

# Cultural Awareness and Transcultural Midwifery Course Views of Midwifery Students Studying in Immigrant-Populated Regions: A Descriptive Study\*

Göçmenlerin Yoğun Olduğu Bölgelerde Öğrenim Gören Ebelik Öğrencilerinin Kültürel Farkındalıkları ve Kültürlerarası Ebelik Dersine Yönelik Görüşleri: Tanımlayıcı Araştırma\*

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## ABSTRACT

Designed as a descriptive study aimed to assess the transcultural awareness and opinions regarding the transcultural midwifery course among senior midwifery students in a region densely populated with immigrants. It focused on senior midwifery students (N=146) enrolled in the Transcultural Midwifery course at a state university in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey, a region known for its significant immigrant population; the sample consisted of 121 midwifery students. Data were collected online in the classroom setting using the Student Introductory Information Form, Opinions on the Transcultural Midwifery Course Information Form, and the Transcultural Awareness Scale. The study adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki and STROBE writing standards. Participants had an average age of  $22.85 \pm 1.70$  years, with 92.6% having provided care to patients from diverse cultures, and 81% reported challenges in caring for these individuals. The average total score on the Transcultural Awareness Scale was  $17.66 \pm 4.08$ . Students with a family history of immigration ( $p=.037$ ) and those with international experiences ( $p=.031$ ) showed higher levels of transcultural awareness. Students who faced difficulties in providing care to patients from different cultures scored higher on the Transcultural Awareness Scale total ( $p=.016$ ) and the sub-scale of Cultural Communication Awareness ( $p=.001$ ) compared to those who did not encounter such difficulties. The study

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found that transcultural awareness among the students was at a good level, particularly higher among students with an immigrant family background, international experience, and those who encountered challenges in caring for individuals from different cultures.

**Keywords:** Transcultural awareness, Cultural competence, Health care education, Intercultural communication, Cultural diversity in health care

## ÖZ

Bu tanımlayıcı tipte çalışmada son sınıf ebelik öğrencilerinin kültürlerarası farkındalıklarını ve kültürlerarası ebelik dersine yönelik görüşlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlandı. Araştırmanın evrenini ülkemizde göçmenlerin yoğun olarak yaşadığı bir bölge olan Güneydoğu Anadolu bölgesinde yer alan bir devlet üniversitesinin Kültürlerarası Ebelik dersine kayıtlı son sınıf ebelik öğrencileri (N=146); örneklemini ise 121 ebelik öğrencisi oluşturdu. Veriler, Öğrenci Tanıtıcı Bilgi Formu, Kültürlerarası Ebelik Dersine İlişkin Görüşler Bilgi formu ve Kültürlerarası Farkındalık Ölçeği ile sınıf ortamında online olarak toplandı. Araştırmada Helsinki Deklerasyonu'na ve STROBE yazım standartlarına uyuldu. Katılımcıların yaş ortalaması  $22.85 \pm 1.70$  yıl, %92.6'sı farklı kültüre sahip hastalara bakım veren, %81'i bu bireylere bakım verirken zorlandığını ifade eden son sınıf ebelik öğrencilerinin Kültürlerarası Farkındalık Ölçeği toplam puan ortalaması  $17.66 \pm 4.08$  olarak bulundu. Ailesinde göçmenlik olan öğrencilerin ( $p=.037$ ) ve yurtdışında bulunma deneyimi olanların ( $p=.031$ ) diğerlerine göre kültürlerarası farkındalık düzeylerinin daha yüksek olduğu tespit edildi. Farklı kültürden hastalara bakım verirken zorlanan öğrencilerin Kültürlerarası Farkındalık Ölçeği toplam puanı ( $p=.016$ ) ve Kültürel İletişim Farkındalığı alt boyutu puanı ( $p=.001$ ) bakım verirken zorlanmayan öğrencilere göre daha yüksek olduğu görüldü. Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin kültürlerarası farkındalıkları iyi seviyede olduğu, ailesinde göçmenlik olan, yurtdışında bulunma deneyimi olan ve farklı kültürde bireylere bakım verirken zorlanan öğrencilerin kültürlerarası farkındalıklarının yüksek olduğu bulundu.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Kültürlerarası farkındalık, Kültürel yeterlilik, Sağlık bakım eğitimi, Kültürlerarası iletişim, Sağlık bakımında kültürel çeşitlilik

## INTRODUCTION

Transcultural awareness is defined as the comprehension, acknowledgment, and understanding of the differences and similarities between one's own culture and those of others. This concept includes an intrinsic belief in the equality of all cultures, the capability to understand both one's own culture and the cultures of other people effectively, and a positive stance towards the processes of merging and differentiating among cultures (Muslu & Tuzcu, 2022; Ozturk, Erdogan, Dogan, Kiziltepe, & Baykara, 2021; Rad, Shomoossi, Hassan, & Torkmannejad, 2017). Transcultural awareness is of particular importance for healthcare professionals, especially for midwives who are responsible for the care of individuals in critical conditions, as it is an essential skill that requires ongoing development to navigate the challenges that arise from cultural conflicts (O'Brien, O'Donnell, Murphy, O'Brien, & Markey, 2021).

A significant portion of midwifery practice encompasses reproductive health, maternal and child health, fetal and newborn health, as well as family and community health services, which are profoundly influenced by cultural factors (Demirel, Nurdan, & Doğaner, 2020). Thus, midwives must gain knowledge relevant to specific cultures by taking into account individuals' cultural differences and similarities. Sensitivity to cultural variations is a crucial element in midwifery care (Altinkaya & Amanak, 2020). Transcultural awareness constitutes an integral component of midwifery education, necessitating the cultivation of the ability to deliver culturally competent care (Kaihlainen, Hietapakka, & Heponiemi, 2019). However, upon reviewing the literature, it appears that while there are numerous studies on the cultural sensitivity of midwives and

midwifery students (Altinkaya & Amanak, 2020; Demirel et al., 2020; Gönenç et al., 2018; Özdemir, Çözmezoğlu, & Sayiner, 2021), research focusing specifically on transcultural awareness (Akmeşe, Çilesiz, & Aydın, 2023; Muslu & Tuzcu, 2022; Saka & Asma, 2020; Tosun et al., 2021) remains scarce. Our study, in this respect, intends to make a valuable contribution to literature.

The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) underscores the necessity for midwives to acquire knowledge and skills in transcultural care across all fundamental areas of competency (ICM, 2019). Midwifery education should be structured to encompass cultural values, behaviors, differences, and norms, ensuring students develop the perceptions and skills required for cultural care prior to graduation (Byrne, 2020; Tosun et al., 2021). In this context; In the Midwifery National Core Education Program (EUÇEP), which is the basis for midwifery education in our country, there are 11 competencies (Competencies 1, 2, 4, 5, 7) that show the importance of culture and the need for culturally sensitive care. These competencies;

Competency 1: Midwives have the necessary equipment in matters related to obstetrics, gynecology, neonatology, public health, ethics and social sciences in order to provide quality services to newborns, children, women and families, sensitive to cultural differences.

Competency 2: Midwives to society; Provides quality health education and culturally sensitive services to support planned pregnancies, positive parenting and healthy family life.

Competency 4: Midwives provide culturally sensitive, quality service during labor and birth and provide a safe environment.

Competency 5: Midwives provide quality and holistic postpartum care. It ensures adaptation to the postpartum period for the woman and her family by being sensitive to cultural differences.

Competency 7: Midwives provide individualized and culturally sensitive services in accordance with national protocols in cases of termination or loss of pregnancy (EUÇEP, 2016).

Understanding and respecting cultural beliefs and practices in midwifery care, which encompasses pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period, is essential to providing effective and respectful care. Transcultural awareness enables midwives to recognize and address the unique needs of each patient, increasing trust and improving health outcomes. cultural awareness in midwifery care is a priority as it has an impact on individualized care, communication, building trust and relationships, and addressing health inequalities (Aydemir, Can Öztürk, & Tuna, 2022; Johnston, McKenna, Malik, & Reisenhofer, 2022, 2023). Enhancing students' transcultural awareness not only facilitates a shift in perspectives but also fosters increased tolerance, empathy, and sensitivity across cultures (Saka & Asma, 2020). Gaining intercultural awareness among midwives may lead to more tolerant and less ethnocentric perspectives and begin to develop a new identity that is more capable and more tolerant of cultural differences (Akmeşe et al., 2023). Therefore, assessing students' perspectives on transcultural midwifery education and their transcultural awareness is pivotal in producing culturally competent, qualified midwifery graduates.

This study delves into the impacts of transcultural awareness on midwifery practice and education through a multidimensional lens. Particularly, there exists a gap in the current literature regarding the short and long-term effects of transcultural midwifery education on students' professional development and caregiving abilities. This research aims to deeply explore the relationship between transcultural awareness and midwifery education, while also addressing how cultural sensitivity is integrated into the professional identities of student midwives and manifested in their practical applications. Consequently, the study seeks to present a theoretical framework that highlights the significance of transcultural awareness in midwifery education, offering a critical analysis of how effectively working with cultural diversity enhances the ability of midwives and midwifery students to understand, respect, and adapt to cultural differences. Moreover, the research proposes strategic approaches for the integration of cultural sensitivity into midwifery practices, thereby providing insights that could fortify the role of midwifery education programs in meeting both global and local health service needs.

## METHOD

### Objective and Type of the Research

This research was designed as a descriptive study to examine the transcultural awareness and opinions regarding the transcultural midwifery course among senior midwifery students at a state university located in the Southeastern Anatolia region

of Turkey, an area with a high concentration of immigrant populations.

### Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of senior midwifery students (n=146) enrolled in the EBE465 Transcultural Midwifery course during the spring term of the 2022-2023 academic year, who successfully graduated from the Turkish Learning Center (TÖMER) and were proficient in Turkish. The sample size was calculated using the formula  $n = N \cdot t^2 \cdot p \cdot q / d^2(N-1) + t^2 \cdot p \cdot q$  ( $p=.50$ ,  $q=.50$ ,  $d=.05$ ,  $t=1.96$ ), resulting in a minimum required sample size of 91. The study was completed with the participation of 121 voluntary students.

### Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected through an online survey using Google Forms. The instruments included:

**Student Introductory Information Form:** Based on the literature (Akmeşe et al., 2023; Muslu & Tuzcu, 2022; Saka & Asma, 2020), this form comprised 7 questions that gathered students' sociodemographic information (nationality, native language, age, place of residence, marital status, experience of going abroad, migrants in the family residence).

**Opinions on the Transcultural Midwifery Course Information Form:** Developed after a literature review (Akmeşe et al., 2023; Demirel et al., 2020; Hultsjö, Bachrach-Lindström, Safipour, & Hadziabdic, 2019; Yakar & Alpar, 2017; Yalçın Öner & Öztürk, 2022). this semi-structured form contained 12 questions regarding students' opinions on the transcultural midwifery course.

**Transcultural Awareness Scale:** Developed by Rozaimie et al., with its Turkish validity and reliability conducted by Yakar Karabağa and Alpar in 2017 (Yakar & Alpar, 2017) this scale consists of three sub-dimensions:

**Cultural Awareness Dimension:** Items 1, 6, 8, 9

**Perceived Cultural Awareness Dimension:** Items 3, 5

**Cultural Communication Awareness Dimension:** Items 2, 4, 7

The scale employs a five-point Likert-type rating, with the total score ranging from a minimum of 9 to a maximum of 45, where lower scores indicate greater transcultural awareness. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.73. For this study, Cronbach's alpha was evaluated as 0.83.

### Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was conducted utilizing SPSS version 25.0 (George & Mallery, 2003). We summarized the data through measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies (n), and percentages. To evaluate whether the data followed a normal distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was assessed using Levene's test prior to performing parametric analyses. The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to measure its internal consistency. For the purpose of comparing two distinct groups, the independent samples t-test was

employed. In cases where the analysis involved more than two groups, we resorted to the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), specifically using the F-statistic. To pinpoint the exact nature of any statistical differences observed, we implemented the Bonferroni post hoc test, maintaining a threshold for statistical significance at  $p < .05$  across all tests conducted.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for conducting the research was obtained from the Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee of the authors' affiliated university and the midwifery department where the data were collected (Meeting/Decision Number: 2023/65, Date: 24.07.2023). The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki principles and STROBE writing standards. All participating students were informed about the research, assured that collected data would not be used for any commercial purposes, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Written consent was obtained, and permission to use the scale was acquired via email from the authors who conducted the Turkish validity study.

### RESULTS

Participants in the study had an average age of  $22.85 \pm 1.70$  years, with 92.6% being Turkish citizens and 90.1% having Turkish as their native language, while 19% spoke another language fluently. It was reported that 10.7% of the students had immigrant family members, and 7.4% had experience living abroad. A significant majority of the senior midwifery students, 92.6%, had provided care to patients from diverse cultures, with 81% indicating difficulties in caring for these individuals. Furthermore, 82.6% viewed providing care to patients from different cultures as an opportunity for professional development, and 83.5% believed that offering this course in earlier terms would be beneficial, while 76.9% suggested that delivering this course as a practical class would be more effective. Before taking the Intercultural Midwifery course, 76% of the students thought they approached patients with cultural sensitivity during their clinical practices; this proportion increased to 88.4% after taking the course (Table 1).

The average scores for the cultural awareness sub-dimension were  $7.75 \pm 1.89$ ; for the perceived cultural awareness sub-dimension,  $3.84 \pm 1.29$ ; for the cultural communication awareness sub-dimension,  $6.07 \pm 1.84$ ; and the total score for the Intercultural Awareness Scale was  $17.66 \pm 4.08$  (Table 2). Considering that lower scores on the scale indicate higher levels of intercultural awareness, students with a family history of migration ( $p = .037$ ) and those with experience living abroad ( $p = .031$ ) demonstrated higher levels of intercultural awareness compared to their peers. Students who reported experiencing difficulties while providing care to patients from different cultures had significantly lower total Intercultural Awareness Scale scores ( $p = .016$ ) and lower scores on the Cultural Communication Awareness sub-dimension ( $p = .001$ ) than those who did not report such difficulties, indicating higher levels of intercultural awareness. According to the students' assessments of the place of cultural care in midwifery education

as "none, low, medium, advanced," a statistically significant difference was found between the total Intercultural Awareness Scale scores and the Cultural Communication Awareness sub-dimension scores ( $p < .05$ ). Post hoc Bonferroni analysis revealed that students who perceived the inclusion of cultural care in their education as advanced had higher levels of cultural communication awareness compared to all other groups ( $p = .001$ ), whereas those who perceived it as low had lower levels of intercultural awareness than those who perceived it as moderate or advanced ( $p = .016$ ). In addition, students who believed that the Intercultural Midwifery course contributed to patient interaction had significantly lower scores on the Cultural Communication Awareness sub-dimension, reflecting higher awareness, compared to those who did not share this view ( $p = .043$ ) (Table 3).

### DISCUSSION

This study, evaluating the transcultural awareness and opinions regarding the transcultural midwifery course among 121 senior midwifery students, found that the level of transcultural awareness among the students was high. Given that lower scores on the Intercultural Awareness Scale indicate higher levels of awareness, this finding suggests that the participants demonstrated a generally strong capacity to recognize and understand cultural differences. Similar to the findings of Küçükkelepçe et al. (2022) (Küçükkelepçe Şimşek, Bulut, Kırmızıgül İnan, & Gölbaşı, 2022), which also reported above-average cultural sensitivities among midwifery students, other studies have consistently shown high levels of cultural awareness and sensitivity (Akmeşe et al., 2023; Altinkaya & Amanak, 2020; Bulduk, Usta, & Dincer, 2017; Özdemir et al., 2021; Safipour, Hadziabdic, Hultsjö, & Bachrach-Lindström, 2017). However, there is also research indicating medium levels of transcultural awareness (Ličen, Karnjuš, & Prosen, 2021). Midwives, who are an important part of the health system, are expected to have transcultural awareness. In this way, it is thought that midwives who are aware of other cultures and are sensitive to transcultural differences can gain a broad understanding of how culture affects beliefs and behaviors and can reflect this understanding and awareness to midwifery care.<sup>8</sup> The high level of transcultural awareness observed in our study could be attributed to the region's significant intake of migrants and the students' frequent interactions with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds. This scenario is positively evaluated as it aids midwifery students, as healthcare professionals, in understanding and providing effective care to individuals from different cultures.

It is known that personal experiences play an important role in the development of transcultural awareness (Yıldız et al., 2023). Our findings revealed that students with overseas experience exhibited higher levels of transcultural awareness compared to their peers, aligning with some studies that found statistical significance between living abroad and cultural awareness (Saka & Asma, 2020) and contrasting with others that did not (Akmeşe et al., 2023; Safipour et al., 2017). In another similar study conducted with 598 health education students in 2021, it

**Table 1.** Descriptive Characteristics of the Students

Descriptive Feature	n (%)
<b>Nationality</b>	
Turkish	112 (92.6)
Other	9 (7.4)
<b>Native Language</b>	
Turkish	109 (90.1)
Other	12 (9.9)
<b>Fluency in Another Language</b>	
Yes	23 (19)
No	88 (81)
<b>Family History of Immigration</b>	
Yes	13 (10.7)
No	108 (89.3)
<b>Experience Living Abroad</b>	
Yes	9 (7.4)
No	112 (92.6)
<b>Providing Care to Patients from Different Cultures</b>	
Yes	112 (92.6)
No	9 (7.4)
<b>Difficulty in Providing Care to Patients from Different Cultures</b>	
Yes	98 (81.0)
No	23 (19.0)
<b>Viewing Care for Patients from Different Cultures as an Opportunity</b>	
Yes	100 (82.6)
No	21 (17.4)
<b>Place of Cultural Care in Midwifery Education</b>	
None	3 (2.5)
Low	9 (7.4)
Medium	35 (28.9)
Advanced	74 (61.2)
<b>Contribution of the Course on Transcultural Midwifery to Patient Interaction</b>	
Yes	110 (90.9)
No	11 (9.1)
<b>Cultural Approach Before Taking the Course</b>	
Yes	92 (76.0)
No	29 (24.0)
<b>Cultural Approach After Taking the Course</b>	
Yes	107 (88.4)
No	14 (11.6)
<b>Desire to Take the Course in Earlier Terms</b>	
Yes	101 (83.5)
No	20 (16.5)
<b>Preference for the Course to be Practical</b>	
Yes	93 (76.9)
No	28 (23.1)
<b>Average Age: 22.85±1.70 (Min:21, Max:32)</b>	



**Table 2.** Total and Subdimension Scores of the Scales

Scales	n	Descriptive Statistics				Cronbach's Alpha
		Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	Sd	
Transcultural Awareness Scale	121	9	29	17.66	4.08	0.83
Cultural Awareness	121	4	12	7.75	1.89	0.93
Perceived Cultural Awareness	121	2	8	3.84	1.29	0.90
Cultural Communication Awareness	121	3	12	6.07	1.84	0.80

**Table 3.** Transcultural Awareness Scale/Subscale Total Scores According to Some Characteristics

Characteristics		Cultural Awareness	Perceived Cultural Awareness	Cultural Communication Awareness	Transcultural Awareness Scale
		$\bar{X} \pm SD$	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	$\bar{X} \pm SD$
Nationality	Turkish	7.75±1.90	3.85±1.30	6.08±1.83	17.68±4.10
	Other	7.77±1.92	3.66±1.22	6.00±2.12	17.44±4.09
	<b>t/p</b>	0.042/.967	0.424/.672	0.125/.901	0.171/.864
Family History of Immigration	Yes	7.73±1.49	3.23±1.23	6.02±1.71	15.61±2.69
	No	7.92±1.94	4.79±1.29	6.46±1.86	18.55±4.21
	<b>t/p</b>	0.342/.733	1.148/.253	0.798/.427	<b>0.883/.037*</b>
Experience Living Abroad	Yes	7.11±1.61	3.83±1.36	5.33±1.93	14.33±3.96
	No	7.80±1.91	3.88±1.29	6.13±1.83	17.96±4.09
	<b>t/p</b>	1.503/.294	0.110/.912	1.253/.213	<b>1.020/.031*</b>
Providing Care to Patients from Different Cultures	Yes	7.77±1.88	3.86±3.55	6.08±1.88	17.72±4.12
	No	7.44±2.12	3.55±0.88	6.00±1.41	17.00±3.64
	<b>t/p</b>	0.504/.615	0.693/.490	0.125/.901	0.509/.611
Difficulty in Providing Care to Patients from Different Cultures	Yes	7.77±1.01	3.84±1.27	6.98±1.74	17.61±3.96
	No	7.65±2.01	3.82±1.37	5.34±2.25	15.91±4.67
	<b>t/p</b>	0.279/.781	0.069/.945	<b>1.039/.001*</b>	<b>0.317/&lt;.001**</b>
Place of Cultural Care in Midwifery Education	None <sup>a</sup>	6.00±1.73	3.00±1.00	6.66±1.52	17.35±3.98
	Low <sup>b</sup>	8.22±2.12	3.77±1.09	6.11±1.45	18.11±3.75
	Medium <sup>c</sup>	8.05±2.01	4.25±1.48	6.25±1.80	15.57±4.24
	Advanced <sup>d</sup>	7.62±1.80	3.68±1.19	4.04±1.84	13.66±4.16
	<b>F/p</b>	1.470/.226	2.036/.055	<b>2.404/.001*</b> <b>d-a,b,c</b>	<b>1.745/.016*</b> <b>b-d,a,c</b>
Contribution of the Course to Patient Interaction	Yes	7.70±1.93	3.80±1.28	5.00±1.09	17.54±4.19
	No	8.27±1.48	4.27±1.34	6.18±1.87	17.68±2.94
	<b>t/p</b>	0.954/.342	1.160/.249	<b>2.048/.043*</b>	0.105/.916

was reported that factors such as traveling abroad significantly affected transcultural awareness (Gungor, Tosun, & Prosen, 2021). It is an expected result that the cultural sensitivity and awareness of students who have lived or traveled abroad will increase, as they have the opportunity to experience different cultural norms, values and practices first-hand. However, the failure of some studies to find this relationship may be due to the diversity in students' sociodemographic characteristics and educational experiences. Educational experiences in different

regions and conditions can affect students' levels of intercultural awareness.

Interactions with diverse cultures are known to enhance students' cultural competence (Repo, Vahlberg, Salminen, Papadopoulos, & Leino-Kilpi, 2017). The majority of students in our study reported providing care to patients from different cultures and experiencing difficulties in this regard. Notably, students who faced challenges in caring for patients from different cultures had higher levels of transcultural awareness.

This is supported by Özdemir et al.'s study on midwives, which found that those caring for individuals from different cultures had significantly higher cultural sensitivities, and another study in the nursing field indicated that students who communicated with people of various cultural backgrounds exhibited higher cultural sensitivity (Choi & Kim, 2018; Özdemir et al., 2021). In 2022, a qualitative study analyzing the cultural perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of 39 qualified nurses from four European countries (Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Turkey) regarding the care of patients from different cultural backgrounds also reported striking statements (Antón-Solanas et al., 2022).

Considering the multicultural nature of our country, it is imperative for institutions providing health education to cultivate students who are sensitive and highly aware of cultural issues and to create appropriate educational environments (Baksi, Sürücü, & Duman, 2019; Esegbona-Adeigbe, 2022). Our research demonstrated that students who took the transcultural midwifery course showed an increased rate of applying cultural approaches to their patients after the course and reported that this course contributed to their interaction with patients, leading to higher cultural communication awareness compared to others. These results are corroborated by similar findings in the literature (Altinkaya & Amanak, 2020; Ceylantekin & Öcalan, 2016; Leung et al., 2020). Based on these outcomes, we believe that expanding the transcultural approach within the midwifery education curriculum to enhance students' transcultural awareness and sensitivity is crucial.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that the students' level of transcultural awareness was high, particularly among those with a family background of migration, those with experience living abroad, and those who faced challenges in providing care to individuals from different cultures. Transcultural awareness in midwifery care is a critical element for increasing patient satisfaction, reducing health inequalities and improving clinical decision-making processes. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to cultural awareness in midwifery education and practice. Cultural sensitivity improves the quality of midwifery care, leading to better outcomes in maternal and newborn health.

In a globalizing world, we believe it is crucial to review educational strategies for cultivating midwives with high transcultural awareness. In this regard, it is recommended to expand the inclusion of courses focused on transcultural midwifery care in undergraduate education. Observational and experimental studies evaluating the factors affecting students' levels of transcultural awareness are also recommended. Encouraging participation in courses, symposiums, and other scientific activities related to this topic is also recommended to foster the development of culturally competent midwifery students.

## Limitations of the Research

This research is limited to senior midwifery students studying at a state university in the Southeastern Anatolia Region. While the number of students included in the study and the results

reflect the study population, they cannot be generalized to all midwifery students. Additionally, the data are based on self-reports from the students, and the results may differ from observations made by professionally practicing midwives.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** Ethical committee approval for this study was obtained from the Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee of the Hasan Kalyoncu University Faculty of Health Sciences, (Date: 24.07.2023; No: 2023/65).

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