

Teachers' Awareness of Multicultural Education and Diversity in School Settings

Betul TONBULOGLU*

Dolgun ASLAN**

Hasan AYDIN¹***

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Abstract

Problem Statement: The concept of multiculturalism was generally perceived in terms of ethnic backgrounds or differences in race and so brought forth negative viewpoints and apprehensions with regard to the issue. It is undoubtedly of great importance to provide comprehensive educational systems in which individuals in multicultural societies can live together in peace. Therefore, the attempt to determine the perceptions of teachers towards multiculturalism is essential, as they are responsible for the organization of class learning environments. Likewise, it is important to analyze the degree to which educational programs actually carry or incorporate these multicultural principles with the view of ensuring an education that will include all students and ensure they are raised in a way that embraces peace. Nevertheless, the number of studies conducted in Turkey on this topic to date remains very small.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers with regard to multicultural education and diversity and to highlight the awareness of teachers concerning this issue.

Method: A qualitative case research design was employed for this study. Within the study, there was an attempt to present the thoughts of teachers with regard to multicultural education, and at the same time, examine yearly plans to determine the degree to which multicultural education had been incorporated into the teaching process. In order to determine the

* Ministry of Education, Istanbul, e-mail: betultonbuloglu@gmail.com

** Dr.-- The Ministry of Education, aslandolgun@gmail.com

***Corresponding author: Dr. Yildiz Technical University, College of Education, Curriculum and Instruction Dept., Istanbul, e-mail: aydinhytu@gmail.com

study group, a purposeful sampling technique was used. The research group consisted of six teachers employed during the 2012–2013 academic year at a primary school situated in the province of Istanbul, Turkey. The data of the study were collected by means of semi-constructed interviews, observations and document analyses, and interview questions. An observation form and yearly plans were used as data collection tools. The data obtained were then evaluated in accordance with the content analysis technique.

Findings and Results: On analysis of the results, it was discovered that the actual knowledge of the teachers, with regard to multicultural education and diversity, was found to be adequate, and their opinions towards multicultural education were observed to be largely positive. Nevertheless, there was serious confusion and prejudice with regard to certain concepts connected to multicultural education; teachers were seen to suffer from certain inadequacies with these issues. Furthermore, analysis of the yearly plans revealed that the number of attainment goals and activities, as well as types of assessment and evaluation tools that were included to emphasize multiculturalism and diversification, were insufficient.

Conclusions and Recommendations: In order for teachers to understand the importance and necessity of multicultural education—and for teachers to be able to transfer this into practice in the educational environment itself—the implementation of educational reforms that recognize equal opportunities in learning is a pressing priority. For this reason, it is suggested that teachers need to adopt multicultural educational principles and include these in their teaching programs, while the training opportunities available to teachers and academic studies conducted on this topic need to increase.

Keywords: multiculturalism, multicultural education, opinions of teachers

Introduction

Certain multicultural constructs, which included various characteristics, emerged as the result of an interaction of experienced geographical, sociological, and economic elements connected to developments that accumulated through the course of history. Thoughts with regard to the concept of multiculturalism that incorporate recognition of elements such as race, ethnic background, language, sexual preference, age, disability, social class, and religious denomination (APA, 2002; Kaya, 2015) have become better defined as a result of its inclusion within the education system. Multicultural education is a comprehensive school reform process that aims to provide a basic standard of education for all students, as well as one in which racism and segregation in all its manifestations is rejected and the diversity of society members is supported (Aydin, 2012). Banks (1999) described multicultural education

as an educational type in which students of different genders, races, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds were to be afforded the same opportunities of success in education. Wilson (2012) defines multicultural education as it relates to schooling and instruction: designed for the cultures of several different races in an educational system. The aim of this type of education is to guarantee equality of opportunity, solve problems arising from cultural conflicts, and support students' development of empathy so as to recognize their mutual cultures, and in so doing, increase their academic success. The actions of the leading theoreticians and researchers of the multicultural education movement, in trying to reconstruct educational institutions, support the assertion that this is indeed a reform movement (Banks & Banks, 2002). In such a way, all students from a diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including white, male, and middle-class students, can gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can help them contribute to the future of their own nation and the planet in a productive manner (Banks & Banks, 2002). On account of the fact that multicultural education necessitates taking into account the differences cited above, one can come to the conclusion that multicultural education is a form of education that champions freedom (Parekh, 1986).

According to Gay (1994), multicultural education is an educational policy that ensures individuals are allowed to express their ethnic and cultural differences, aims to present equal academic opportunities so as to raise students to success, and encompasses educational materials and organizational structures. Multicultural education aims to help students acquire positive behaviour traits, such as the ability to empathize and show respect and tolerance to others (Sinagatullin, 2003). Aydin (2013a) states that the goal of multicultural education is to consider the ethnic and racial differences of students as an educational alternative and contribute to the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of students. Halvorsen and Wilson (2010) underline the fact that multicultural education is aimed at all children, and they defend the view that it is an undertaking that helps establish equal opportunities in education for those who originate from different cultures; it also allows the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that will allow students to participate in a democratic society. Gay (1994) specified that the main aims of multicultural education are equality and excellence in education, expression of values and attitudes, necessary multicultural social awareness, acquisition of basic skills, development of cultural and ethnic literacy, and personal development.

Aydin (2013b) argues that the multicultural educational program is organized by way of applications, which allows the values and goals of multicultural education to come to life, goals and learning targets to be set, content to be specified, as well as learning and teaching activities and assessment evaluation tools that allow multicultural education's basic values and goals to come into existence. A program is designed that reflects the viewpoints of students who belong to different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and social groups (Banks, 2006). Multicultural educational programs, through a variety of experiences and relationships (between knowledge) established through those experiences, ensure the differentiation of knowledge for students undertaking different constructivist routes of learning (Tonbuloglu, Aslan &

Aydin, 2013). Leangan (2000) argued that students obtain information about other cultures and important universal themes that necessitate cooperation with different people; therefore, they gain deeper insights into knowledge and the wider world. In applications of multicultural education in Turkey, Polat (2009) found that while examining the educational programs introduced in the 2004–2005 academic year, elements of multicultural education reflected themselves—sometimes directly and occasionally in more subtle ways. When examining the lesson in which the most time was allocated to multicultural education, namely life sciences, it was found that students had acquired numerous positive skills and attitudes. The writer and other researchers (2009) specified that in the applications of the new programs, teachers were expected to support learning in accordance with the constructivist approach and with regard to individual differences, and therefore needed to be informed so as to acquire a better consciousness of multiculturalism and related educational issues.

One of the fundamental elements of an educational program is undoubtedly the teachers themselves. As indicated by Costa (1997), the success of formal education is connected to the attitude and professional preparedness of the teacher. This increases the importance of the qualities of the teachers and the multicultural elements found within and related to these qualities. Gay (1994) indicated that teachers generally perceived values, beliefs, and events in standard terms and taught with regard (principally) to what they knew. As they did not understand the ethnic, social, racial, or linguistic diversities of their students, they knowingly or unknowingly applied the wrong educational techniques in their classes. In order to allow the teacher to deliver effective education in multicultural classes, the teacher must be encouraged to employ cultural sensitivity strategies and ensure opportunity equality to guarantee the academic success and personal development of all students (Sharma, 2005). Penny, Forney and Harlee (2000) set out the following nine principles that should be followed to guarantee multicultural education.

1. Students must be helped to raise their academic success in all areas by using materials and approaches that are sensitive to students' sociocultural backgrounds and experiences.
2. An essential part of multicultural education ought to be allowing different voices to be heard.
3. The verbal and non-verbal communication models of the teacher need to be analyzed continuously to raise the participation of students in their learning process.
4. The learning styles of the students and the teaching styles of the teacher ought to be highlighted and used in order to develop the content and lesson design.
5. Multicultural education should occupy a place in the formal educational program.
6. Multicultural education should be a program that encompasses all levels.

7. Multicultural education should teach students to think critically so as to develop objective research and learning tools and allow them to ask questions freely.
8. Multicultural education necessitates an understanding of the family culture of that community.
9. Multicultural education should be evaluated as a source of benefit for the community.

Tonbuloglu and Aydin (2014) highlight that in Turkey, where education in one's native language or bilingual education is not largely accepted, the content and meanings of the terms multiculturalism and multicultural education were not widely known; for that reason, they were rarely referred to during pre-service or in-service teacher training programs. The concept of multiculturalism was generally perceived in terms of ethnic backgrounds or differences in race and so brought forth negative viewpoints and apprehensions with regard to the issue (Karatas & Oral, 2015). In addition, Kaya and Aydin (2014) argue that it is undoubtedly of great importance to provide comprehensive educational systems in which individuals in multicultural societies can live together in peace. Therefore, the attempt to determine the perceptions of teachers towards multiculturalism (Faltis, 2014) is essential, as they are responsible for the organization of class learning environments. Likewise, it is important to analyze the degree to which educational programs actually carry or incorporate these multicultural principles with the view of ensuring an education that will include all students and ensure they are raised in a way that embraces peace. Nevertheless, the number of studies conducted in Turkey on this topic to date remains very small (Yazici, Basol & Toprak, 2009), and few teachers are provided with the skills to become true practitioners of multicultural education, either prior to or during their professional service (Yazici, Basol & Toprak, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to determine teachers' points of view with regard to multicultural education and diversity as well as highlight the position of multiculturalism in the yearly plans applied by teachers. The opinions, apprehensions, and suggestions with regard to multiculturalism—and the examination of education programs within the context of multiculturalism—is thought to make a valuable contribution to the academic literature on this topic. The following research questions were sought to answer for this study:

1. What are the viewpoints of teachers with regard to multicultural education?
2. What were the initial evaluations of teachers with regard to multicultural education and its related sphere of activity?
3. What are teachers' suggestions regarding multicultural education?
4. What are the levels of proficiency of teachers with regard to the design of yearly plans with respect to multiculturalism?

Method

Research Design

A qualitative case study was used for this study. According to Yin (2009), the case study is a research method that observes the phenomenon under observation within its own environment. It is used in cases where there are no clear lines or divisions between the phenomenon under observation and there is more than one type of evidence or source of data. In this study, the "case" was defined as an attempt to present the thoughts of teachers with regard to multicultural education and diversity and, at the same time, conduct research by examining the content of yearly plans to ascertain the degree to which multicultural education was incorporated into lessons. This design was able to incorporate a variety of evidence, including observations, interviews, and documents, to deeply explore the multifaceted social phenomenon of family partnerships (Haines, 2015; Yin, 2009).

Research Sample

The study group for this research consisted of six teachers employed at a primary school in the Istanbul province during the 2012–2013 school year. Purposeful sampling techniques were selected because they allowed the researcher to select participants who have the potential to answer the research question to be addressed (Charmaz, 2006; Stake, 2006). Attention was paid to teachers' lengths of service, their different age groups, and ethnic origins. Creswell (2012) stated that a qualitative research study deals with a small number of people or events, from a very small number, such as one or two individual subjects, up to larger groups of 20 to 30 subjects. This is because it necessitates the preparation of a report that provides details for every person or event. This school was chosen because it is situated in the province of Istanbul and incorporates a multicultural structure in terms of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, presence of handicapped citizens, social class, religious denomination, and other social factors. In addition, the school in question is located near a number of districts with a cosmopolitan makeup, and the quality of the information received from school administrators regarding the general student profile of the institution proved useful for the purpose of this research.

The average age of the study group, which consisted of two male and four females, was 37 years old ($m = 37$). All were class teachers who had completed the bachelor's degree program for the training of class teachers. The teachers had seen periods of service of 19, 16, 15, 13, seven, and five years, respectively. On the form where teachers were asked to indicate their ethnic identities, three teachers answered "citizens of the Turkish Republic"; one teacher wrote Turkish (migrant from Thessaloniki, modern Greece); one teacher replied Turkish (father was a migrant from Thessaloniki and mother was from eastern Turkey, Kurdish); and one teacher replied the father was Caucasian and the mother was a Bulgarian migrant. None of the teachers included in the study were disabled in any way, and all indicated their religion as "Muslim/Islam."

Research Instrument and Procedure

For the aim of this research, participants were first asked to submit a consent form and then complete a second form with demographic information. On the

consent form, the purpose of the research was specified, and information was provided on the topic of confidentiality prior to asking for their consent. Following this stage, demographic information regarding the participant teachers' race, ethnic origin, language, gender, age, any handicaps or disabilities, education, and religious confession was collected with the aid of the information collection form. The study group was then determined in accordance with this demographic information, and observation and semi-constructed interviews were conducted with the members of the study group. Thereafter followed the collection of one copy of the yearly plans of each teacher in the study group; these were analyzed with regard to the manner in which they conveyed multicultural elements. In such a way, the limitation in the diversity of data collections, when safeguarded through the use of other data collection methods, serves to increase the reliability and validity of the findings obtained from an academic study (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005).

Observation form. The participants were first asked to complete a consent form and a demographic information form. Appointments were made with each of the teachers, and the observations and interviews were conducted on the agreed dates. Following this stage, yearly plans were requested from every teacher, and a descriptive analysis method was used with a view of ascertaining the degree to which multicultural elements were incorporated into the plans.

Two researchers observed the teachers in the classroom setting and recorded notes on the observation form. The researchers were careful to ask teachers in advance for the necessary permission to attend their lessons and agreed on appointment times that were mutually appropriate to observe the lessons. The behaviour of the teachers during the lessons, their attitudes towards students, and the activities they employed in class were observed, and then the researchers compiled the findings of the observation supporting in their observations with the findings obtained from the interview stages.

Interview questions. The questions devised by researchers with regard to the views, apprehensions, and suggestions concerning multicultural education in the classroom environment were presented to the teachers by way of the semi-constructed interview model, and their answers were recorded. These questions were organized after a thorough analysis of academic literature on the topic, consideration of the specific conditions and circumstances of the Turkish education system, and elicitation of the opinion of four expert opinions from academic staff members currently serving at the Educational Sciences Department at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul. A pilot application was conducted on three doctoral students currently studying at the Department of Educational Sciences, and sections that were deemed incomprehensible or difficult to comprehend were removed. The recorded questions and answers were then transferred to a computerized format; after this stage, the questions and answers were written in report form. The teachers of the study group were then asked for their approval as to the accuracy of what had been reported. In such a way, the internal validity or feasibility of the findings obtained from the research increased.

Document analysis. One example of the lesson plans they had prepared for their lessons was taken from every teacher, and these were analyzed with respect to multicultural elements. Each researcher analyzed these lessons with regard to what

was written under the headings specified on the yearly plans, and the findings obtained were compared before reaching a common result. Furthermore, three doctoral students at the curriculum and instruction department were asked to examine the analysis found in the document, and alterations were made to the document in the light of their opinions.

Data Analysis

With the permission of the teachers concerned, the notes taken using type recording equipment were turned into a computer-usable format, and the findings of the interview and observation stages were analyzed together. The data were then evaluated using a "content analysis" technique. According to Yildirim and Simsek (2005), the aim of content analysis is to summarize and interpret data according to predefined themes or topic headings. As the data can be organized according to themes that have emerged from the questions, data can also be presented by focusing attention on the questions or dimensions of the interview (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005). The findings reached were confirmed by three doctoral students at the curriculum and instruction department. The data obtained from this study were then presented with attention paid to the questions featured during the interview process and the findings of the observations.

Validity and Reliability

a) To increase internal reliability (feasibility), the researchers aimed to collect a diversity of data (triangulation), and the findings were based on analyses of the observations, teachers' opinions, and documents. Each interview was conducted for the duration of one hour, during which the views of the participants were elicited in detail with regard to the topic. After the questions and answers were written in report form, they were then read back to the teachers in the study group, and confirmation was taken from the teachers as to the accuracy of the answers recorded. Furthermore, the analyses of the yearly plans and findings of the interviews were analyzed, and the codes created from those and document analyses were also checked for accuracy. Certain alterations were made in the light of the opinions of experts in the field.

b) In order to increase the reliability of the research study, all of the findings were submitted without making any comments. The findings of the observations conducted by two researchers were then compiled. Three different researchers read the findings of the interviews separately; during these reading sessions, possible codes were created. It was then discussed under which themes or topic headings these themes could be grouped together. The analysis process was conducted separately, the experts then came together, and a final decision was made as to the codes and themes to be included. Each researcher also analyzed the yearly plans separately, and then the findings reached were compared and a common result was reached. In such a way, there was an attempt to ensure the consistency of the study.

The first author was a teacher employed at the same school as that where the teachers were interviewed for the study. The fact that the researcher was situated at the location of the research allowed the participants to feel at ease and reply to questions in a relaxed and sincere manner. However, the possibility of partisanship or arising bias was kept in mind at all times; to overcome any limitations, the duration of the interviews conducted with the participants' was kept relatively long.

Furthermore, care was taken in the interviews to ask the same question in different ways. The answers were each carefully checked for accuracy, and the findings from the observation stages were carefully compared with those from the interview stage and explained in detail. Moreover, after the report was written, the answers were read to the participants and the findings were confirmed. At the same time, when the findings were published, there was an attempt to refer directly to the quotations (of the participants), and comments were made with references to the quotations of the participants.

Results

Within the context of this research, the findings gathered from the data obtained from the interviews and observations and examination of the yearly plans were then written up and organized according to 11 main themes or topic headings. These were: "The present knowledge of teachers with regard to the topic," "The thoughts of teachers with regard to the necessity of multicultural education," "Apprehensions concerning multicultural education," "Thoughts regarding teachers themselves," "The abilities of teachers to describe their students," "The thoughts of teachers regarding the school and class atmosphere," "What teachers can do (to implement multicultural education)" "What can be done with regard to students speaking different native/minority tongues," "Adaptation of teaching methods," "Teachers' in-service training," and "The adequacy of yearly plans in a multicultural context." The themes and categories created from the context of the findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Themes and Categories Created From the Data Analysis

Themes	Categories
1. Opinions of teachers with regard to multicultural education	1.1. Teachers' actual knowledge of the topic. 1.2. Teachers' thoughts with regard to the necessity of multicultural education. 1.3. Apprehensions with regard to multicultural education.
2. Teachers' self-assessment with regard to multicultural education and its sphere of influence	2.1. Thoughts with regard to teachers themselves. 2.2. Teachers' ability to recognize/describe their students. 2.3. Teachers' thoughts with regard to the school and class atmosphere.
3. Suggestions with regard to multicultural education	3.1. What teachers can do (to help implement multicultural education). 3.2. What can be done to help students with different native/minority languages. 3.3. The adaptation of teaching methods. 3.4. In-service training of teachers.
4. The adequacy of teachers with regard to their yearly plans with respect to multicultural elements	

Opinions of Teachers With Regard to Multicultural Education

The teachers were asked their views with regard to multicultural education and within the context of the first research question/area. The questions that attempted to highlight the actual knowledge of teachers concerning the subject and their thoughts regarding the necessity of multicultural education were thoroughly analyzed.

The actual knowledge of teachers with regard to the topic. After the analysis of the question that was aimed to ascertain the actual knowledge of teachers with regard to the topic, three teachers gave definitions of multicultural education as a type of education in which people with different characteristics and from different cultures could receive education at the same time and place. One teacher supplied the definition of multiculturalism as “education that raised the individual in every aspect,” while two other teachers described the concept as one in which “an appropriate education was provided to people from different cultures.” A teacher who had been educated abroad defined multicultural education, with the support of numerous examples, as follows:

Multicultural education is when people from different cultures come together to receive education at the same place. After the Holocaust in Germany, great importance was attached to multicultural education that manifested itself in many ways, and a type of education was created that did not put anyone under social pressure. For example, as Muslims, [those from my culture] were not obliged to participate in religious education lessons.

Teachers’ thoughts with regard to the necessity of multicultural education. After the analysis of the question that attempted to elicit the thoughts of teachers with regard to the necessity of multicultural education, it was understood that all teachers interviewed thought that multicultural education was necessary. One teacher thought that diversity should not be overlooked or ignored, and the segregation or division of people into classes (both within and outside school) was wrong. Three teachers argued that in order for teachers to establish equality of opportunity and create a more cohesive society, they needed to behave more sensitively with respect to cultural differences. Furthermore, it was observed that in the classroom setting, all teachers attempted to behave in a fair and equal way towards their students, create a democratic classroom environment, and maintain an equal distance to all students (Lafer, 2014). Thoughts of two teachers’ thoughts on multicultural education were as follows:

If people with different religions, languages, and of different races live together in the same society and are present in the same class, we are forced to grant them equal rights.

Turkey is a “mosaic” in the sense that there are unique cultures specific to particular regions. The teacher should not evaluate students according to his own social environment or culture, but should learn the lifestyle of the students, and without reflecting this fact explicitly, should behave more sensitively [towards them].

Apprehensions with regard to multicultural education. When teachers were asked questions regarding their apprehensions towards multicultural education, two of the teachers interviewed argued that problems might emanate from family backgrounds of the students. Two teachers believed that problems would not be experienced should teachers take necessary precautions. One believed multicultural education was a rich source of benefits, and for this reason, problems would not be experienced, whereas one teacher argued that differences among students may actually bring out conflict. One of the teachers expressed this viewpoint:

I believe that the biggest disagreement or opposition [to multicultural education] may originate from the families themselves. Families may feel that not enough interest is being shown to their own children.

Another teacher expressed his thoughts on the topic as follows:

Turkey is a “mosaic”; the fact that our types of regional cuisine are so different and our traditions and cultures are so different is our true source of wealth. This is a point that doesn’t separate us, but on the contrary, unites us.

Five teachers were of the view that the responsibility would inevitably fall on teachers to resolve the problems, and that teachers would be forced to pay great attention to the creation of appropriate learning environments and their words in class. By methods such as bringing families together to talk to one another and teachers, these problems could be solved. Two teachers were of the opinion that in-service training was necessary for teachers regarding this topic. One teacher articulated his view in the following way:

Here, the most important responsibility falls most probably on the teacher himself. Providing he behaves towards every student in the same way and does not exclude anyone on account of their culture, I do not think he will experience any difficulties.

Teachers’ Self-Assessment With Regard to Multicultural Education and Its Sphere of Influence

Teachers’ evaluations, with regard to multicultural education, were analyzed through questions that aimed to elicit teachers’ thoughts regarding themselves, their abilities to describe/recognize their students, their thoughts concerning the school and class environment, and their apprehensions of multicultural education.

Thoughts of teachers regarding themselves. When the thoughts of teachers were examined with regard to themselves in relation to multicultural education, it was observed that they saw themselves as competent in regard to the way in which they felt they implemented a teaching approach appropriate to the requirements of multicultural education. Two of the teachers stated that they saw students first and foremost as people and children and did not exercise any kind of discrimination in their thoughts or actions. One teacher mentioned the fact that he had educated students of many different ethnic origins; another argued that the ethnic origin of

students did not interest him and he had always behaved equally towards all students. One teacher expressed his views in the following manner:

As a child from a different culture, I can see what it means to receive education in another culture. For this reason, my approach towards people is perhaps different from those who have been born in, grown up, or taught in only one country. I strive to evaluate people first as people, rather than on account of their race or religion.

Another teacher used these words to argue that he regarded himself as competent with regard to multicultural education:

I personally think that I do not discriminate in any way. In any case, as I do not know who is of Laz, Circassian, or immigrant origin, this does not greatly interest me.

One teacher—who had described herself first as inadequate with regard to this subject, as she had never taught a student of another race—was reminded of the researcher’s definition of multiculturalism. She recalled that she had indeed taught students of different ethnic origins and changed her mind on the issue. One teacher, expressing the fact that she had insufficient knowledge with regard to the topic, summarized her feelings as follows:

I sometimes see myself as inadequate and ill-equipped with regard to this issue. I feel inadequate sometimes as regards the knowledge required. I see my inadequacies when I am asked to provide information regarding multiculturalism as a teaching approach or any type of deeper knowledge on the topic.

The abilities of teachers to describe/recognize their students. Five of the teachers stated that they were sufficiently able to describe their students, while one teacher felt he was not able to do so adequately. Those teachers who felt they could sufficiently describe their students had, by way of house visits, parent-teacher meetings, and by studying the information on students’ identity cards, managed to gain a more detailed profile of their students. Three teachers, rather than asking parents directly about their religious beliefs or ethnic origins, instead made judgments on the students’ and parents’ behaviours and on things they heard from outside concerning the families. By asking these types of questions about identities, it was wrongly perceived by many parents to constitute a type of discrimination. One teacher felt it was easier to ask for this type of information from students themselves:

I have striven as much as possible to visit our students’ houses. Most of them are of Muslim and Turkish origin. Of course, among these students, there are many Kurds, but you can’t ask directly [about their ethnic origin]. When the teacher asks this directly, they think like this: “Why is the teacher asking this? Is the teacher discriminating against us?” This is not because I want to know the child’s values so as to develop a specific attitude towards him; however, it seems that if you ask such things, people make a big deal.

One teacher described his thoughts in this way:

I have enough information about the students in my classroom. However, in my class there isn't a multicultural situation, as they are all students at the same academic level. When I've held parent meetings I've asked them where they are from and their home cities, but I haven't asked too many questions. If they want to express something on the issue, they're free to do so.

Thoughts of teachers with regard to the school and classroom environment. Three of the teachers indicated that the school and classroom environments were not suitable for multicultural education, while three teachers believed they were appropriate. One of the teachers who did not think the environments were suitable cited the reasons as large class sizes and low educational levels of parents. He also added that state schools would not be able to shoulder such a type of education, and that it could lead to the division of students into groups. In order to prevent this, comprehensive study needs to be carried out as to its feasibility in state schools. Another teacher stated that classes did have a multicultural nature, but little attention was paid to this fact:

At the moment, to be frank, I do not think that state schools can shoulder the burden of responsibility that multicultural education could bring about. Students could divide up into groups, even if this might be secretive and only by way of whisper or hearsay. By students whispering that someone is one race or another, I feel it may hurt the pride of the student. For this reason, I feel that a study should be contacted comprising all elements from the principal at the top to the student portfolio at the bottom.

One of the teachers, who expressed that the school and class environment was suitable for multicultural education, stated that the present class environment was appropriate; two teachers stated that the curriculum was of a comprehensive nature in that it included all cultures and rendered the class and school environment suitable for multicultural education. However, one teacher, taking into account the different cultures present in the school environment, felt that the introduction of multicultural education could fan the flames of discrimination, and as a result, was a wrong step. He expressed his views in the following manner:

There is an element of unity when we talk about education. If the Turkish Republic indeed means the Turkish Republic, it follows that there is a curriculum that gives expression to the mosaic nature of our country. It follows that there is no need to do anything in addition to this. Cultural education can provoke discrimination, in my view. This is because a child feels uncomfortable when you behave to him differently.

Suggestions With Regard to Multicultural Education

In order to ascertain the suggestions of teachers with regard to multicultural education, the answers to questions designed to elicit their views on the following topics were proposed: the things that teachers can do to support multicultural education, the things that can be done for students who speak different mother tongues, and teachers' suggestions concerning the adaptation of teaching methods and in-service training.

Things that the teacher can do. When teachers were asked what could be done so as to know their students better, five teachers highlighted the need to establish communication with the family and observe their living conditions. In so doing, they will gain a better knowledge of their students. Furthermore, one teacher suggested that through conducting trips, one gained better insights into the attitudes and lives of one's students. Another participant stressed the importance of creating a relationship of sharing between the parents and teacher at all times, and finally, another teacher expressed the way that he had obtained useful information about the families he was involved with via a parental observation form. One of the teachers set out his suggestions as follows:

In order to get to know the families, the first priority is to see the environment in which the family lives. However, just seeing the house in which the family lives is not enough. To reduce these gaps in knowledge on my part, I give the children homework assignments from time to time. They create presentations and videos for me that help me understand their real lives better.

One teacher stated that the cultural backgrounds of his students did not greatly interest him and referred to the fact that he felt that this situation prevented any kind of discrimination on his part:

I don't do anything in particular. Why, you might ask? In this way, you don't run the risk of discriminating in any way. What the students eat, drink, or their traditions don't interest me.

The things that can be done for students speaking different native/minority languages. Four teachers stated that students speaking different minority languages should be able to receive instruction in this language. While one teacher supported the idea that students should be able to receive their general education from a teacher proficient in that language, another teacher, stressing the necessity of using a common language in education, defended the view that the use of more than one language in education could lead to the disintegration of the country. The teachers articulated their views on the topic as follows:

The thing to be done is to allow the student to receive education from someone who knows that language. Or, at least such an application can be tried, and in that school, for whichever ethnic group has the most students, the teacher can deliver cultural adaptation lessons. When I arrived in Germany, I didn't know German, and because there were many Turkish students like me who did not know German, for certain lessons during the week, they would send us to Turkish teachers who would teach us German.

While no one should interfere with anyone who speaks Kurdish or the Laz language, a concept of Turkishness should remain at the forefront of our education. Perhaps Turkish education should be unified and refined because Turkey is at a very sensitive stage in its development. We are, politically and socially, at a very sensitive juncture. I do not think we should allow this [multicultural education] to spread from a very specific cultural aspect. If we split like Yugoslavia, no one will be able to

stop our decline. As a result of these cultural divisions, especially as far as language is concerned, it will take us to a very different place. Turkish is spoken in all state and educational affairs. This does not mean that Turkish is a language of racism, but rather simply the common language.

Another two teachers felt it necessary to approach students who spoke other languages with understanding and use a common language, stress the importance of using gestures and impersonation, and play games in order to reach a common understanding. One teacher expressed his opinion in the following way:

Even if the child's native language is different, one can create a situation in which the student can be made to feel that he or she is speaking the same language. Even if the languages of the teacher and student are different, a road to understanding can be opened through the use of gestures and impersonation, even if they do not understand each other completely. They may even communicate through the use of games. In this regard, it is necessary to understand the way a child thinks, the situation that he finds himself in, what he feels, and behave accordingly.

The adaptation of teaching methods. Five teachers indicated that it was necessary to use different teaching techniques and methods for student groups from different cultures. Two of the teachers argued that multicultural elements could only be added as topics to lessons such as life sciences and social sciences. One teacher suggested teaching multiculturalism through the offer of optional lessons. One teacher suggested that multicultural elements could be spread across numerous subjects in the curriculum. One teacher stated that all students were different, and for that reason, it is necessary to use a variety of methods so as to address all their needs. One of these teachers summarized his views on the topic in this way:

I think that multicultural education is better provided in social sciences or life sciences lessons. The richness of our culture is expressed better in social and life sciences lessons than in mathematics or science lessons. I believe that students from every region can, by using technology and preparing slides for presentations, show the positive aspects of their regions and destroy the prejudices of others.

One teacher expressed the opinion that the curriculum taught in school was already designed in such a way that it already incorporated all cultures, and for that reason, there was no need for different methods or techniques. He defended this view as follows:

In Turkey, there is an important concept, namely unity, in education. During the preparation of the curriculum, it is not merely created according to the culture of the West or the East of the country. Therefore, in lessons, when we explain/discuss music or pictures, there is, in my opinion, no discrimination.

During the lessons observations, it was seen that teachers did not mention the term multicultural education, nor did they resort to any different strategy or methodology. Rather, it was observed that multicultural elements were spread among the different principal lessons of the curriculum.

In-service training of teachers. Five teachers put forward the view that multicultural education should be included within in-service teacher training programs, while one said there was no need for extra training or education on this topic. One of the teachers who mentioned that in-service education is needed to incorporate multiculturalism defended the view that multiculturalism should be a separate lesson taught by a dedicated subject teacher. One teacher indicated that this type of education should be offered in places where there is the greatest number of cultural differences, and elsewhere according to the needs of those areas or regions. One teacher admitted that, due to the fact that he never had any experience of the issue, he was unable to generate any ideas as to how multiculturalism could be applied. Another teacher confessed that he had previously never thought very much about multicultural education; however, he expressed the opinion that such an education could be very beneficial. Two teachers' views on this issue were as follows:

I think so, yes. If it did happen, it would be wonderful because the teacher will get to know his students better and will know how to better approach his students. At the moment, the teacher does what he himself has read, or what he himself knows [from habit]. However, if he receives a more scientific in-service training, I think it will be of great benefit. Indeed, if such a thing were introduced, I would be one of the first participants.

On this issue, the teachers who will provide the education must be clear; they must become specialists in this area and be able to teach students at certain periods of the week using this specialist knowledge.

The Adequacy of Yearly Plans With Reference to Multiculturalism

The yearly plans of the classroom teachers who teach different classes were analyzed according to the number of achievement goals, number of activities, and types of evaluation and assessment. The numbers that stressed multicultural elements were then defined and recorded as examples. The teachers indicated that the yearly plans had been prepared collectively (in conjunction with other teachers), and they had tried to remain true to the achievement goals, activities, and evaluation and assessment criteria included within them. In Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5, space is allocated to the results of the analysis of the yearly plans for first, second, third, and fourth grades. As a result of the pre-interviews conducted with teachers, the fact that teachers focused largely on the four principal lessons meant that these lessons were chosen as a focus, and the yearly plans for these four lessons were taken into account for analysis. Moreover, due to the fact that science lessons are included within the scope of life sciences lessons for the first three years of primary school, the content of the yearly plan for the separate subject of science and technology was only analyzed for fourth grade.

Table 2.*Analysis of Yearly Plan With Regard to Multicultural Elements*

Class/grade	Life science lesson (in fourth grade classes this lesson becomes social sciences)	f	Examples
First grade	Number of achievement objectives	86	
	Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	7	Similar and different characteristics of friends
	Number of activities	77	
	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	7	Our similarities and differences
	Types of assessment and evaluation		Based on observation, fill in the blanks, true/false answers, multiple-choice, short answers to questions, oral presentation and self-evaluation
	Assessment and evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using a self-evaluation form and evaluation
Second grade	Number of learning objectives	95	
	Number of learning objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	7	Participation in school and class election activities so as to contribute to democratic culture
	Number of activities	92	
	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	7	Democracy in school
	Types of assessments and evaluations		Assessment and evaluation included in observation, fill in the gaps, true/false, multiple choice, short answers to questions, oral presentations, and self-evaluation
	Methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using self-evaluation form and evaluation
Third grade	Number of achievement objectives	111	
	Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	8	The supremacy of democratic practices was debated with vigour, supported with examples from school life
	Number of activities	105	
	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	8	Differences are natural

Table 2. Continues

	Types of assessment and evaluation		Assessment included observation, filling in the blanks, true/false responses, multiple-choice questions, short response type questions, and self-evaluation
	Evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using a self-assessment form
	Number of learning objectives	46	
	Number of learning objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	7	To meet others' feelings and thoughts with respect
	Number of activities	39	
Fourth grade	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	7	Respect for feelings and thoughts of others
	Types of assessment and evaluation		
	Assessment and evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using a self-evaluation form

As can be seen in Table 2, the yearly plans collectively prepared by teachers for the life sciences lessons taught and applied in the first four grades of primary school, the number of learning achievement goals and activities, and the range of types of assessments and evaluations were extremely limited.

Table 3.

Turkish Lessons With Respect to Multicultural Elements

Grade	Turkish lesson	f	Examples
	Number of learning objectives	132	
	Number of learning objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	12	Oral expression of feelings, thoughts, and dreams
First grade	Number of activities	41	
	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	8	Student is asked to speak about events that have made him or her happy or sad

Table 3. Continues

	Types of assessment and evaluation		Observation forms, worksheets, individual evaluation forms, written work, and visualization may be used as means of evaluating the student
	Methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using a self-evaluation form
	Number of achievement objectives	172	
	Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	13	Student writes introductory pieces of writing to describe his family and environment
	Number of activities	47	
Second grade	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	8	Student is asked to write about his or her dream house, school, friend, teacher, car, toy, etc.
	Types of assessment and evaluation		Observation forms, worksheets, individual evaluation forms, written descriptions, and visualization may be used as means of evaluating the student
	Assessment and evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using a self-evaluation form
	Number of achievement objectives	185	
	Number of achievement objectives	18	Student highlights the similarities and differences between the thoughts present in a text and his or her own thoughts
	Number of activities	60	
Third grade	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	9	By creating a "respect tree" and using certain expressions attached to the trees, students may be asked to bring certain situations to life
	Types of assessment and evaluation		Observation forms, worksheets, individual evaluation forms, written descriptions, and visualization exercises may be used as means of evaluating the student
	Types of assessment and evaluation that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using a self-evaluation form
Fourth grade	Number of achievement objectives	249	

Table 3. Continues

Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	18	Student use expressions that direct the reader to think differently
Number of activities	92	
Number of activities that stress multiculturalism	4	Student may be asked to group words that describe various feelings into positive and negative categories
Types of assessment and evaluation		Evaluation of students according to the activities and project evaluation form
Assessment and evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Evaluation using a self-evaluation form

As can be understood from Table 3, the number of achievement objectives and activities as well as assessment and evaluation types found in the lesson plans prepared and applied collectively for Turkish lessons in the first four grades of primary school is extremely low.

Table 4.

Analysis of the Yearly Plans for Mathematics With Respect to Multiculturalism

Grade	Math lesson	f	Examples
First grade	Number of achievement objectives	47	
	Number of learning objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Number of activities	38	
	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Types of assessment and evaluation		Check lists for achievement objectives, open-ended questions, group evaluation, observation form, and measurement of attitude
	Assessment and evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism		Group work, individual activities
Second grade	Number of achievement objectives	59	
	Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Number of activities	80	

Table 4. Continues

	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Types of assessment and evaluation		Multiple-choice, linking exercises, short answer responses, tests requiring extended responses
	Assessment and evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Number of achievement objectives	69	
	Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Number of activities	-	
Third grade	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Types of assessment and evaluation	-	Multiple-choice, matching exercises, short answer responses, extended responses
	Methods of assessment and evaluation that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Number of achievement objectives	85	
	Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Number of activities	134	
Fourth grade	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Types of assessment and evaluation		Progress tests are employed as a means of assessment and evaluation
	Assessment and evaluation methods that emphasize multiculturalism	-	Methods of assessment and evaluation that emphasize multiculturalism

As can be seen in Table 4, in the yearly plans prepared and applied collectively by teachers for mathematics lessons in the first four grades of primary schools, both the number of achievement objectives and activities as well as the types of assessment and evaluation employed were rather limited.

Table 5.

Analysis of the Yearly Plans for Science and Technology Lessons With Respect to Multicultural Elements

Grade	Science and technology	f	Examples
	Number of achievement objectives	178	
	Number of achievement objectives that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
	Number of activities	119	
	Number of activities that emphasize multiculturalism	-	
Fourth grade			Project and performance assignments, concept maps, concept tree, thinking hats, constructed grids, puzzles, multiple choice questions, open-ended questions, true/false questions, matching exercises, and filling in the blanks
	Types of assessment and evaluation		
	Methods of evaluation that emphasize multiculturalism		Thinking hats, project and performance assignments

As can be seen in Table 5, in the yearly plans prepared and applied collectively by teachers for science and technology lessons in fourth grade classes, both the number of achievement objectives and activities as well as the types of assessment and evaluation are extremely limited.

The low number of achievement objectives and types of assessment and evaluation do not correlate with the opinions expressed by teachers that different teaching methods and techniques should be employed for various groups in the same class. In this respect, we can reach the conclusion that the teachers' ideas with regard to multicultural education were not sufficiently reflected in their yearly plans.

This situation does not correspond with the opinions of teachers obtained from the interview indicating that different teaching methods and techniques were necessary for groups from different cultures, or that multicultural elements could be added as themes to lessons of the curriculum, such as life sciences or social sciences.

Discussion and Conclusion

Multicultural education is a field of study that aims to help students acquire behaviours, such as establishing empathy, showing respect, and acting tolerantly towards others (Sinagatullin, 2003). Furthermore, it endeavours to allow students to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours that will enable them to participate in a democratic society and obtain equal opportunities in education (Halvorsen & Wilson, 2010). It is a priority for teachers to put the principles of multicultural education into practice in order for them to understand the importance and necessity of multicultural education so they can transfer this philosophy into effect in a real educational environment. As Costa (1997) has indicated, the successful application of formal education is connected to the attitude and professional preparedness of the teacher, and in multicultural education, this represents an even more important factor. Multicultural educational programs are based on a philosophy that allows students who belong to different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and social groups to express their individual points of view (Banks, 2006b). The application of multicultural education is related to both the competency of the teacher and the adequacy of the education program. This study attempts to analyze the thoughts of teachers with regard to multicultural education and the yearly plans of teachers within the context of multicultural education by means of a case study approach.

Schlosser (1992) defines the most effective teachers as those who are able to learn to understand their students' cultures and impart self-confidence to them. When examining the findings of this study, it can be observed that the teachers' actual knowledge with respect to multicultural education is sufficient, and they display a largely positive attitude towards multicultural education. Teachers unanimously agreed that multicultural education was necessary, and the concept on which they focused the most attention was that of equality in education. Banks (2005) proposed that all educators need to ensure equal access to and equal opportunities in education. However, teachers harbour great prejudices and suffer from serious confusion regarding key concepts related to multicultural education. Moreover, teachers often see themselves as having insufficient knowledge or practical training in this field.

Most of the teachers interviewed for this study saw themselves as proficient as far as being practitioners of multicultural education because they considered the attitude they adopted in class in keeping with the tenets of the philosophy. In this regard, they cited that the (principal) reason for their belief in their own proficiency was because they behaved equally to all students. However, when the responses submitted by teachers to the questions regarding the degree to which the school and class environments were appropriate for multicultural society, they expressed apprehensions that the introduction of multicultural education could lead to a division of students into "groups," and that such a type of education could fan the flames of discrimination, and the school infrastructure would not be able to endure such an educational burden. In contrast, Banks (2008), in his explanation of the miscomprehensions with regard to multicultural education, articulated the fact that rather than setting out to divide a country, multicultural education is in fact designed

to unite a country that has already become divided. The findings reached in this study show that teachers tend to agree with the argument that multicultural education is indeed necessary; however, they harbour certain apprehensions with regard to problems that may be experienced at the application stage. Such a situation may be evaluated in which teachers lack adequate backgrounds or preparation with regard to multicultural education, so they may be deemed not yet ready to put it into practice.

Pena (1997) indicated that the experiences of students from cultural minority groups tended to show that, on account of the teacher's perception, they and other similar student groups were uneducated; such groups were largely ignored by the teacher. Glazer (1997) put forward the view that the teacher's defense of the dominant culture could lead to a situation in which other subcultures felt under pressure and could lead to their complete, forced assimilation. In this study, viewpoints elicited from the participant teachers who stated that no multicultural environment existed in their classes could be interpreted as a sign that the teachers interviewed were closed to cultures outside their own, and rather than highlight differences among their students, they preferred to conceal them so as to create uniformity within their class. Moreover, most teachers, on account of the fact that they had not undergone such an educational experience (or training), expressed the idea that they could not conceive of any ideas regarding how such an education could be put into practice. The opinions expressed regarding the fact that the present curriculum incorporates all cultures seems to contradict the findings reached as a result of the analysis of the yearly plans the teachers had created.

When the suggestions of most teachers with regard to multicultural education were analyzed, the participants emphasized the fact that teachers themselves would be able to solve any problems that might arise and prevent any problems related to the application and administration of the process. In his analysis regarding the perceptions of educators, Pena (1997) noted that teachers allocated very little time getting to know their students, and as a result, possessed little concrete information about them. Similarly, in this study, the overwhelming majority of teachers stated that for the teaching and learning process to conduct itself effectively, one needed to learn as many details as possible about the origins of the student(s); nevertheless, there were also teachers who expressed that they felt no need to acquaint themselves with the cultural backgrounds of the students, as this may lead to discrimination. In fact, the ethos of multicultural education lies in getting to know students in all aspects so as to shape an educational milieu in accordance with their needs and interests and ensure an educational environment that is democratic in nature. Teachers becoming better acquainted with their students is not a means to create discrimination, but rather an endeavor to shape education in accordance with the differing needs and priorities of students.

Nelson (2001) stated that the attachment of value to socially-constructed belief systems and racial and cultural differences was the key to achieving equality of opportunity in education. In this study, the majority of the teachers interviewed did not wish to ask families questions regarding their ethnic origin, race, or religion for fear of it being interpreted as a form of discrimination on the part of the teacher. This situation may be an indication that we in Turkey are not yet ready to be considered a truly multicultural society, and certain prejudices still persist in our society in which

people of different beliefs or racial and cultural values are not approached or treated in an equal manner.

Most of the teachers interviewed expressed the need to employ different teaching methods and techniques for student groups from different cultures; in general, they stated that multicultural elements could be added as topics to the course content of lessons, such as social sciences or life sciences, or they could be spread across subject disciplines. This situation is similar to the supplementary and contributory approaches specified by Banks for the inclusion of multicultural educational content into school programs. Banks (2008) mentioned that to integrate cultural content into school programs, different approaches had been attempted; yet, in both contributory and supplementary approaches, traces of the dominant culture could still clearly be seen. However, in the transformation approach, there was an intention to allow students to evaluate concepts and problems from different viewpoints. One teacher stated that to bring school and class environments to a level in which multicultural education can be applied in an appropriate manner, it was first necessary to conduct a comprehensive study encompassing every aspect of the school, from the head teacher right down to the student portfolio. This is an expression of opinion in keeping with the transformational approach.

Gorski (2000) vehemently defended the view that it is important for teachers to constantly examine their prejudices, partialities, and any perceptions that may influence the experiences of their students. An effective multicultural educator and teacher should be forced to continually examine and transform him or herself. Cirik (2008), in light of the studies he conducted, felt that trainee teachers' comprehension of issues such as multicultural education, race, or ethnic origin was inadequate. For this reason, he expressed the need for lessons to be provided on teacher training programs from the first years of study that would deal with issues such as the relationship between education and culture and the differences between cultures, as well as include knowledge and skills that may help address these problems. In their studies, Polat (2009), Basbay and Kagnici (2011) focused upon the multicultural competencies of teachers and stressed the fact that in order for multicultural education to be applied, teachers must possess particular skills. In this study, in a similar fashion, it was indicated that there is a need for in-service training on the subject of multicultural education. In this regard, a particular basis or background on the part of the teacher is necessary for the development of teachers' skills. In such a way, teachers with heterogeneous classes may be able to develop their skills so as to foster an atmosphere of respect, empathy, tolerance, and democratic consciousness; in so doing, they will be able to consider diversity as a source of richness. Furthermore, they will gain the opportunity to allow students to see things not merely in black and white, but also in colors as well as acquire greater abilities to listen to others.

The fact that citizens possess such differing values, characteristics, and religious and philosophical beliefs in the modern world renders multicultural education essential. As Stradling (2003) stated, multicultural education allows students the opportunity to accept that other viewpoints exist, and they can consider them equally; it also allows us the opportunity to attempt to understand the feeling of other parties. Multicultural education, in addition to preparing students to work in a world in which diversity is ever more prominent (Gaff, 1992; Morey & Kitano, 1997) by assigning students an active role in a safe class environment and approving

experimentation and experience, also serves to raise the communication skills of its students (Gay, 2000). From this perspective, it is suggested that multicultural education should be included in education programs, and teachers should be encouraged to adopt its principles. Furthermore, it is proposed that teachers should be educated and trained in this subject, and the number of studies conducted in this area of research should be increased.

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Okullardaki Çokkültürlü Eğitime ve Çeşitliliğe İlişkin Öğretmen Farkındalıkları

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Özet

Problem Durumu: Çokkültürlülük kavramı genelde sadece etnik yapı ve ırk farklılığı olarak algılanmakta, bu konudaki olumsuz görüş ve endişeler ortaya konmaktadır. Oysa çok kültürlü yapıya sahip toplumlarda barış içinde bir arada yaşanabilmesinde kuşkusuz bu yapının tamamını kapsayıcı bir eğitimin verilmesinin önemi çok büyüktür. Sınıftaki eğitim ortamının düzenlenmesinden sorumlu öğretmenlerin çokkültürlülüğe yönelik algılarının tespit edilmesi ve eğitim programlarının çokkültürlü öğeleri taşıma bakımından analiz edilmesi de, verilen eğitimin tüm öğrencileri kapsayacak ve hepsinin başarılı olmasını sağlayacak nitelikte olabilmesi için mutlaka gereklidir. Buna rağmen çokkültürlü eğitimle ilgili Türkiye’de yapılan çalışma sayısı yok denecek kadar azdır (Yazıcı, Başol, Toprak, 2009) ve çokkültürlü eğitimin asıl uygulayıcıları olan öğretmenlere bu konuda hizmet öncesi veya hizmet içi bir eğitim sağlanmamaktadır.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu araştırmanın amacı, öğretim sürecinde öğretmenlerin çokkültürlü eğitimle ilgili düşüncelerini ortaya koymaya çalışmak ve öğretmen farkındalıklarını belirlemektir. Çalışmada aynı zamanda öğretmenlerin yıllık planları incelenerek derslerine çokkültürlü eğitimi ne derece dâhil ettikleri araştırılmıştır.

Yöntem: Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden durum çalışması kullanılmıştır. Çalışma grubunun belirlenmesinde amaçlı örneklem yoluna gidilmiş, çalışma grubunu 2012-2013 öğretim yılında İstanbul ilinde bulunan bir ilkokulda görev yapan 6 öğretmen oluşturmuştur. Öğretmenlerin farklı mesleki kıdemde, farklı yaş grubunda, farklı cinsiyetten, farklı etnik kökenden olmalarına dikkat edilmiştir. Veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme, gözlem ve doküman analizi yoluyla toplanmış, veri toplama aracı olarak görüşme soruları, gözlem formu ve yıllık planlar kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada öncelikle katılımcılardan araştırmaya katılımların için izin belgesi alınmış, ardından demografik bilgi formunu doldurmaları istenmiştir. Demografik bilgilerine göre çalışma grubu belirlenmiş, bu çalışma grubuyla gözlem ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yürütülmüştür. Ardından çalışma grubundaki öğretmenlerin dersleri için hazırladıkları yıllık planlarının birer örneği alınarak, çokkültürlü öğeleri taşıması bakımından analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmacılarından ikisi, öğretmenlerin ders sırasındaki davranışlarını, öğrencilere karşı tutumlarını ve sınıf içi etkinliklerini gözlemleyerek, gözlem bulgularını ve düşüncelerini gözlem formlarına not almıştır. Araştırmacılar tarafından, sınıf ortamındaki çokkültürlü eğitime ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşünü, endişe ve önerilerini öğrenmeye yönelik olarak oluşturulan görüşme soruları, öğretmenlere yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla sorulmuş ve verilen cevaplar ses kaydına alınmıştır. Araştırmacılarından her biri, öğretmenlerin dersleri için hazırladıkları yıllık planların bir örneğini alarak bu yıllık planları çokkültürlü öğeleri içermesi bakımından belirlenen başlıklar altında ayrı ayrı analiz etmiş, sonra ulaşılan bulgular karşılaştırılarak ortak sonuca varılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler "içerik analizi" tekniğine dayalı olarak değerlendirilmiştir.

Bulgular: Görüşme ve gözlem verileri ile derslerin yıllık planları dikkate alınarak yapılan analizler sonucunda bulgular "öğretmenlerin konuyla ilgili mevcut bilgileri, öğretmenlerin çokkültürlü eğitimin gerekliliğiyle ilgili düşünceleri, çokkültürlü eğitimle ilgili endişeler, öğretmenlerin kendilerine yönelik düşünceleri,

öğretmenlerin öğrencileri tanıma yeterlilikleri, öğretmenin okul ve sınıf iklimine yönelik düşünceleri, öğretmenin yapabilecekleri, anadili farklı öğrencilerle ilgili yapılabilecekler, öğretim yöntemlerinin uyarlanması, öğretmenlerin hizmet içi eğitimi ve öğretmenlerin yıllık planlarının çokkültürlülük bağlamında yeterlilik düzeyi" olmak üzere on bir tema kapsamında kurgulanmıştır. Öğretmenlerin çoğu çokkültürlü eğitime uygun bir yaklaşım sergileme noktasında kendini yeterli gördüğünü belirtmiş, bunun nedenini ise tüm öğrencilere eşit davranmak olarak ifade etmişlerdir. Oysa okul ve sınıf ikliminin çokkültürlü eğitime uygunluğu noktasında verilen cevaplar analiz edildiğinde, öğretmenlerin gruplaşmaların olabileceğinden endişe ettiği, böylesi bir eğitimin ayrımcılığı körükleyebileceğini belirttikleri ve okul yapısının şu anda böyle bir eğitimi kaldıramayacağı yönünde düşüncelerinin olduğu görülmüştür. Ulaşılan bu bulgu, aslında çokkültürlü eğitimin gerekliliğinin çalışmaya katılan öğretmenler tarafından genel olarak kabul gördüğü, ancak uygulama noktasında yaşanabilecek sıkıntılardan endişe edildiği, öğretmenlerin çokkültürlü eğitim konusunda yeterli altyapıya sahip olmadığı ve mevcut yapının çokkültürlü eğitime tam olarak hazır olmadığı yönünde değerlendirilebilir. Sınıflarda çokkültürlü bir ortamın bulunmadığı yönünde belirtilen görüşler, öğretmenlerin kültürel azınlık grubundaki öğrencileri göz ardı ettiği, kendi kültürü dışındaki kültürel gruplara kapalı olduğu şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Ayrıca çoğu öğretmen, daha önce böyle bir deneyim yaşamadığından dolayı nasıl bir eğitimin verilebileceği konusunda fikir yürütemediklerini ifade etmiştir. Mevcut müfredatın tüm kültürleri kapsadığı yönündeki görüşler ise, bu araştırma kapsamında yapılan yıllık plan analizleri sonucunda erişilen bulgularla çelişmektedir. Çokkültürlü eğitimle ilgili öneriler analiz edildiğinde öğretmenlerin çoğu, çıkabilecek sorunların öğretmenlerce çözülebileceğine vurgu yapmış, öğretmenin süreci idare etme şekline bağlı olarak sorunların engellenebileceğini savunmuşlardır. Öğretmenlerin çoğu, sınıfta bulunan farklı kültürden olan öğrenci grupları için farklı öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerinin kullanılması gerektiğini ifade ederken, genelde çokkültürlü unsurların Sosyal Bilgiler ve Hayat Bilgisi gibi derslerin içine tema olarak eklenebileceğini veya konular arasına serpiştirilebileceğini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin çoğu, çokkültürlü eğitim konusunda hizmetiçi eğitime gereksinim olduğunu vurgulamıştır.

Sonuç ve Öneriler: Farklı değerlere, özelliklere, inançlara, felsefi yaklaşımlara sahip olunması, çokkültürlü eğitimi bir bakıma zorunlu hale getirmektedir. Çokkültürlü eğitim, başka görüşlerin ve bakış açılarının da var olduğunu kabul etmek ve bunların doğruluğu konusunda tarafsız düşünmek, empati yaparak karşı tarafın duygularını anlamaya çalışmak gibi kazanımlara imkân tanır. Bu açıdan çokkültürlü eğitimin programlarda yer alması ve öğretmenlerce benimsenmesi, öğretmenlerin bu konuda eğitilmeleri ve çokkültürlü eğitimle ilgili yapılan çalışma sayısının artırılması önerilmektedir. Böylece öğretmenlerin sınıfın heterojen yapıya sahip olduğunu, öğrencilerin saygı, empati, hoşgörü ve demokrasi bilincinin ve çeşitliliği zenginlik olarak algılama becerilerinin gelişimine imkan verilmesi gerektiğini görebilmeleri mümkün olabilir. Ayrıca yaşamı sadece siyah beyaz yönleriyle değil de farklı renklerle de görebilme, duyabilme yeterliliğine sahip olma bilincinin öğrencilere kazandırılmasına fırsat sunulmuş olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: çokkültürlülük, çokkültürlü eğitim, öğretmen görüşleri.