



| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi |

Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions and Their Professional Preparation Levels for Multicultural Education: Implications for Teacher Education Curricula

Hizmet Öncesi Öğretmen Adaylarının Çok Kültürlü Eğitim Algıları ve Mesleki Hazırlık Düzeyleri: Öğretmen Eğitimi Programları için Çıkarımlar¹

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Keywords

1. Multiculturalism
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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines pre-service teachers' perceptions and their professional preparation levels for multicultural education.

Design/Methodology/Approach: In accordance with the research problems, this study was conducted using a mixed method research and a partial mixed sequential and equal status design. In the quantitative part, 381 pre-service teachers were surveyed using the Multicultural Perception Scale (MPC) to assess their perspectives on multicultural education. In the qualitative part, 20 pre-service teachers were interviewed individually to determine their levels of professional preparation for multicultural education.

Findings: The quantitative findings of the study showed that pre-service teachers have a moderate level of perception their professional preparation levels for multicultural education. Pre-service teachers enrolled in the Primary Education program have a higher perception of multicultural education than pre-service teachers enrolled in other teacher education programs. Furthermore, there is no significant difference between grades. On the other hand, it appears that male pre-service teachers have significantly lower perceptions of multicultural education than female pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers are observed to emphasize the terms "diversity, interaction, and togetherness" when defining multicultural education, according to the qualitative findings of this study. In addition, they emphasized the interactions between pre-service teachers and international students, the program's course content, and extracurricular activities in light of the findings regarding the teacher education program's contribution to and opportunities for enhancing the levels of professional preparation for multicultural education. Examining the recommendations of pre-service teachers for teacher education, it is evident that more opportunities for extracurricular activities, school experience, and observation are recommended. Another recommendation highlighted is the addition of a multicultural education course to the teacher education program.

Highlights: According to the findings, multicultural education must be more thoroughly integrated into teacher education programs. It is anticipated that the study's findings will contribute to future studies of curriculum development and research on multicultural education conducted by those involved in teacher education at the national and international levels.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı hizmet öncesi öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitim algıları ve mesleki hazırlık düzeylerini incelemektir.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Bu çalışma, araştırma problemleri doğrultusunda karma araştırma yöntemi ve eşit statülü kısmi sıralı karma desen ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmanın nicel boyutunda, öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitim algılarını ölçmek amacıyla, 381 öğretmen adayından "Çok Kültürlülük Algı Ölçeği (ÇAÖ)" ile veri toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın nitel boyutunda ise, öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitime yönelik mesleki hazırlık düzeylerini incelemek amacıyla, araştırmacıların hazırladığı bireysel görüşme formu ile 20 öğretmen adayı ile bireysel görüşmeler yürütülmüştür.

Bulgular: Araştırmanın nicel bulguları, öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitime yönelik algılarının orta düzeyde olduğunu göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte Sınıf Eğitimi programına kayıtlı öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitim algılarının diğer programlara kayıtlı öğretmen adaylarından daha yüksek olduğu ortaya konulmuştur. Farklı sınıf düzeylerindeki öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitim algı düzeyleri arasında ise anlamlı bir farka rastlanmamıştır. Öte yandan, kadın öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitime yönelik algı düzeylerinin erkeklerden daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Araştırmanın nitel bulguları ise, öğretmen adaylarının çok kültürlü eğitim tanımlarında, çeşitlilik, etkileşim ve birliktelik terimlerine sıklıkla yer verdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, öğretmen eğitimi programlarının çok kültürlü eğitime yönelik mesleki hazırlık düzeylerinin iyileştirilmesine sağladığı katkı ve sunulan olanaklar ile ilgili bulgular, uluslararası öğrencilerle olan etkileşim, programdaki ders içerikleri ve ders dışı etkinliklere vurgu yapılmıştır. Son olarak öğretmen adaylarının önerilerine yönelik bulgular incelendiğinde, ders dışı etkinliklerin ve çok kültürlü eğitime yönelik ders sayılarının artırılması ve okul deneyimi ve gözlem için daha fazla fırsat sunulmasının önerildiği görülmektedir.

Önemli Bulgular: Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, çok kültürlü eğitimin öğretmen eğitimi programlarına entegrasyonun konusunda iyileştirmeye ihtiyaç duyulduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışmanın bulgularının, ulusal ve uluslararası düzeyde program geliştirme çalışmalarına ve çok kültürlü öğretmen eğitime yönelik gelecek araştırmalara katkıda bulunması beklenmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

Schools are at the forefront of bringing people together and making sure that ethnic differences are shown fairly, especially in countries that are known for being very diverse. Banks (2006) says that multicultural nations are always trying to find a balance between unity and diversity. Since education is linked to and affected by politics, the pervasive multicultural discourse cannot be separated from education work in teacher education institutions (Ron-Erich & Gindi, 2018). Rodriguez (1983) says that the way teachers think and act has a big effect on how much multicultural education is taught in schools. So, even a curriculum that stresses diversity may not work (Banks, 2010) if teachers don't have the knowledge, skills, and attitude to teach in a multicultural way. Consequently, it is essential to incorporate "multiculturalism" into teacher education programs and learning environments. Multiculturalism is defined as a philosophical position and social movement that assumes that race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education, religious or spiritual orientation, and other cultural aspects of a pluralistic society must be reflected in all institutionalized structures of educational institutions (American Psychological Association [APA], 2002; Banks & Banks, 2009). In this regard, multiculturalism is viewed as a set of principles and practices utilized by a population to organize their individual and communal lives, make sense of themselves and the world, and make decisions (Parekh, 2000).

In the 1960s, the civil rights movement fought for freedom, political equality, and economic integration. This set the stage for multicultural education. At that time, many oppressed groups asked for cultural and ethnic lessons to be taught in public schools (Banks, 1989). Multicultural education discourses have been centered on increasing access and academic success for historically underrepresented groups in academic and socioeconomic leadership roles since their inception (Ndrua & Dogbevia, 2012). Multicultural education is based on an educational philosophy that aims to give all students the same chances to do well in school, no matter their gender, social class, race, ethnicity, or culture (Banks & Banks, 2009). Multicultural education is defined as "an approach to school reform aimed at achieving educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social-class, and linguistic groups" (Banks, 2009, p. 13). According to Banks's definition, multicultural education promotes equality, which ensures justice and accepts diversity in the educational setting. In addition to emphasizing the need to preserve each student's cultural heritage, multicultural education promotes tolerance among students from diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 1996). One of the primary goals of multicultural education, according to multicultural education specialists, academics, and practitioners, is to reform schools and other educational institutions so that students from various socio-cultural groups, particularly historically marginalized groups, will experience educational equity (Banks, 2004; Sleeter, 1997). This suggests that a multicultural education necessitates a comprehensive restructuring of all instructional processes, including curriculum, teaching methods, instructional materials, classroom management, student performance evaluation, school-community relationships, and educators' attitudes, dispositions, perceptions, and behaviors (Banks, 2004; Bennett, 2001; Sleeter, 1997; Sleeter & Grant, 1999).

As society's demands for incorporating diverse perspectives into virtually all of our interactions increase, the need to adequately prepare pre-service teachers for teaching in this diverse world has grown more urgent (Neuharth-Pritchett et al., 2011). As schools become more diverse, teachers must be prepared to handle sensitive and complex issues relating to equality, social justice, diversity, and discrimination (Banks, 2014). The purpose of multicultural education is to equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach and learn about multiculturalism and multicultural education (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Walker et al., 2004). Pre-service teachers should be made aware of cultural diversity because educational institutions are crucial contexts in which a multicultural perspective must be adopted. In order to establish multicultural learning environments in teacher education, it is crucial to define multicultural education and define its boundaries by outlining its dimensions, objectives, and guiding principles. Teachers' awareness, knowledge, and competence are crucial in multicultural education, and it is essential to emphasize this concept in teacher education because they will implement the curriculum, select the appropriate methods and techniques, select the tools and materials, create the learning environment, and assess and evaluate the learning (Banks, 2007; Benediktsson, 2019; Gay, 1994; Neuharth-Pritchett et al., 2001). In this regard, Reed (1993) also states that pre-service teachers must be taught to comprehend and value the diversity of cultures in our society. They must learn to appreciate cultural diversity. They also must be taught that through their classroom expectations, actions, words, and deeds, they can foster acceptance and respect among all students.

Significance of the Study

Today, students and teachers can participate in educational activities all over the world, not just in their own countries. This requires educators to have positive attitudes toward multicultural education, which is defined as being respectful and tolerant of different cultures in order to ensure equal opportunity in education without regard to religion, language, or race (Karacabey et al., 2019). In addition, understanding and implementing multiculturalism is crucial, not only because of the value placed on culture, but also because of its contribution to diverse societies and societies in flux due to migration and other factors. In this process, multicultural education serves as a central concept for teaching individuals how to overcome social barriers resulting from cultural differences (Akcaoglu & Aرسال, 2017, p.224). In this context, multicultural pedagogical knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes toward students with ethnic and cultural education are becoming increasingly important for prospective teachers. (Arsal, 2019) Teacher training programs and teachers play a significant role in the development of positive attitudes toward cultural differences among teacher candidates. According to Gorski (1997), all students should be taught to bring their own stories and awareness

levels to school (as cited in Arslan, 2013, p.31). It is expected that pre-service teachers will work according to their expertise, narrative, point of view, and beliefs in order to educate effectively about various cultures (Arslan, 2013). Sleeter (2000) emphasizes the significance and necessity of multicultural education in teacher education, arguing that multicultural students cannot achieve important life goals without academic and global multicultural education. Because students have the opportunity to recognize their own diversity and use it to strengthen themselves and others (Sleeter, 2000; as cited in Arslan, 2013, p. 31).

In this regard, this study on pre-service teachers' perceptions and levels of professional preparation for multicultural education is significant in two ways. In order to create learning environments that are sensitive to multicultural education, the perception results will serve as a guide for the inclusion of learning experiences in the teacher education program. The results of the study on professional preparation levels will also serve as a guide for the development of teacher education programs that equip pre-service teachers with multicultural education awareness, knowledge, and competence. The findings of the study will help in the development of teacher education programs, specifically multicultural teacher education programs. In addition, it will be beneficial for researchers and subject-matter experts involved in curriculum development and will fill a gap in the literature in this field.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the perceptions and levels of preparation for multicultural education among pre-service teachers. The following research questions have been formulated for this purpose:

1. What is the pre-service teachers' multicultural education perception level?
 - a. How do pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education differ depending on the type of teacher education program, grade level, and gender?
2. How do pre-service teachers define multicultural education?
3. How do pre-service teachers perceive the contribution and opportunities for enhancing multicultural education professional preparation?
4. What recommendations do pre-service teachers have for improving their professional preparation for multicultural education in their teacher education?

METHOD

Research design

This study employed a mixed method research design to investigate the pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and their levels of professional preparation. Mixed methods research refers to studies that combine quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis, and interpretation in one study or in a series of studies that focus on the same underlying phenomenon (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 267). In the current study, partially mixed methods (QUAN -> QUAL) were employed because the quantitative and qualitative parts were conducted sequentially in their entirety before being combined at the data interpretation stage, and both stages were given approximately equal weight. In accordance with the research problems, a Sequential Explanatory Design, which is a two-phase process including quantitative data collection and analysis; qualitative data collection and analysis and final interpretation afterwards (Creswell, 2014), was used to measure the level of pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education, and to examine their level of professional preparation.

Participants

This study's sampling method is convenience sampling (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 99). This sample was selected since it's easier to access, and it's essential to select a sample of people who are willing to volunteer for the study. Following the online distribution of consent forms to participants, declarations of their voluntary participation in the study were gathered. In this context, the number of students enrolled in each teacher education program at the Faculty of Education has been determined, and the program in which double majors and/or minors have established themselves first has been selected. In addition, Turkish pre-service teachers were selected to participate because the study sought to examine their perspectives on multicultural education and their professional preparation levels. Participants were thus pre-service teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at the education faculty of a foundation university in Turkey. Pre-service teachers enrolled in Guidance and Psychological Counseling (GPC), English Language Education (ELE), Elementary Mathematics Education (EME), Early Childhood Education (ECE), and Primary Education (PE) programs during the 2021-2022 academic year participated in this study (Table 1).

According to the information in Table 1, a total of 381 pre-service teachers enrolled in numerous program types and grade levels provided data. Based on program type, 30.7% ($f=117$) of the pre-service teachers are enrolled in the GPC program, 27.3% ($f=104$) are enrolled in the ELE program, 15.2% ($f=58$) are enrolled in the EME program, 13.6% ($f=52$) are enrolled in the ECE program, and 13.1% ($f=50$) are enrolled in the PE program. According to grade level, 30.7% ($f=117$) of pre-service teachers study at the freshman level, 26.2% ($f=100$) study at the sophomore level, 23.6% ($f=90$) study at the junior level, and 19.4% ($f=74$) study at the senior level. Based on gender, 79.8% ($f=304$) of pre-service teachers are female, whereas 20.2% ($f=77$) are male.

Table 1. Distribution of pre-service teachers by program type, grade level, and gender

Variables	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Program Type	GPC	117	30.7
	ELE	104	27.3
	EME	58	15.2
	ECE	52	13.6
	PE	50	13.1
	Total	381	100
Grade Level	Freshmen	117	30.7
	Sophomore	100	26.2
	Junior	90	23.6
	Senior	74	19.4
	Total	381	100
Gender	Female	304	79.8
	Male	77	20.2
	Total	381	100.0

Additionally, 20 pre-service teachers, one from each grade level of each teacher education program, were interviewed using an interview questionnaire as part of the qualitative part of the study. Through online individual interviews, data on the levels of pre-service teachers' professional preparation for multicultural education were gathered.

Data collection and analysis

381 pre-service teachers participated in the study's quantitative part. Ayaz's (2016) "Multiculturalism Perception Scale" (MPC) was used online to investigate the participants' perspectives on multicultural education. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics obtained from the participants. The scale was constructed using a 5-point Likert scale format. There are 25 items on the scale, with the following levels of agreement: "1-I do not agree at all," "2-I do not agree," "3-I am undecided," "4-I agree," and "5-I definitely agree"(Table 2). "The Teachers' Multicultural Educational Attitudes Scale" adapted to Turkish by Yazıcı, Başol, and Toprak (2009) was used to evaluate the MPC's validity. The correlation between the results, calculated at $r = .74$, indicates a significant relationship. Consequently, it is possible to assert that this scale guarantees convergent validity. In addition, the Cronbach Alpha, Spearman-Brown, and Guttman Split-Half coefficients were used to determine the reliability of the data. Therefore, the Cronbach Alpha value is 0.94, the Spearman-Brown correlation value is 0.882, and the Guttman Split-half coefficient value is 0.882. Consequently, it is evident that there are values greater than 0.70, and the internal consistency, item correlation, and reliability level of the scale are all above the acceptable threshold, indicating that the scale's reliability is high (Ayaz, 2016).

Table 2. Examples of MPC items

Item No.	Item	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	I am undecided	I agree	I definitely agree
1	I am not bothered by the fact that those around me speak different languages.					
5	I consider the coexistence of different cultures to be a social necessity.					
10	I consider myself a multicultural educator.					
15	I do not believe that an education that emphasizes cultural differences will result in social segregation.					
20	I respect people who have different ideological ideas.					

Item No.	Item	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	I am undecided	I agree	I definitely agree
25	I believe that students should not view themselves as inferior in the classroom because of their culture.					

Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which units are chosen for inclusion in the sample because they are easiest for the researcher to access, was used to select the sample for the qualitative part of this study (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, 20 pre-service teachers from each grade level of each program, including GPC, ELE, EME, ECE, and PE, participated in the qualitative part of the study and were interviewed individually online. Individual interviews were conducted with pre-service teachers to determine their professional levels of multicultural education preparation. The data was collected using a semi-structured individual interview form developed by the researchers. The form include the questions such as “ What is your definition of multicultural education?”, “Which courses in the teacher education program you are currently enrolled in have enhanced your multicultural education professional preparation?”, and “What suggestions do you have for enhancing teacher candidates' professional preparation for multicultural education in pre-service teacher education?”. In the qualitative part of the study, the researchers prepared the interview questions, and experts in the field of curriculum and instruction provided their opinions. The interviews continued after the necessary changes and corrections to the individual interview form were made in response to the opinions of the experts. In addition, the formula Reliability = Consensus / (Consensus + Disagreement) x 100 proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate the reliability of the study's data. In addition to coder consistency, attention was paid to the detailed description of the research process, and direct quotations were included to support the codes that appeared under the relevant themes when reporting the findings.

To answer the first question and its sub-question, the data organized in accordance with the research's purpose were transferred to SPSS 21 and analyzed. Utilizing descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution, the study's program type, grade level, and gender data were examined. After conducting normality tests on the data, Kurtosis and Skewness values, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests (Table 3), histograms, and Q-Q plots were used. Since the skewness-kurtosis values fall outside the range of (-3, +3) (Kline, 2016), it can be determined that the data are not normally distributed. In addition, based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk values, it is possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the variable categories and that the data are not normally distributed (p.05). Since it was determined from the histogram and Q-Q plots that the values are not normally distributed, it can be concluded that the variables in this study are not normally distributed. As a result, non-parametric methods were utilized in the data analysis. At the program type and grade level, the Kruskal-Wallis H test with Bonferroni correction was utilized, while the Mann-Whitney U test was utilized to compare gender-related data differences between the two groups.

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test results

Multiculturalism Perception Scale	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	p	Statistic	df	p
	.123	381	.000*	.873	381	.000*

*p< .05

To answer the other research questions, qualitative data were analyzed using Creswell's seven-stage descriptive analysis method (2014). Descriptive analysis, according to Yıldırım & Şimşek (2016), is a type of qualitative data analysis that entails analyzing and interpreting data collected using various techniques under predetermined themes. Using specific codes, descriptive analysis was used to examine qualitative data. The pre-service teachers participating in the research were coded according to their programs and grade levels (For example, for the freshmen pre-service teacher who is enrolled in English Language Education program: ELEPT1) The themes were created by extracting them from the interview transcripts as a result of the open-coding analysis of individual interview forms.

FINDINGS

Pre-service teachers' multicultural education perception levels

On the basis of the lower and upper 27% slices, pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education were categorized as low (102), moderate (102–109), and high (>109) and then analyzed. 27% (n=103) of pre-service teachers have low perception levels of multicultural education, 44.1% (n=168) have moderate perception levels, and 28.9% (n=110) have high perception levels, according to the findings of the first problem of the study (Table 4). In the quantitative part of the research, findings regarding pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education revealed that nearly half (44.1%) of the pre-service teachers had moderate perceptions of multicultural education.

Table 4. The Multiculturalism Perception Scale Scores of Pre-Service Teachers

Lower and upper 27% slices	n	%
Low (<102)	103	27
Moderate (102-109)	168	44.1
High (>109)	110	28.9
Total	381	100

Pre-service teachers' multicultural education perception levels based on their teacher education program type, grade level, and gender

The average perception level revealed by the MPC scores of pre-service teachers based on program type is ($M=109.01$; $SD=13.76$). In addition, pre-service teachers enrolled in the PE program have a higher level of multiculturalism perception ($M=113.94$; $SD=11.66$) than pre-service teachers enrolled in the EME program ($M=109.97$; $SD=10.95$), pre-service teachers enrolled in the ECE program ($M=109.90$; $SD=11.00$), pre-service teachers enrolled in the GPC program ($M=108.16$; $SD=14.07$), and pre-service The Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed statistically significant differences among program types ($H=11.98$; $p=.017$). It has been observed that pre-service teachers enrolled in the Primary Education program have higher MPC scores than those enrolled in other programs. According to the Kruskal Wallis H test, there is no statistically significant difference between grade levels ($H=2.074$; $p=.557$). Senior level pre-service teachers' MPC scores ($M=106.66$; $SD=16.02$) were lower than those of freshmen level pre-service teachers ($M=110.18$; $SD=12.59$), sophomore level pre-service teachers ($M=110.55$; $SD=10.37$), and junior level pre-service teachers ($M=107.69$; $SD=16.15$), although the differences were not statistically significant. In addition, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences in MPC score between gender groups ($U=7132$; $p=.0001$) It appears that male pre-service teachers have significantly lower MPC scores ($M=101.00$; $SD=17$) than female pre-service teachers ($M=111.00$; $SD=12$).

When the findings regarding the pre-service teachers' responses to the MPC items are examined (Table 5), it has been found that pre-service teachers feel uneasy around people who speak different languages, but not around people of different religions. People should explain their religious beliefs and ethnicity without fear and advocate for a tolerant approach in this circumstance. In addition, it has been noted that it is wrong to treat people differently based on their social status, that people from different regions are aware that their behaviors and perspectives may differ, and that they generally have empathy for those from cultures that are different from their own. It was discovered that pre-service teachers generally respect the actions of individuals based on their age and their different ideologies. It is also possible to assert that pre-service teachers are aware of the numerous cultural differences present in society and recognize the necessity to address them.

Moreover, they believed that cultural diversity in the classroom would not result in social discrimination. In contrast, pre-service teachers believe that discrimination based on ethnicity is a serious problem in the United States. The majority of pre-service teachers believe that the educational system should reflect the ethnic diversity of the nation and that the learning environment should be able to accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, it has been observed that pre-service teachers defend the notion that teachers should accept students from diverse cultures, as each student has a unique culture, and that each student should have the opportunity to encounter their own cultural values. According to studies of teacher education programs, pre-service teachers believe that the implementation of multicultural education programs in schools will provide equal educational opportunities. However, it has been discovered that pre-service teachers do not view themselves as fully qualified multicultural educators. In fact, it has been discovered that pre-service teachers believe multicultural education is essential today and want to study it in teacher preparation programs.

Table 5. Distribution of the Answers Given to MPC items

Item No.	I do not agree at all		I do not agree		I am undecided		I agree		I definitely agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	14	3.7	39	10.2	69	18.1	87	22.8	172	45.1
2	9	2.4	4	1	18	4.7	45	11.8	305	80.1
3	0	0	3	0.8	26	6.8	64	16.8	288	75.6
4	14	3.7	12	3.1	24	6.3	56	14.7	275	72.2
5	11	2.9	16	4.2	55	14.4	83	21.8	216	56.7
6	4	1	9	2.4	25	6.6	60	15.7	283	74.3
7	7	1.8	5	1.3	32	8.4	93	24.4	244	64
8	19	5	24	6.3	59	15.5	93	24.4	186	48.8

9	10	2.6	15	3.9	54	14.2	93	24.4	2090	54.9
10	9	2.4	30	7.9	101	30.7	117	30.7	124	32.5
11	3	0.8	9	2.4	26	6.8	88	23.1	255	66.9
12	6	1.6	16	4.2	53	13.9	100	26.2	206	54.1
13	17	4.5	24	6.3	78	20.5	92	24.1	170	44.6
14	6	1.6	12	3.1	31	8.1	79	20.7	253	66.4
15	16	4.2	32	8.4	61	16	105	27.6	167	43.8
16	8	2.1	12	3.1	26	6.8	59	15.4	276	72.4
17	11	2.9	11	2.9	44	11.5	84	22	231	60.6
18	14	3.7	22	5.8	52	13.6	84	22	209	54.9
19	17	4.5	26	6.8	72	18.9	92	24.1	174	45.7
20	8	2.1	14	3.7	43	11.3	96	25.2	220	57.7
21	1	0.3	4	1	15	3.9	64	16.8	297	78
22	4	1	7	1.8	23	6	69	18.1	278	73
23	6	1.6	16	4.2	48	12.6	85	22.3	226	59.3
24	4	1	2	0.5	16	4.2	51	13.4	308	80.8
25	5	1.3	2	0.5	11	2.9	41	10.8	322	84.5

In conclusion, when the findings from the quantitative part of the study, which examined how pre-service teachers viewed multicultural education, were taken into account as a whole, it was determined that the majority of the pre-service teachers who participated in the study had a tolerant and empathetic attitude toward multicultural education with various languages, races, ethnic origins, religious beliefs, ideological ideas, and age groups. In addition, pre-service teachers are aware that people from different regions have different attitudes and ways of thinking. In addition, despite the belief that locals should be free to express their religious beliefs without fear, it has been discovered that locals have difficulty communicating in other languages. Because they believe that implementing multicultural education programs in schools will lead to equal educational opportunities, the majority of them desire multicultural education-related courses in teacher education programs. In addition, they argue that every student should have the opportunity to experience his or her own cultural values at school and that the environment should be able to accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Pre-service teachers argue that they should not view themselves as a subclass in the educational setting due to their culture, despite their preference for classes where multiple cultures have equal rights rather than a single culture. It has become apparent, however, that they are largely unsure about identifying as multicultural educators.

Definition of multicultural education

Some pre-service teachers (ELEPT1, ELEPT2, ELEPT3, ELEPT4, EMEPT2, ECEPT1, ECEPT4, GPCPT1, GPCPT4, PEPT1, PEPT2) defined multicultural education as *"blending more than one culture in education"* and *"coexistence of students from different cultures and cultural respect for one another."* Other pre-service teachers also define multicultural education as *"the interaction of students from different cultures and the diversity of the classroom."* Other pre-service teachers defined multicultural education as *"Education in many different stages, and each has acquired a property from the collection of a system's implementation"* (ECEPT2), *"Introduction and explanation of different cultures"* (ECEPT3), *"People of different cultures living together peacefully and without prejudice"* (GPCPT2), and *"The information they bring from their own cultures enriches the learning environment"* (ECEPT4, PEPT3). One of the pre-service teachers, GPCPT4, characterized multicultural education as *"the coexistence of students from various cultures and mutual cultural respect"* has provided the following further explanation: *"...When I think of multicultural education, I usually envision a classroom filled with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, there could be refugees, of which there are currently a great number in Turkey. Whether they are Syrian or Afghan, I observe people of all cultures living in harmony and receiving an education."* ELEPT3 defines multicultural education as *"diversity in the classroom and interaction between students of different cultures"* with the following clarification: *"When I first heard the term, I immediately thought of how a teacher should be prepared for the possibility of having students from diverse cultural backgrounds in the classroom. Having students from different cultural backgrounds, as opposed to just one, signifies that there is diversity in the classroom, and I believe that the interactions between these students and their motivation enhance the learning experiences of the students."*

In conclusion, findings regarding pre-service teachers' level of professional preparation for multicultural education examined in the qualitative part of the study revealed that they defined multicultural education as the interaction of students from different cultures, and people together in a classroom environment where students from different cultures coexist without discrimination in education. In addition to emphasizing "diversity, interaction, and togetherness" pre-service teachers also emphasize respect and tolerance, according to these definitions. Particularly, it is noted that the pre-service teachers' definitions of multicultural

education are influenced by the current immigration and refugee situation at national and international level and they provide personal examples.

Contribution and opportunities provided for improving professional preparation level for multicultural education

The findings highlighted the following themes in relation to the contributions and opportunities of pre-service teachers for enhancing the level of professional preparation for multicultural education: *Interaction with international students* (ELEPT1, ELEPT2, EMEPT2, EMEPT4, ECEPT1, ECEPT4, GPCPT3); *course content* (ELEPT2, ELEPT3, ELEPT4, EMEPT1, EMEPT2, PEPT1, PEPT2, PEPT3); and *extracurricular activities* (GPCPT1, GPCPT2, GPCPT4). First, it has been determined that interaction with international students at this foundational university where English is the language of instruction increases pre-service teachers' levels of professional preparation for multicultural education. Interacting with students from other cultures in the same environment has been emphasized as a form of cultural sharing. EMEPT4, which emphasized "interacting with international students," stated that *"Education is a common factor in the development of multiculturalism because it gives us access to a variety of information about various cultures, such as information about classmates, classroom procedures, and familiar faces."* On the other hand, it was noted that the lack of international students in the EME program has a negative impact on the levels of professional preparation for multicultural education. ELEPT2 has also emphasized the significance of both "interaction with international students" and "course content" respectively: *"Due to the large number of international students, there is already a multicultural educational structure in place here. Whether you like it or not, the lesson includes multicultural interaction as a result. We also study English and American culture in addition to Turkish culture, as I have already completed the English Language Education program. Consequently, my department and university are the natural source of a highly cultural interaction"*. EMEPT2 also emphasized the significance of these two themes by including them in its statements: *"I believe that education has a stake in the development of multiculturalism because it can provide us with diverse information about different cultures, whether it's about our classmates, the implementation of lessons, or the people with whom we communicate"*

In order to highlight how the "content of the courses in the program" helps pre-service teachers' professional preparation level for multicultural education, which he continues, PEPT3 highlights the significance of the courses as follows: *"I took a course last semester called "Inclusive Language Education," which I believe is an awareness-raising course because, as we all know, Turkey is constantly intertwined with various cultures as a result of its geographic location. As a result, the students in our future class will come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, so we ought to be ready for this situation. It is crucial for us to use the lessons we have learned or to acquire the tools we need to advance in this way. These are actually stressed at some points in the training I have received. Can it be developed further in our courses? Yes, but since this content educates and enlightens us in this context, I can't say that it had no effect at all."* In addition, it was revealed that extracurricular activities influence the level of professional preparation of pre-service teachers for multicultural education. The levels of professional preparation of pre-service teachers for multicultural education have been found to be positively impacted by seminars, conferences, and related communities. GPCPT2 and GPCPT4 stated that "extracurricular activities" such as related societies and seminars can enhance their level of professional preparation for multicultural education.

Contribution of the courses in the teacher education program to improve their professional preparation level for multicultural education

It was observed that pre-service teachers utilized examples from professional courses and field knowledge courses when the findings regarding the contribution of courses in the teacher education program to enhancing professional preparation levels for multicultural education were analyzed. First professional courses "Educational Psychology" in terms of teaching students how to communicate with the course contributes to establishing, "Educational Philosophy" in terms of gaining different perspectives, and "Moral and Ethics in Education" specifically mentioned within the content and scope of the concept of multiculturalism is concluded. As field knowledge courses, the "English Language and Literature," "Culture and Language," and "Language and Literature Teaching" courses in the ELE program are said to assist pre-service teachers in recognizing and adapting to other cultures. In addition, it has been determined that the courses "World Languages and Cultures" and "Teaching English Language Skills" contribute to a higher level of professional preparation for multicultural education by allowing students to utilize reading passages and videos from multiple cultures as course materials. Pre-service teachers enrolled in the EME program reported that the "History of Mathematics" and "Mathematics and Culture" courses help them recognize and make peace with other cultures. According to pre-service teachers in the ECE program, the courses "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" and "Educational Approaches in Early Childhood Education" provide students with the opportunity to learn about the preschool education systems, educational programs, and practices of other countries and compare them to our own. According to pre-service teachers enrolled in the GPC program, "Counseling Skills" and "Group Counseling" courses help them to be understanding and respectful of clients from different cultures. In addition, they asserted that the course "Psychological Counseling with Children and Adolescents" teaches children and adolescents from diverse cultural backgrounds how to provide counseling services with cultural sensitivity. Pre-service teachers enrolled in the PE program claimed that "Inclusive Language Teaching" helps them teach students from different cultures about Turkish culture and the steps that students from different cultures should take in order to express themselves during the learning-teaching process.

Recommendations for improving professional preparation level for multicultural education

Some pre-service teachers place a heavy emphasis on 'extracurricular activities,' such as projects and seminars, according to findings regarding the recommendations for pre-service teacher education (ELEPT2, ELEPT3, ELEPT4, EMEPT4, ECEPT2). ELEPT2 drew attention to this issue with the following statement: "Certainly, we should not limit ourselves to attending classes. Aside from that, I believe that we must improve ourselves. Participation in Erasmus projects is possible. Traveling abroad can improve our cultural understanding. In addition, we may be able to participate in short-term projects. Additionally, we can attend seminars on the subject". Similarly, ECEPT2 emphasized the significance of extracurricular activities as follows: "...Especially Syrians, as we reside in a country that accepts immigrants. I believe that trips, forums, conferences, interviews, workshops, and festivals can be organized with qualified teachers or with people who have that culture and have mastered that culture, teachers. In this context, some pre-service teachers (EMEPT1, EMEPT4, ECEPT2, GPCPT2, GPCPT4, PEPT2, PEPT4) also emphasized practice/school experience and/or observation by an experienced teacher. In conclusion, it is evident that emphasis is placed on both lesson adherence and the importance of devoting time to extracurricular activities and self-improvement. In addition, it was suggested that participation in student exchange programs such as Erasmus and, if possible, the acquisition of international experience should be encouraged. In addition, it was suggested that a language and cultural society be formed and that pertinent conferences, seminars, and workshops be held.

In contrast, ECEPT2 emphasized the importance of practice and school experience in the following ways: "*For example, there are institutions that teach foreign languages and serve students from extraordinarily diverse cultural backgrounds. Even now, I realize I haven't given it much thought and I lack information, so I believe it would be possible to meet with them for observation or practice.*" In addition, GPCPT2 places the following emphasis on practice and academic experience: "*We want to implement multicultural education, but how will we go about doing so? We must travel and gain experience; we must see the world. Even if there is no internship, or if there is a school application for one in the future, there will be one and it will be beneficial, so at least we will be aware of our deficiencies. In this situation, I believe that courses with a greater emphasis on practice than theory can be more beneficial.*" This is how PEPT4 clarifies the significance of practice and school experience further: "*For instance, the lessons are not slightly more theoretical; rather, the first four weeks consist of theory lessons, and the last four weeks consist of practical lessons. I believe that many programs are geared toward this, and I would like for students to be able to apply and experience what they are learning.*". In conclusion, it is essential to recognize that an increase in the number of practicum classes is recommended because pre-service teachers must also develop professional competence in the application of gaps and improvement areas in this area.

The inclusion of a multicultural education course in the teacher preparation program is another noteworthy suggestion (ECEPT1, ECEPT3, ECEPT4, PEPT2, PEPT3). It has been determined that courses explaining how to interact with students of different cultures and examining the educational systems of different countries can be added. It has been discovered that providing training and sharing relevant resources within the scope of the course will also increase awareness of this issue. Regarding the inclusion of a multicultural education course in the teacher education program, PECEPT4 also emphasized the following: "*However, the lesson could be included. In addition, book and film recommendations can be made regarding how we should proceed in this regard... If an expert imparts knowledge or offers resources that serve as examples, it may increase our awareness.*" In addition, PEPT3 emphasized the importance of including a course on multicultural education in the teacher education program and stated: "*First and foremost, I believe that universities should have a required course on this topic because there are students from different cultures at every level and grade, from classroom teaching to various programs. According to these students, every child in Turkey has the same right to an education as children everywhere else. In light of these rights, it is essential that pre-service teachers receive an education of generally high quality in this area.*"

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to determine the level of the pre-service teachers' perspectives on multicultural education and their professional preparation. Their perceptions of multicultural education were moderate, according to the research findings presented previously. Several studies indicate that preservice teachers' beliefs about their students' success are frequently influenced by their own ethnic background and a lack of cultural knowledge (Middleton, 2002). In addition, pre-service teachers in teacher preparation programs must be able to draw conclusions from research findings, synthesize information from multiple perspectives, and reflect on and evaluate their own learning (Alger, 2006, Etscheidt et al., 2012, Gibson, 2012).

The study also aimed to determine if there were significant differences in pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education based on the type of program. The results of the study indicated that pre-service teachers enrolled in the Primary Education program have a higher perception level than those enrolled in the other program types. The perceptions of pre-service teachers enrolled in the English Language Education and Social Sciences Education programs are higher than those of pre-service teachers enrolled in the other program types, according to research by Demir & Başarır (2013). Similarly, the perceptions of multicultural education among pre-service teachers in the study by Olur and Oğuz (2019) vary significantly based on the type of program. However, the study's findings indicate that pre-service teachers in the ECE program have the highest perception level, followed by those in the PE program. Even though there was no significant difference in pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education based on grade level, the multiculturalism perception scale scores of senior pre-service teachers were lower, according to the study's findings. In this regard, it has become apparent that the research findings and the findings of similar research in the literature are not identical. It was also found that pre-service teachers' perceptions of multiculturalism were

significantly influenced by their gender. According to the study's findings, the perceptions of female pre-service teachers regarding multicultural education are greater than those of male pre-service teachers. Female pre-service teachers have a higher level of multicultural awareness than male pre-service teachers, according to previous research (Alanay, 2015; Bahadır, 2016; Demir & Başarır, 2013; Güngör et al., 2018; Nayır & Çetin, 2018; Olur & Oğuz, 2019). In this context, it is possible to say that the research results are consistent with the existing literature.

When defining multicultural education, pre-service teachers used phrases such as "being together with the students from different cultures and respecting each other," "blending in more than one culture," and "all cultures meet," as well as "people from different cultures always happily studying together" and "an educational environment enriched by the information that students from different cultures have added from their own cultures in a classroom environment where students from different cultures are together." When examining the pre-service teachers' definitions of multicultural education, it is evident that they focused solely on cultural differences and ignored terms such as religion, language, race, age, and gender. This indicates that the pre-service teachers lack adequate multicultural education knowledge. Other studies (Nayır & Çetin, 2018; Olur & Oğuz, 2019) have also attracted interest by focusing solely on the cultural component of multicultural education in its definition.

Examining the recommendations made by pre-service teachers for enhancing their professional levels of preparation for multicultural education, it can be seen that they advocate for extracurricular activities, practical lessons, the inclusion of a multicultural education course in the teacher education curriculum. The pre-service teachers taking part in the research suggested setting up seminars, conferences, congresses, and workshops related to multicultural education. Olur & Oğuz (2019) also state in their study that one of the reasons why pre-service teachers have low competencies for multicultural education is that it's possible that they didn't attend a seminar on multicultural education, which suggests that the teacher education program needs to be developed. The study's findings also highlighted the importance of practice and education. Involving multicultural education courses and field experiences into teacher education curricula improves pre-service teachers' understanding of students from diverse cultural backgrounds and has a positive effect on their multicultural competence and attitude, according to the research (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of multicultural education in teacher education programs, according to the findings of the present study. Similarly, issues with school policy and structure, as well as how teachers interact with students and each other, must be addressed in addition to the curriculum's lack of multicultural components (Banks & Banks, 2000; Lee, 1995; Nieto, 2000). In addition, Premier & Miller (2010) asserted that the inclusion of multicultural issues in teacher education programs and the creation of opportunities for pre-service teachers to encounter multicultural issues are necessary for the achievement of this objective. The need for multicultural education courses in teacher preparation programs is supported by a number of studies in the literature (Başbay & Bektaş, 2009; Kelm et al., 2001; Kurtuluş, 2018; Olur & Oğuz, 2019).

In light of this, it is suggested that redesigned educational systems with multicultural curricula are necessary (Cole, 1998). Accordingly, Gay & Howard (2000) claim that multicultural teacher education curricula need to cover two topics: "acquiring cultural knowledge of self and others", which focuses on enhancing teachers' ethnic and cultural self-awareness, and "developing multicultural pedagogical knowledge and skills", which is concerned with multicultural pedagogical skills, multicultural performance assessment, and multicultural teaching competencies. It also covers the fundamentals of multicultural teaching. According to Arslangilay (2018), these teacher education programs should prepare aspiring teachers for multicultural classroom settings and should implement a culturally sensitive program. If teachers do not have the perception, competences, and disposition to teach in a multicultural way, even a multiculturally oriented curriculum may become ineffective (Banks, 2010). This suggests that for multicultural education to be properly implemented in schools, teachers need to have a thorough understanding of the subject. This is due to the fact that educators use what they are well-versed in and/or believe is deserving of being taught. Teachers today must be prepared to handle sensitive and complex issues relating to equality and social justice, diversity, and discrimination because schools are becoming more and more diverse (Banks, 2014). The curricula and instructional techniques used in schools, the relationships between teachers, students, and parents, and the conceptualization of the nature of education and teaching in schools are all strongly influenced by multicultural education (Nieto, 1999). Teachers play a crucial role in helping students develop their worldviews and their understanding of diversity as well. Because of this, it's crucial for aspiring teachers to be knowledgeable about this subject, and teacher education programs need to be improved.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude, one of the biggest challenges in today's education, particularly in teacher education, are those related to teaching in diverse environments (Delpit, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2011). Therefore, it is crucial to educate pre-service teachers about the demands of multicultural education. The only option in this process for multicultural education experiences and preparing pre-service teachers to face the challenges of diverse societies is to play a crucial role in teacher education (Gay, 2004). In this context, multicultural education needs to be integrated into teacher education programs to ensure effective classroom environments, starting with higher education, and multicultural education needs to be given a place at all educational levels. The teaching-learning process should also be regulated in accordance with multicultural education. Since they prepare teachers at all levels, teacher education programs are crucial in this regard. Additionally, it is thought that improvements in multicultural education, which will be incorporated into curricula, will undoubtedly benefit the Turkish educational system given the country's current political, social, and cultural status.

In light of the findings of the study, it is evident that although pre-service teachers believe multicultural education is necessary in the learning environment, their level of professional preparation for multicultural education is inadequate. Therefore, teacher education programs should provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to acquire multicultural education-related knowledge, competencies, and skills. In addition, it has been observed that multicultural education courses in teacher education programs fall short in terms of imparting multicultural education-related knowledge, skills, and competencies. Therefore, it is recommended to include this material in all grade levels of teacher education programs. Collaboration between universities, faculties, and departments can be used to organize seminars, workshops, congresses, and projects for the purpose of enhancing the multicultural education knowledge, skills, and competencies of pre-service teachers. In addition, students at the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior levels participated in this study. To examine the differences between a study group of freshmen and senior pre-service teachers, additional research can be conducted. Pre-service teachers at a foundation university's faculty of education participated in this study. Further study could compare pre-service teachers at the education faculty of a state university with those at a foundation university. In this study, qualitative information was gathered through individual interviews. Identical research can be conducted through focus group interviews.

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Statements of publication ethics

We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

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