept that varies in different definitions and perspectives. In particular, there has been a broader literature addressing culture both nationally and internationally with the understanding of globalization in recent years (Banks, 2013a; Galley, 2001; Guvenc, 1994). In the twenty-first century science, rapid developments have been experienced in science, art and technology, and thus the nations have interacted with one another. Thanks to this interaction, individuals with different cultural characteristics have begun to recognize each other's cultural characteristics and influenced by their cultural characteristics. Moreover, wars taking place since the beginning of the twentieth century have led individuals to migrate and live together with individuals who possess different cultural characteristics. This gives rise to the emergence of the concept of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is observed in groups with different origins such as language, religion, race, history, geography, living within a political framework or within certain geographical boundaries (Banks, 2013a, Kaya & Aydin, 2014). Reitz (2009: 1) has defined multiculturalism as "toleration of individuals with a different religion, language, race and cultural characteristics in society, and that the equality of these differences is legally ensured and sustained in their lives under a common culture." Through multiculturalism, individuals become aware of the different cultural features that are within their own cultures. People try to recognize the diversity within their own cultures and look at different cultures with tolerance and instead of suppressing them (Giddens, 2000). Multiculturalism has influenced many areas such as art, literature and education. Education has been dramatically influenced by multiculturalism which has led to the emergence of multicultural education. Multicultural education welcomes and affirms democratic values and aims, cultural pluralism, social justice as well as social, personal and intellectual development of students (Nieto & Bode, 2011). Multicultural education refers to the dimension of education in multiculturalism. It is an educational reform that will ensure all students' equality in education regardless of individual differences (language, religion, race, age, gender, economic level, social class) (Banks, 2013a). Aydin

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(2013) has described multicultural education as "a reform movement designed to bring about some fundamental changes in the education system".

Multicultural education;

- a) Schools play a significant role in improving all students' attitudes and values that a democratic society requires,
- b) It adopts different cultural values and pluralism,
- c) It promotes the development of social justice and prohibits discrimination of any kind in schools and in the society,
- d) All activities and policies implemented in the school have a positive effect on the knowledge and skill levels of the students,
- e) Students actively take part in all institutions and organizations equally,
- f) It is a process that encourages teachers and students to critically analyze the world of today, where power and domination prevail (National Association for Multicultural Education [NAME], 2014).

The major aim of multicultural education is to provide equality and justice for all students through a comprehensive, sustainable, more transformative attitude that educators can understand and fulfil (Gorski, 2006). Despite the various definitions of multicultural education by different scientists, there is a consensus on the fact that teaching-learning environment must be shaped by considering cultural differences in terms of multicultural education.

Teachers are pioneers in the design of the multicultural education based teaching environment and in the implementation of activities along with the development of the teaching programs. Teachers should primarily be willing to learn the cultures of students with their own cultural identities and different cultural characteristics so that they can apply the programs based on multicultural education (Bulut, 2014). Multicultural educational environment that will greatly contribute to the development of positive attitudes both in terms of learning and cultural diversity can be created by teachers while planning the learning-teaching process through accepting and giving priority to the students' biological, sexual, racial, religious, cultural, economic and political differences (Polat, 2009). Besides, teachers will ensure the creation of awareness and tolerance regarding multiculturalism in future generations. In this respect, teachers need to be well informed about the design of a multicultural teaching environment and they must create a classroom atmosphere that welcomes different viewpoints in order that they can have an insight in this sense (Banks, 2008). Classroom teachers work in different settlements in Turkey (villages, towns, counties, cities etc.), and they encounter students with different cultural characteristics. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to examine the views of classroom teachers on multicultural education and to observe how they apply multicultural education in their classes.

Numerous studies have been conducted on multicultural education in Turkey in recent years. Upon analyzing the relevant literature, it has been observed that quantitative research designs are frequently used and studies have been conducted on the attitudes and perceptions of the prospective teachers regarding multiculturalism (Akinlar & Dogan, 2017; Basarir, 2012; Basbay & Bektas, 2009; Bulut, 2014; Marangoz, 2014; Yildirim, 2016). In their study, Basarir, Sari and Cetin (2015) have carried out a qualitative study on the perceptions of teachers from different branches towards multicultural education, what multicultural based activities they prefer, and the advantages and disadvantages of multicultural education.

Unlike other studies, this research has tried to determine only classroom teachers' views on multicultural education, what activities they use in the lessons related to multicultural education, the problems they have encountered and the solution proposals they have developed regarding these problems. Teachers' educational status, gender and seniority are expected to influence their views on multicultural education.

As a matter of fact, these variables are considered to have an influence on the views of the individuals. Hence, the views of the classroom teachers on multicultural education have been examined depending on these variables. The lack of in-depth research regarding multicultural education in Turkey has been considered as a shortcoming by the researcher. The findings of the research will provide data to the Ministry of National Education and related units. For all these reasons, such a study has been carried out. This research is expected to contribute to the relevant literature.

In this regard, this research aims to examine the current situation of multicultural education in elementary schools. In the service of this goal, answers to the following questions have been sought:

1. What are the views of the teachers on multicultural education in terms of their gender, educational status and seniority?
2. What are the views of the teachers on the multicultural education-based activities they perform in the lessons?
3. What are the views of the teachers on the problems they encounter when applying multicultural education in their lessons?
4. What are the views of the teachers regarding the solution proposals for the problems they encounter while applying

multicultural education in their classrooms?

5. What multicultural education-based activities do the teachers prefer in the lessons, what problems do they encounter and what are their solution proposals to these problems?

Method

Research Design

This research has used case study research method which is considered as one of the qualitative research designs. Tikac (2015, p. 360) defines qualitative research as “a scientific study based on the discovery, understanding and interpretation of a variety of events and phenomena in a context where they are thoroughly examined. Creswell (2007) indicates that qualitative research is the process by which social life and people-related problems are inquired and interpreted with their own specific methods. Johnson and Christensen (2012) note that case study is a form of a qualitative study through which the detailed examination of one or more cases is provided. It is inevitable to use multiple sources of data in order to be able to reveal the situation within its real context when inquiring such questions as why and how (Yin, 2014). The reason for this is that a single source of data would not be enough to explain the situation (Akar, 2016). This research has a case study research method as the views of the classroom teachers working in a multicultural environment were examined and the case was tried to be examined in depth by using multiple data sources. The unit of analysis is multicultural education in the current research.

Participants

The participants of this study consist of 15 classroom teachers who worked in the province of Elazig during the 2016 and 2017 academic year. The research has been carried out in this province since the researcher works as a teacher in the institution located within this province. One of the purposeful sampling methods, the maximum variation sampling method has been used in the research. The maximum variation sampling method involves predetermining some criteria that are different in individuals and selecting participants who differ significantly from the criteria (Creswell, 2007). The main goal of the maximum variation sample is to reflect the diversity of the individuals and homogeneous sample at the maximum level (Yildirim & Simsek, 2011). The present study has attached great significance to the variety of the participants' gender, educational status and seniority. In this way, the diversity of their perceptions regarding multicultural education has been tried to be reflected. Table 1 depicts the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic information about the participants

| Code | Gender | Educational Status | Seniority |
|------|--------|--------------------|-------------|
| T1 | Male | Graduate | 6-10 years |
| T2 | Male | Graduate | 16-20 years |
| T3 | Male | Graduate | 1-5 years |
| T4 | Female | Graduate | 6-10 years |
| T5 | Male | Post-graduate | 6-10 years |
| T6 | Male | Graduate | 16-20 years |
| T7 | Male | Graduate | 6-10 years |
| T8 | Female | Graduate | 1-5 years |
| T9 | Female | Graduate | 1-5 years |
| T10 | Male | Graduate | 6-10 years |
| T11 | Male | Graduate | 1-5 years |
| T12 | Female | Graduate | 6-10 years |
| T13 | Female | Graduate | 11-15 years |
| T14 | Female | Post-graduate | 6-10 years |
| T15 | Male | Post-graduate | 1-5 years |

Upon examining Table 1; male teachers ($f: 9$) have been found to be more than female teachers ($f:6$). When the distribution of teachers depending on their educational status has been examined, the majority of them are graduates ($f: 12$) and their seniority has varied between 6-10 years ($f:7$). Three teachers coded as T:4, T:11 and T:14 were selected among the participants based on the volunteering principle for the observational data.

Data Collection Tools

The research has deployed two data collection tools. These are:

Interview: Interviewing is one of the most commonly used data collection tools in qualitative research. Interview is defined as a data collection technique through verbal communication (Karasar, 2012). The aim of the interviews is to understand the unobserved elements that an individual possess such as experience, attitudes, perceptions and thoughts related to a subject or a situation but are significant for research (Merriam, 2009; Yildirim & Simsek, 2011). This

research has used a semi-structured interview form. Semi-structured interviews are data collection tools used in case study researches (Sart, 2015). The tool includes three questions to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants and four open-ended questions to identify their views on multicultural education. The open-ended questions have been presented to the views of the two lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Curriculum and Teaching Department and two classroom teachers. The tool has got its final form on the basis of the feedback from the lecturers and the teachers. The research has been conducted during the fall semester of the 2016-2017 academic years. Research data was collected by visiting the elementary schools accessible by the researcher. During the application of the interview form, the aim of the research has been explained to the teachers and they have been asked to respond the questions sincerely for the research to reach its goal. The participants have been ensured to voluntarily participate in the research. A voice recorder has been used during the interviews. The interviews have been recorded by voice recording. Each interview has lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Observation: Observation has been used as one of the qualitative data collection tools. Observation is a research technique used for observing people in their natural environment and having an idea about the events (Guler, Halicioglu & Tasgin, 2013). This study has used participant observations. DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) identified participant observation as a data collection tool in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people for learning the aspects of their life routines and culture. Participant observation is used to make additions to the data obtained from other methods such as structured and semi-structured interviews, pure observation, analysis of text and other secondary sources (Bernard, 2006). As a participant, the role of the observer is to appear in the environment only for making observation regardless of participating in the group activities. The participants are aware of the condition of the observer (Aktas, 2014). In this study, the researcher has also observed the multicultural education activities that three participants conducted in the classes with permission. This research has deployed a structured observation form as the observation form. In the structured observation form, what will be observed must be clearly stated (Aktas, 2014). It is unlikely to observe everything in qualitative research. Hence, it is necessary for the researcher to have a specific orientation, that is to say, clearly what is to be observed in which scope before the observation starts (Yildirim & Simsek, 2011). The observation form has been created by taking the semi-structured interview questions into account in order to identify the boundaries of observation. In this context, the multicultural education-based activities that teachers have used, the problems they have encountered, and the solution proposals they have developed were observed. The observation form had its latest version with the interpretations made by the two lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Curriculum and Instruction Department. The observation has been performed in the fall semester of the 2016-2017 academic years and lasted 10 weeks (30 hours).

Data Analysis

The research data was analyzed through content analysis. Content analysis is an analytical method that attempts to define data with a broad context and to derive meaning from it (Given, 2008; Krippendorff, 2004). Berg (2001) defines content analysis as attentive, detailed and systematic examination and interpretation of a specific material in order to identify patterns, themes, prejudices and meanings. In the interviews, the responses of the teachers have been examined and coded one by one, and these codes have been corresponded to one another and gathered under themes. The views of the teachers have been presented in findings coding them with number and letters (T:1, M=Teacher 1, Male; T:2, F=Teacher 2, Female). Observations made by the researcher have been numbered and then observations recorded on the observation form by the researcher have been examined and coded one by one. A qualitative data analysis program has been used during data analysis and findings have been presented with graphics and figures.

There are various strategies to ensure the validity and reliability in qualitative researches. Within the scope of the research, the following strategies have been used:

1. In the study, the credibility of the research is tried to be provided by giving information about the characteristics of the participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2012)
2. The research ensures detailed information on participants and research (Polit & Back, 2010),
3. All research findings were presented directly to the reader without any comment and generalization (Guler, Halicioglu & Tasgin, 2013).
4. The research used direct quotations and statements of the participants in order to enable readers to make comparisons (Guler, Halicioglu & Tasgin, 2013).
5. In the research, codes were presented to two field experts and their level of correspondence was determined (Miles & Huberman, 1996).
6. The research data has been collected using different data collection tools and compared to each other so as to determine whether the findings are consistent (Ekiz, 2013) and reliability has been tried to be provided.

Findings

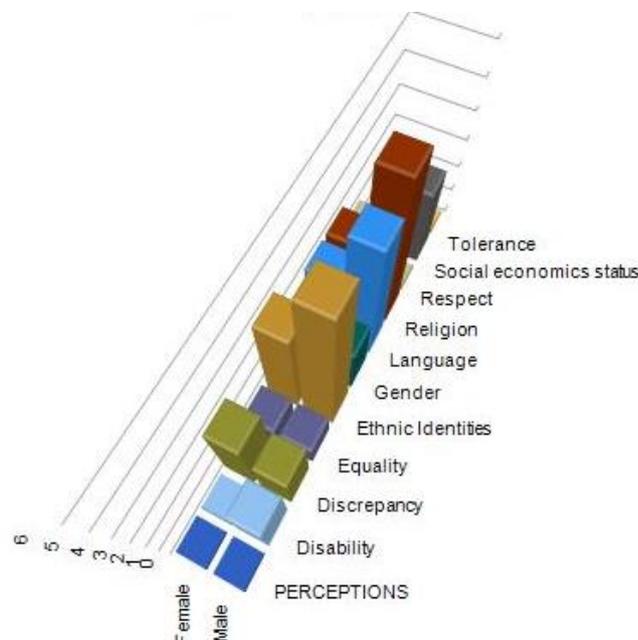
Theme 1: Multicultural Education=Ethnic Identity

As seen in Figure 1, classroom teachers have different perceptions towards the concept of multicultural education. Word cloud analysis has depicted that classroom teachers perceive multicultural education as the education which is mostly received by different ethnic identities. Besides, the concepts of religion, language and gender have been found to be frequently used.



Figure 1. Classroom teachers' perceptions towards multicultural education

The research aims to determine the perceptions of classroom teachers towards multicultural education in terms of their gender, educational status and seniority. Graph 1 displays teachers' perceptions regarding multicultural education depending on their gender.



Graph 1. Teachers' perceptions towards multicultural education in terms of gender

Graph 1 depicts that female teachers define multicultural education as the education received by the individuals who have different beliefs ($f:3$) and who speak different languages ($f:2$) by taking the differences ($f:3$) into account. Besides, multicultural education is perceived by female teachers as respect ($f:2$), love ($f:2$) and equality ($f:1$). The views of the female teachers are presented as follows:

"It is the education given to the individuals who have different beliefs, who speak different languages and who have different ethnic identities." (T:4, F)

"It is the training through which tolerance is ensured for different cultural characteristics and that these differences must be respected." (T:8, F)

"It is education that entails respect and tolerance towards cultural differences. People with different cultural characteristics live together in society; therefore, education includes these cultural differences" (T:12, F)

"It is a kind of education that include the characteristics of individuals with different cultural characteristics such as religion, race and language in a teaching environment (T:13, F)

"Multicultural education is training that regulates the teaching environment by taking into account the differences of the students who speak different languages, who have different religion, race and social class. It is the education that the differences are more evident and equalized in the teaching environment." (T:15, F)

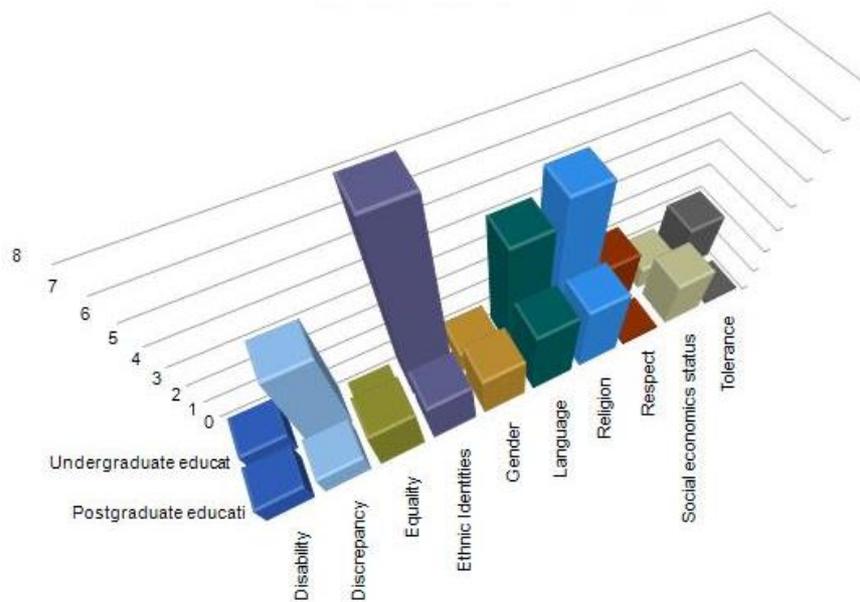
Male teachers perceive multicultural education that is undergone by individuals with different ethnic identities (f:6) and different religions (f:2). In addition, multicultural education is perceived by male teachers as the education presented to the individuals who have different socio-economic status (f:2), gender (f:2), language (f:5) and who are disabled (f:2); moreover, it also takes the differences into account (f:2) and provides equality (f:1). The views of some of the male teachers are presented as following:

"It is the education that attaches great importance to the differences such as religion, language, ethnic structure, socio-cultural differences, disability status, and gender." (T:1, M)

"It is to integrate different religions, languages, gender, socio-economic status, disability into the lessons when needed. It provides individuals with gaining democratic attitude." (T:5, M)

"It is the arrangement of the teaching environment depending on different cultural characteristics." (T:7, M)

Graph 2 displays teachers' perceptions towards multicultural education in terms of their educational status.

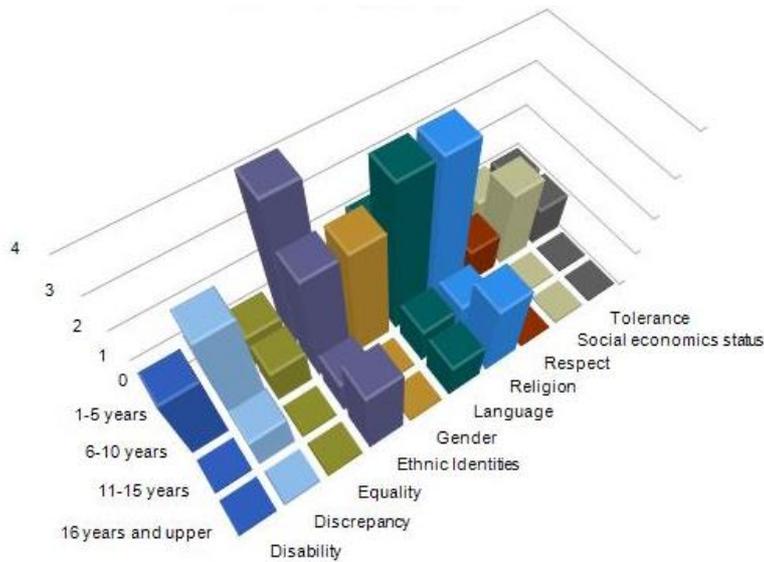


Graph 2. Teachers' perceptions towards multicultural education in terms of their educational status

Graph 2 depicts that male teachers perceive multicultural education as the education that is mostly undergone by the individuals with different ethnic identities (f:7). In addition, multicultural education is perceived by the teachers who have graduated from university as the education that is unique to the individuals who speak different languages (f:4), who are disabled (f:1) and who have different religions (f:5) and socio-economic status (f:1); furthermore, multicultural education improves respect (f:2) and tolerance (f:2) as well as taking the differences in the learning-teaching environment (f:3) into consideration.

Graph 2 also suggests that teachers who have received postgraduate education consider that multicultural education is mostly undergone by the individuals with different languages (f:3) and religions (f:3). Moreover, multicultural education is perceived by the teachers who have received postgraduate education as the education that is special to the individuals with different gender (f:2), ethnic identity (f:3), disability status (f:1) and socio-economic level (f:2); it also provides equality (f:2) and attaches great significance to the differences (f:2) within the learning and teaching environment.

Graph 3 shows teachers' perceptions related to the multicultural education in terms of their seniority.

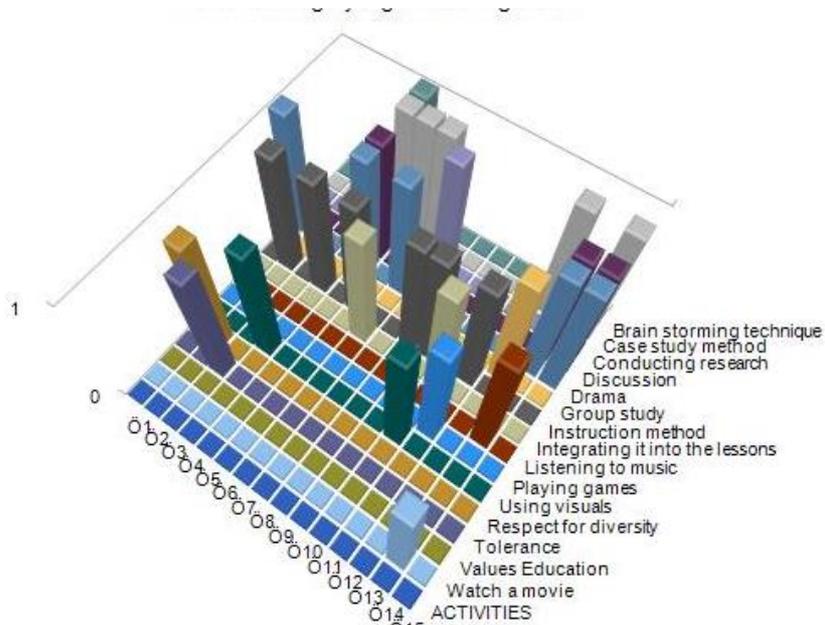


Graph 3. Teachers' perceptions concerning multicultural education in terms of their seniority

A closer look at the perceptions of teachers with 1-5 years of experience in terms of multicultural education based on seniority indicates that they perceive it as education mostly received by individuals who have different ethnic identities (*f:4*). Besides, multicultural education is perceived by the teachers with 1-5 years of experience as the education that is special to the individuals who have different socio-economic levels (*f:2*), languages (*f:2*), religions (*f:2*). Multicultural education is also considered as a way of providing respect (*f:1*) and tolerance (*f:1*) along with ensuring the differences (*f:1*) within the learning and teaching environment. Teachers with 6-10 years of experience have been identified to perceive multicultural education as the education mostly given to the individuals with different religion (*f:4*) and language (*f:4*). More than that, multicultural education is perceived by the teachers with 6-10 years of experience as the education that is special to the individuals with different socio-economic (*f:2*) and disability status (*f:2*), gender (*f:3*) and ethnic identity (*f:2*); furthermore, it is considered as an education that ensures individuals respect (*f:1*), tolerance (*f:1*) and equality (*f:2*) and that takes into account the differences in the learning and teaching environment (*f:2*). Likewise, teachers with 11-15 years of experience have been recorded to see multicultural education as a kind of education through which the individual differences (*f:1*) are taken into consideration and which is welcomed by the individuals who have different ethnic identities (*f:1*), languages (*f:1*) and beliefs (*f:1*). Multicultural education is perceived as the service presented to the individuals with different ethnic identities (*f:2*) and beliefs (*f:3*) by the teachers with 16 and more years of experience

Theme 2: Student-Centred Activities

Teachers' views on the activities based on multicultural education are presented in Graph 4.



Graph 4. The multicultural education-based activities used by the teachers

As can be seen by Graph 4, the multicultural based activities that have been implemented by teachers are divided into student-centred and teacher-centred themes. Graph 4 depicts that classroom teachers mostly use student-centred activities concerning multicultural education. The student-centred activities that teachers mostly use has been identified as drama method (f:6). Similarly, classroom teachers have been determined to mostly use case study method (f:5), discussion (f:3), watch a movie (f:1), playing games (f:1), listening to music (f:1), group study (f:1), using visuals (f:2), integrating it into the lessons (f:2), making individuals gain the values of tolerance (f:1) and respect to the differences (f:1), brainstorming technique (f:1) and conducting research (f:1). In this regard, some of the teachers expressed their views as follows:

"I have student-centred activities like making a drama about cultural differences, brainstorming, discussion, etc. I frequently use case study. I try to teach students how differences are natural through using these methods. Moreover, I also make the adaptation of my students who have different cultural characteristics to the school easier in this way. When encountering something of their own cultural characteristics, their sense of belonging to the school improves." (T:5, M).

"I perform various activities in visual arts, music, Turkish, social studies courses taking into consideration the cultural differences of the students. For instance, we have done collage in visual arts lessons. I play different melodies in music lessons. I organize drama activities and we discuss the case studies." (T:7, M).

"I do various activities taking into account the different cultural characteristics of my students. To illustrate, I have them watch films of different beliefs, and we discuss them. We listen to foreign music. I try to develop their empathy skills through drama activities. Sometimes, I debate over the problems caused by the differences. For example, we recently had a debate about violence against women." (T:14, F).

Teachers have also stated that they use instruction method (f:6) under teacher-centred activities theme. Some of the views of the teachers are presented below:

*"I mostly based the activities on values education. I perform activities on respecting for the differences, I **instruct** the students about the values."* (T:2, M)

*"I mostly **teach** my students the different cultural characteristics. I inform them about living together with people, who have a different cultural background, and I present them various case studies on this subject and we discuss them together."* (T:6, M)

Figure 1 displays the results of the observations related to the multicultural education-based activities that are used by teachers.

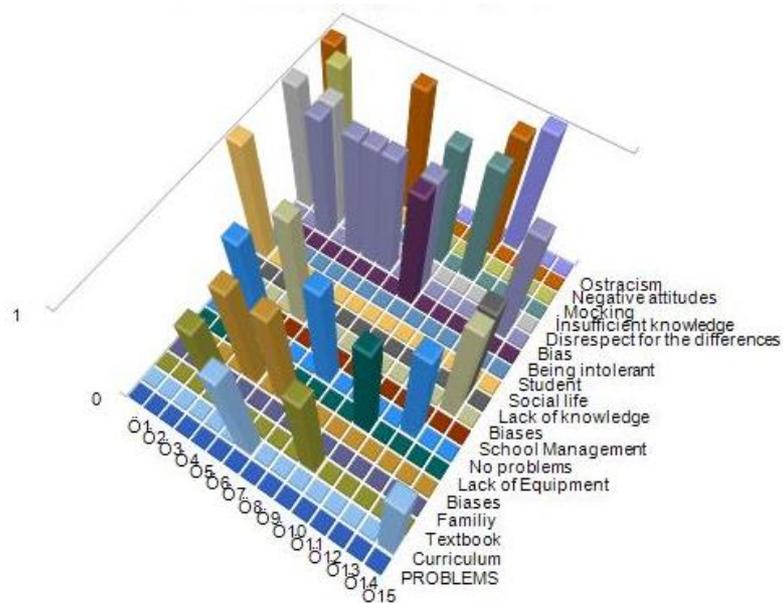


Figure 1. Observation results related to multi-cultural education activities

The observations made by the researcher have indicated that teachers commonly use student-centred activities based on multicultural education in the lessons. It has also been observed that teachers use case study, drama and discussion methods along with films about the disabilities and socio-economic status and activities related to values education including cooperation solidarity, tolerance and respect the differences. Teachers have also been identified to prefer traditional teaching methods such as instruction and question-answer.

Theme 3: Problems=Bias

Graph 5 suggests teachers' views on the problems they encounter while applying multicultural education activities.



Graph 5. Problems faced by teachers when applying multicultural education activities

As can be seen in Graph 5, the problems mostly encountered by the teachers when using multicultural education activities derive from family, social life, student, school administration, teaching programs. It has also found that teachers do not encounter any problem. The graph suggests that teachers populously encounter with student-related problems. Under the theme of student-related problems, teachers have been found to encounter with problems due to various reasons such as students' bias (*f*:6), their negative attitudes towards the individuals with different cultural characteristics (*f*:3), being intolerant (*f*:1), their disrespect for the differences (*f*:2), ostracizing individuals with different cultural characteristics (*f*:1) and having insufficient knowledge (*f*:2) as well as mocking individuals with different cultural traits (*f*:1). The views of T:3 and T:5, in this sense, are as follows:

"I have difficulty in telling students that individuals with different cultures have different lifestyles and that each culture has its own characteristics since they are biased against the differences. The fact that students do not respect differences causes problems in the lessons." (T:3, M)

"Families have an effect on the emergence of the students' biases. I have difficulty in overcoming them. Families sometimes react as they also have these biases. The problems may also arise as textbooks do not include activities about the individuals with different cultural characteristics. I cannot do so many activities because of school management's prejudice." (T:5, M)

As for the family-related problems theme, teachers have indicated that they have problems due to the fact that the family is usually biased (*f*:2). In this respect, the view of T:7 is as follows:

"The biggest problem is that students have biases against each other and the families, too. In addition, different cultural characteristics are not included in the acquisitions." (T:7, M)

As to the teaching program-related problems theme, teachers have noted that they encounter with several problems as the teaching program (*f*:2) and the content of textbooks (*f*:2) has not been prepared in accordance with multicultural education. T:15 expressed his view as follows:

"One of the significant problems is that teaching programs are not organized on the basis of multicultural education. People with different cultural characteristics live together in our country. Therefore, the failure in preparing the acquisitions, content and educational attainments by considering these differences is a big problem." (T:15, M)

Upon analyzing school management-related problems theme, teachers have been identified to encounter problems due to school management' biases against multicultural education (*f*:2), lack of knowledge about multicultural education (*f*:1) and lack of equipment (*f*:1). In this respect, T:14 stated her view as follows:

"I see that students are biased against one another, which is the biggest problem for me, and the fact that the school administration has prejudices about multicultural education and that they are unfamiliar with it also causes problems." (T:14, F)

One teacher has implied that some of the problems are related to students' social lives.

"There are problems in the social life of the region in which we work. For instance, the lack of value for girls, the lack of respect for other religions and beliefs, and the neglect of students with disabilities are the most significant problems." (T:1, M)

Three teachers stated that they do not encounter any problem during the learning-teaching process. T:8 expressed her view as follows:

"I do not face too many problems in my lessons; I see that my students welcome those who have different cultural characteristics. I think the most important reason for this is that parents are in good economic condition and they are well-educated." (T:8, F)

Figure 2 presents the results of the observations related to the problems encountered by teachers when doing multicultural education activities.

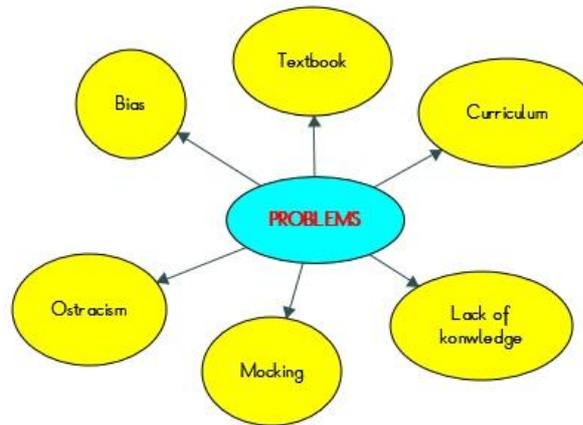
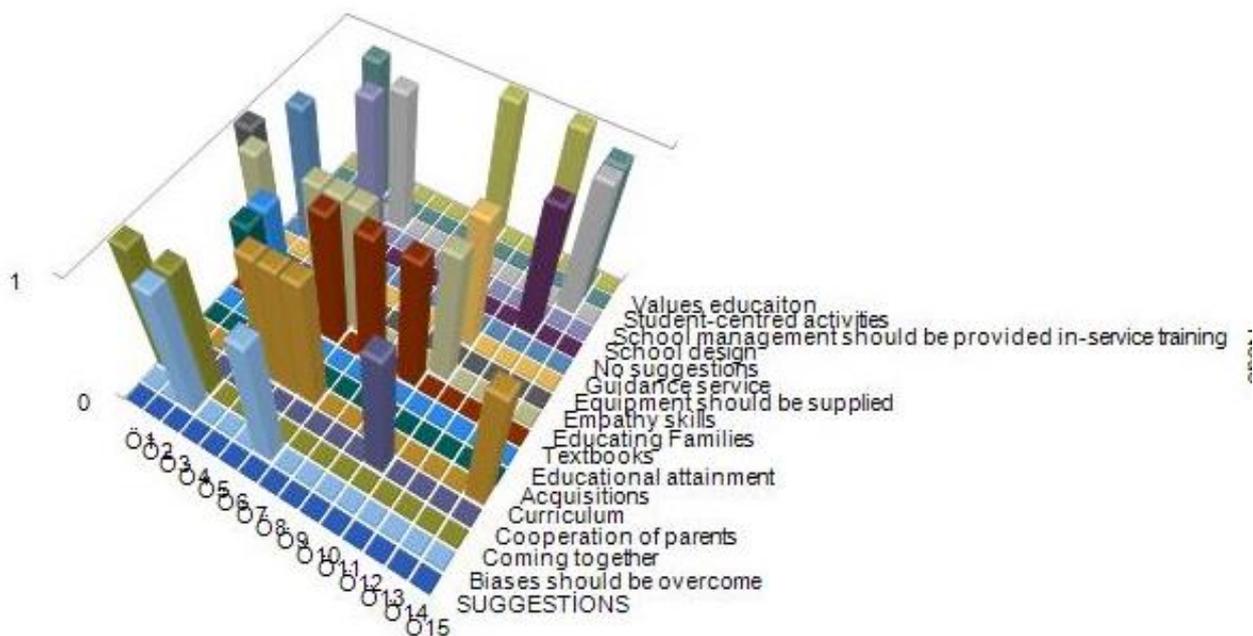


Figure 2. The results of the observations on the problems faced by teachers related to multicultural education

Observations made by the researcher have shown that the teachers mostly face with problems due to prejudices of the students against multicultural education in the lessons. Indeed, it was observed that some of the students used prejudiced expressions in an activity based on different beliefs. In addition, observations made by the researcher have suggested that teachers cannot conduct lessons effectively and efficiently due to the lack of textbooks, and they have difficulty in preparing activities and making students gain the acquisitions since the teaching program is not prepared in harmony with multicultural education. The other problems encountered by teachers have been observed to arise from the fact that students lack knowledge regarding the different cultural characteristics and they ostracize and mock those with different cultural traits.

Theme 4: Solution Proposals=Educating Families

The views of the teachers on the solution proposals that they have developed for the problems they encounter while applying multicultural education activities are presented in Graph 6.



Graph 6. Solution proposals developed by teachers when applying multicultural education activities

A closer look at the teachers' proposals with regard to the problems encountered during the application of the multicultural education suggests that they mostly recommended training parents (f:5). T:5 and T:11 explained their views as in the following statements:

"At first, parents need to be informed and educated about multicultural education. It would be good to organize teaching programs depending on multicultural education, and it would also be useful to provide in-service training with regard to multicultural education for school administrations. Biases may be reduced in this way." (T:5, M)

"There should be activities that will diminish the negative attitudes of the students and cooperation should be provided with the family. Families should be given the training to overcome their biases because I think that the biggest reason for the negative attitudes of the children is the families' biases towards multicultural education. Equipment must be provided to the schools. Thus, we can do more different and effective activities related to multicultural education." (T:11, M)

Further, classroom teachers have also developed numerous recommendations regarding multicultural education: cooperation should be ensured with parents (f:1), it should be contacted with the guidance service (f:1), students' biases should be overcome (f:2), the teaching program should be arranged taking multicultural education into consideration (f:4), programs should include acquisitions based on multicultural education (f:1), education attainments should be organized on the basis of multicultural education (f:2), textbooks should be prepared considering multicultural education (f:3), student-centred activities should be implemented (f:1), school management should be provided in-service training on multicultural education (f:1), schools should be designed based on multicultural education (f:1), students should be urged to gain empathy skills (f:1), students should be endowed with values education (f:2), individuals with different cultural characteristics should be thrown together (f:2), equipment should be supplied (f:1). One teacher is free from a recommendation. Some teachers' views are presented below:

"The textbooks should have different cultural features in order to make teaching easier. Hence, students get familiar with different cultural features." (T:3, M)

"We must teach the students to be tolerant and respectful towards individuals with different cultural characteristics, and that when we behave tolerantly and respectfully to people with different religion, language, and race, we will live happier and more peaceful." (T:9, F)

"I am of the view that student-centred activities should be done in the teaching-learning environment so as to overcome students' biases as I think biases may be reduced in this way. Besides, school administrators should certainly be undergone in-service training on multicultural education so that they can be informed about multicultural education. It would also be easier for teachers to do activities related to multicultural education." (T:14, F)

Figure 3 depicts the summary of the observations about the solution proposals that are developed by the teachers for the problems they encounter while applying the activities related to multicultural education.

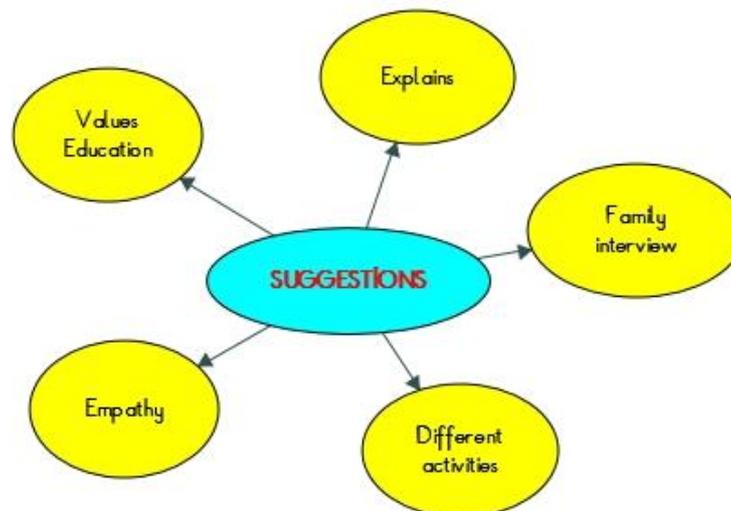


Figure 3. The results of the observations about the solution proposals that teachers have developed for the problems concerning multicultural education

Observations made by the researcher have revealed that teachers mostly explained the causes of the misbehaviours towards multicultural education. As a matter of fact, it was observed by the researcher that the teacher explains why this behaviour is wrong when some of the students use prejudicial expressions in an activity on different beliefs. In addition, observations made by the researcher have indicated that teachers share the problems with the families when student-related problems emerge, and the problems are tried to be solved. It has also been observed that the students are ensured to show empathy towards individuals with different cultural characteristics, activities related to sharing,

solidarity, respect to the differences and tolerance are performed, and different activities are carried out during the teaching-learning process.

Discussion & Conclusions

This research is conducted on how the current situation related to multicultural education in elementary schools. The first aim of the research is to determine how multicultural education is perceived by teachers. The cloud analysis results have revealed that classroom teachers mostly use the concepts of *ethnic identity, religion, language and gender* in relation to multicultural education. Teachers may be said to perceive multicultural education as the education given to the individuals with different ethnic identity, language, religion and gender. Besides, teachers have been identified to possess similar perceptions towards multicultural education in terms of gender, seniority and educational status. Banks (2013a) notes that the regulation of the teaching-learning environment based on the students' differences such as language, religion, ethnic identity, age, gender, economic level, social class, and disability is considered as multicultural education. As seen in this definition, differences such as gender, language, religion and ethnic identity are indispensable concepts of multicultural education. However, multicultural education also holds dimensions such as sexual orientation, age, social class, and disability. These dimensions are not used or rarely emerged in small numbers within the present study. This has been considered as a shortcoming by the researcher.

The reason for this is that no studies showing multicultural education include sexual orientation, age, social class and disability have been conducted in Turkey. Also, the fact that teachers are not well informed about multicultural education may cause this result. Similar results have emerged in the studies conducted by Aslan (2017) and Basarir, Sari and Cetin (2015).

This research has also examined the views of teachers about multicultural education activities. The multicultural based activities that have been implemented by teachers are divided into *student-centred and teacher-centred* themes. The majority of the teachers have stated that they mostly use student-centred activities. The research results have also shown that teachers mostly used drama method among the student-centered activities. San (2002, p. 342) defined drama as "*the interpretation and animation of an event, an idea, an educational unit, and sometimes an abstract concept or behaviour through using improvisation, role playing etc. theatre or drama techniques in a group study and through the rearrangement of the old cognitive patterns within like-a-play processes by which observation, experience, emotions are observed.*" The drama method ensures that the topics covered by the play are permanent in the memory of the individual and that the students look at the events from different perspectives. In this regard, teachers' preference for this method will enable students to look at other cultures from different perspectives. Students who take on the roles of individuals with different cultural characteristics during drama may develop empathy and create a desire for recognizing different cultural characteristics. Teachers have been determined to mostly use case study method, discussion, playing games, listening to music, group study, using visuals, integrating it into the lessons, making individuals gain the values of tolerance and respect the differences, brainstorming technique and conducting research. It has also been observed that teachers use case study, drama and discussion methods along with films about the disabilities and socio-economic status and student-centred activities related to values education including cooperation, solidarity, tolerance and respect to the differences. The results of these observations also are in line with the teachers' interviews on the use of more student-centered activities in their lessons. Teachers' use of more student-centred activities in multicultural education activities is considered as positive by the researcher. Thus, the activities related to multicultural education are expected to be influential on the students and to support the development of democratic individuals, one of the aims of multicultural education. The researches have revealed that students with different backgrounds have higher academic achievement when they are educated in accordance with their own culture and experience (Gay, 2010; Hollins, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ware, 2006), whereas, students whose differences are ignored during the teaching-learning process have lower academic achievement (Irvine, 1990; Irvine & Armento, 2001). In this respect, student-centred activities based on multicultural education in the teaching-learning environment may also enhance the academic achievement of the students. Teachers stated that they mostly use the instruction method under the theme of teacher-centred activities. The research has also examined teachers' views on the problems they encounter when doing multicultural education activities. The problems mostly encountered by the teachers when using multicultural education activities derive from family, social life, student, school administration, teaching programs. Teachers have been determined to mostly encounter with student-related problems. Under the theme of student-related problems, teachers have been determined to encounter with problems due to students' bias against multicultural education. Observations made by the researcher have shown that the teachers mostly face with problems due to prejudices of the students against multicultural education in the lessons. This result supports the view that teachers have problems due to students' biases against multicultural education. One of the aims of multicultural education is to overcome the biases of the individuals against one another (Banks, 2013b; Dunn, 1997). In fact, Yildirim (2016) concludes that the activities about the cultural differences improve respect for cultural, racial and religious diversity and decrease students' biases. The studies conducted by Basarir, Sari and Cetin (2015) and Aslan (2017) have revealed that teachers encounter with problems due to students' biases against one another. Similar layouts have been noted in the studies conducted by Bigatti, Gibau, Boys, Grove, Ashburn-Nardo, Khaja and Springer (2012). This result is parallel to those of the national and international researches. Under the theme of student-related problems, teachers have been found to encounter with problems due to various reasons such as students' negative attitudes towards the

individuals with different cultural characteristics, being intolerant, their disrespect to the differences, ostracising individuals with different cultural characteristics and having insufficient knowledge as well as mocking individuals with different cultural traits. As for the family-related problems theme, teachers have indicated that they have problems due to the families' biases. As to the teaching program-related problems theme, teachers have noted that they encounter with several problems as the teaching program and the content of textbooks have not been prepared in accordance with multicultural education. Upon analyzing school management-related problems theme, teachers have been identified to encounter several problems due to school management' biases against multicultural education, lack of knowledge about multicultural education and lack of equipment. One teacher has implied that some of the problems are related to the students' social lives. Three teachers stated that they do not encounter any problem during the learning-teaching process. The research has also analyzed the views of teachers on solution proposals to the problems about multicultural education. The proposal developed by teachers has been developed for the education of the parents. This is a significant result of the present study. As stated above, most of the problems related to multicultural education encountered by the teachers are caused by students. Hence, it was thought that proposals would have been developed for the students. However, most of the teachers have developed proposals for families. Based on this result, teachers are likely to think that parents should be educated about multicultural education in order to overcome students' biases against the individuals with different cultural characteristics. In addition, family plays a significant role in education. Students' biases against individuals with different cultural characteristics may result from their families. Thus, educating parents about multicultural education may eliminate these biases. Therefore, such a proposal may be developed by the teachers. In addition, observations made by the researcher have indicated that teachers share the problems with the families when student-related problems emerge, and the problems are tried to be solved. Further, classroom teachers have also developed numerous recommendations regarding multicultural education: cooperation should be ensured with parents, it should be contacted with the guidance service, students' biases should be overcome, the teaching program should be arranged taking multicultural education into consideration, programs should include acquisitions based on multicultural education, education attainments should be organized on the basis of multicultural education, textbooks should be prepared considering multicultural education, student-centered activities should be implemented, school management should be provided in-service training on multicultural education, schools should be designed based on multicultural education, students should be urged to gain empathy skills, students should be endowed with values education, individuals with different cultural characteristics should be thrown together, equipment should be supplied. One teacher has not developed recommendations.

Recommendations

Based upon the research findings, various recommendations have been developed:

1. Research results have revealed that teachers have insufficient knowledge about multicultural education. Indeed, when their perceptions towards multicultural education have been examined, shortcomings emerge in the definitions of multicultural education (sexual orientation, age, social class). Thus, it will be useful to provide teachers with in-service training on multicultural education. In this way, teachers will have full knowledge of multicultural education and organize the teaching-learning environment depending on multicultural education.
2. In the present study, teachers have stated that students are biased against the individuals with different cultural characteristics and similar results have been achieved through observations made by the researcher. It will be useful to include student-centered activities in curricula that will reduce the biases of students towards individuals with different cultural characteristics. This ensures the way to remove students' biases.
3. Primary school curricula should be organized taking multicultural education into account.
4. The problems stated by the teachers should be addressed by the concerned people. In this way, multicultural education may be implemented effectively and efficiently.
5. Various studies may be conducted on larger samples for determining the views of teachers who work in different regions of Turkey. This is expected to have a great contribution to the related literature.
6. Researches such as action research, experimental research, mixed models, and other models on the use of multidisciplinary education will contribute to the relevant literature.

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