

## An Analysis of Academicians' Perceptions of Multicultural Education: A Turkish Experience

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**ABSTRACT** The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of academic members' that working at college of education on multicultural education. In this qualitative study, open-ended questions were formed and e-mail to participants from 83 universities in Turkey that have faculties of education. A total of 357 academics took part in the study. The open-ended questions which were e-mailed to academics have been thoroughly analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated by means of content and thematic analysis method. The findings of this study indicated that academics (92%) consider multicultural education as an advantageous form of education for Turkey. The results suggest that the disadvantages of multicultural education might stem from it not being offered by experts. Respondents also stated that to better prepare teachers who will offer multicultural education, the phenomenon of multiculturalism should be integrated to undergraduate curriculum and teachers should acquire skills such as empathy, tolerance, and democratic thinking.

### INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education is an educational reform movement that has become especially popular in the last 20 years (Banks 2008). This education form has ushered in a new era in education and its impact has moved beyond education as education contributes to the solution of many social problems. It may be said that there is no country free from cultural problems. People's genetic make-up might differ and so do their beliefs and ideas. The latter is as scientifically valid as the former one. The countries that realize this thanks to multicultural education have managed to minimize social, cultural and educational problems of the past (Aydin 2013).

Multicultural education has been implemented in various countries for more than twenty years and in the past few years it has become a phenomenon research topic in Turkey (Aydin 2012). Many are curious about the views of academics regarding multicultural education which is considered to be an alternative for the solution of cultural, social, and educational problems. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out the views of academics working in schools of education around Turkey, a country taking small steps in the direction of multicultural education. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the implementation of a possible multicultural education curriculum.

### Literature Review

The pillar of multicultural education are; *multiculturalism, culture, and education*. *Multiculturalism* means multiple perspectives and dimension. Multiculturalism can also be defined as the plurality or multitude of cultures (Ferguson and Laouris 2008). According to Ozlem (2000) up until 18th century the word *culture* had been used to refer to a single culture. Rose (1995) states that culture, is a phenomenon that encompasses distinctive features of our age such as language, religion, race, ethnic origin, gender, and lifestyle. From a sociocultural point of view, *education* is not only the activities taking place in classroom but also a combination of activities that meet the needs and expectations of society (Morris and Pai 1976). In this regard, it can be understood that multicultural education is integrated with one of the essential goals of education which is to *meet the needs of society*. Multicultural education, apart from its education aspect, is an area of interest that aims for equal access to education for people from different ethnic origins, social class or culture (Banks and Banks 1993). Banks (2008) while stating that equal education for all students is the main goal of multicultural education highlights that this education is not only for people from non-dominant cultural groups, but for all students. According to Aydin (2013), another goal of multicultural education is to consider the eth-

nic and racial differences of students as an educational alternative and contribute to the knowledge, skills and behaviors of students.

Multiculturalism is a common form of education presents in the educational system of many countries predominantly the ones that legally adopt multiculturalism. With the implementation of multicultural and multilingual education, countries such as the US, Canada, Sweden etc. have managed to solve the social and educational problems of various cultural groups they are home to (Kaya and Aydin 2013). Moreover, in countries which implement multicultural education, it has been found out that, multicultural education has a positive impact on the academic performance of students.

Turkey is a multicultural society, home to 36 different ethnic groups (KONDA 2011). As in many multicultural countries, Turkey also experiences some problems stemming from ethnic and cultural differences. Many experts think that considering the several countries around the world that adopt multiculturalism and implement multicultural education, many cultural problems facing Turkey can be solved with multicultural education (Kaya and Aydin 2014). Based on these ideas, researchers' study aims to evaluate the views of academics working at faculties of education around Turkey and to determine the feasibility of multicultural education in Turkey.

### Goals of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education aims to teach students such behaviors as empathy, respect for others, and tolerance (Sinagatullin 2003). Parekh (2002) mentions that in addition to teaching empathy to students, multicultural education has such goals as creating a rich and pluralist culture, forming intercultural dialogue, informing students about cultures around the world and rejecting racism. Banks (1994) lists the goals of multicultural education as follows:

1. To increase equal education for students from different groups (genders, ethnic groups, cultural groups, extraordinary students). In other words, ensuring equality of opportunity in education.
2. To help students from both the marginalized and mainstream part of society.

Another goal of multicultural education is to help individuals from different racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds gain nec-

essary knowledge, skills, and approaches to be able to effectively operate in the global society and various religious, cultural and national settings (Banks 2004).

Demir (2012) argues that the behaviors that multicultural education aims to instill in society are as follows:

1. Raising cultural awareness among individuals.
2. Helping individuals develop multiple perspectives.
3. Contributing to the formation of a democratic society.
4. Eliminating the prejudices of individuals and contributing to their opposition to any form of discrimination.

These goals essentially aim to raise students as anti-discriminatory and democratic individuals as well as to increase their academic success.

### Principles of Multicultural Education

Banks (2008) states that for multicultural schools to know their responsibilities the principles of multicultural education must be determined. Based on these ideas, Banks lists the goals of multicultural education in a school setting as follows:

Though Gay (1994) uses the term "personal traits" to refer to the principles of multicultural education and lists them as follows:

1. An empowering social transformation and a humanistic process.
2. Schools' correction of mistakes done due to student poverty, color or culture.
3. Knowing the contributions of different cultural groups to the collective success of humanity and seeking academic honesty.
4. Putting the humanistic theory, this aims for a better understanding of different cultures, at the center.
5. Determining educational tools in the light of philosophy, knowledge and values.
6. Offering education for all students,
7. Offering equality of opportunity for students from different backgrounds.
8. Supporting change.
9. Paying attention to different cultural heritages, perspectives and experiences.
10. Forming meaningful connections between students from different cultures.

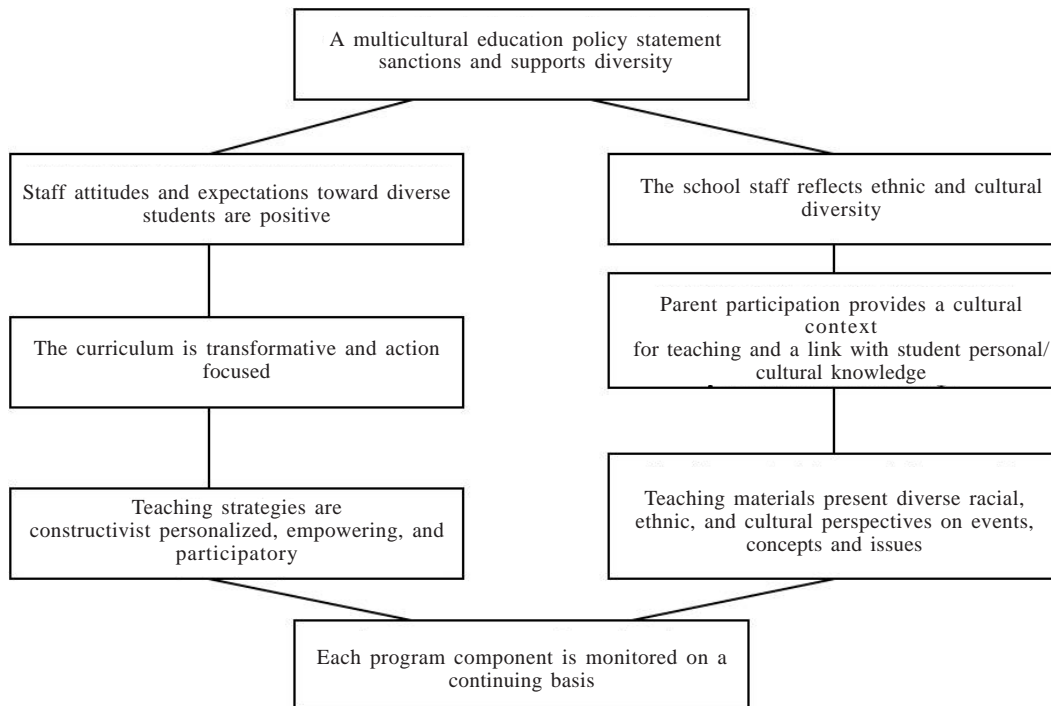
11. The principles of democracy, justice, equality and excellence in education.
12. The value of human life.

In addition, Banks (2004) defines the principles of multicultural education with reference to students, teachers, managers, school staff and school environment while Gay (1994) deals with these principles mainly with reference to the cultural traits people possess. If the perspectives of these two academics on the principles of multicultural education are compared, it can be said that multicultural education rejects stereotypical judgments and supports change. Each person is valuable. Therefore, each person needs to have equal rights. It is not possible for multicultural education to thrive in an environment where equality and democracy are not adopted. The main goal of multicultural education is the elimination of discrimination (Banks 2008; Aydin 2013). Banks (2008) highlighted a multicultural benchmarks for assessing and maintaining an effective multicultural schools as follow;

**The Characteristics of Multicultural Teachers**

Another definition of multiculturalism as a form education is based on its respect for individual differences. Teachers should realize the individual differences of their students and organize the learning process of each student considering these individual differences (Cobanet al. 2010: 125).

In addition to possessing certain characteristics teachers must also take multicultural education classes throughout their training to be able to offer a multicultural education in a multicultural setting (Kaya and Aydin 2014). Studies have shown that there is a positive change in beliefs and attitudes of teachers who take classes on multicultural education regarding cultural differences (Valentiin 2006). On the other hand, it has been observed that most teachers who have not taken classes on multicultural education are insufficient when it comes to organizing the learning environment for students from dif-



**Fig. 1. Multicultural benchmarks for assessing and maintaining an effective multicultural school**

ferent backgrounds (Gay 2000; Basbay and Bektaş 2009). Studies show that teachers are not fully prepared for multicultural education (Cirik 2008). Several scholars have tried to determine the characteristics of teachers who will offer multicultural education. In this regard, Banks (2005) lists the characteristics of multicultural teachers as follows;

1. The ability to create a democratic learning environment by respecting the cultural differences of students,
2. The ability to do activities that ensure equality of opportunity for all students
3. The ability to determine and fight their own prejudices.

Basbay and Kagnici (2011) also argue that the characteristics of multicultural teachers as follows: getting to know students, diversifying teaching taking individual differences into account, valuing, understanding and respecting students, respect for national and universal values and attaining a certain level in multiculturalism.

Several scholars, including Gay (1994), Herring and White (1995), and Bennett (2001) underlined that multicultural teachers should possess the traits listed below:

1. Avoiding discrimination in class based on individual features such as race, gender, religion and language,
2. Accepting cultural behaviors as enriching and integrating them into the classroom,
3. Implementing cooperative learning techniques to bring different cultures together.

Looking at all these characteristics, it might be stated that, to offer multicultural education effectively, teacher must first take courses on multicultural education. Teacher training institutions should include courses in their curriculum that incorporate topics related to the role of culture on education, the concepts of democracy and equality and the notion of multiculturalism (Kelm et al. 2001: 249).

Since it is important in multicultural education to make every student feel values, teacher should respect the ideas of each and every students and refraining from behaviors that might disturb them. Multicultural education is an education of democracy (Aydin 2012b). Classes are also spaces where democracy needs to take place. Since the leader of these spaces are teachers, for students to be individuals who value democracy in their future lives, it is critical that teachers have a democratic attitude and students

interact democratically (Aydin and Ozfidan 2014). In the US, a country which is aware of the importance of this issue, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) plays a pioneering role by including multicultural education classes in teacher training programs.

### **Teacher Training in Multicultural Education**

To implement multicultural education in the best way possible, it is important that teacher and academics who will practice it be experts in multicultural education practices and have positive attitudes towards multiculturalism and multicultural education (Devereaux et al. 2010). Since multicultural education starts from kindergarten, it is important that teachers start practicing multicultural education from kindergarten onwards. In a system transitioning to multicultural education, teachers can be trained on multicultural education through professional seminars organized by experts (Madkins and Mitchell 2000:319). In addition to this, teacher candidates should be given courses related to multiculturalism (democracy and human rights, multicultural citizenship etc.). Both seminars and the university classes should be designed by experts. Additionally, teacher candidates should be informed on how to manage multicultural classes during in their formation courses.

Multicultural teacher training program are implemented in various countries around the world and there are studies concerning these programs. These programs offer multiculturalism, equality and democracy classes to teachers. The main idea these programs aim to instill in teacher is shaped with regards to the “no child left behind” motto (Montecinos and Rios 1999: 7).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study is carried out using a qualitative research method through open-ended questions. According to Glesne (2012), it is possible to categorize the distinctive features of qualitative studies in two main groups. The first group, philosophical foundation, includes both goals and assumptions along with the technical aspects of the study such as data collection, sampling and analysis steps (Creswell 2012). In this method, knowledge uses itself as a tool. The

researcher has to relate the events to his/her experiences to understand the logic and the meaning of events. The second group in qualitative research is where the technical aspects consisting of the presentation of method, analysis and results take shape (Chapman and MacLean 1990).

### Participants and Settings

Within the context of this study, open-ended questions are prepared in a *surveymonkey database* e-mailed to 83 out of 86 universities that have a faculty of education. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the e-mail addresses of academics working at these 83 universities were collected from their university websites. It was not possible to reach the e-mail address of academic from 3 universities.

### Sampling

The universe of the study is the 4201 academics working at various faculties of education in Turkey who received the survey via e-mail. The sample of the study varies for each open-ended question. The sample size for the 1<sup>st</sup> question is 357, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> question it is 339 and for the 3<sup>rd</sup> question the sample size is 177. Since the responses of all academics taking part in this study are evaluated, the sampling type is *Disproportionate Element Sampling*. In this sampling type, all the elements in the universe have equal chances of being chosen (Karasar 2009).

### Research Questions

1. What are the views of academics working in faculties of education in Turkey regarding the advantages of multicultural education?
2. What are the views of academics working in faculties of education in Turkey regarding the disadvantages of multicultural education?
3. What are the views of academics working in faculties of education in Turkey on how to train teachers/teacher candidates about multicultural education?

### Data Collection

The survey created for this study has two parts. The first part asks for the demographic

information of participants (gender, age range, ethnic origin, university, title) while the second part presents open-ended questions. The second part includes 3 questions and an additional field with the title "If there is anything you would like to add, please write here".

### Data Collection Process

In order to collect data for the study, (IRB) permission has been obtained from the social sciences institute at Yildiz Technical University. The survey that was created for data collection on *survey monkey database* was e-mailed to 4573 recipients from 83 universities on March 25, 2013. 372 e-mails bounced back due either to the address being wrong or not in use. After two weeks of data collection (25 March -7 April 2013), the survey was closed down that marked the end of data collection for this study.

### Data Analysis

This data analysis provided an attempt to answer the research questions that guided this study. The responses of academic to open-ended questions. 1. What do you think are the advantages of multicultural education? 2. What do you think are the disadvantages of multicultural education? 3. How do you think teachers should be trained for multicultural education? All research questions are read, analyzed thoroughly through *content and thematic analysis method* and the differing and common views of academics are evaluated for each question.

### Limitations of the Study

The survey was e-mailed to 4203 academics but only 357 filled it and thus participated in the study. This low participation rate might be due to various reasons such as a lack of e-mail responsiveness in Turkey in general, opposing views to multicultural education, skipping the email or not wanting to take the survey.

## FINDINGS

The responses to each question are analyzed one by one and the results suggest that 1) academics view multicultural education as an advantageous type of education, 2) the problems that might emerge might be due to multicultural

education's not being well understood and efficiently and effectively implemented by experts and 3) to effectively implement multicultural education teachers (pre-service and on the job) need to be trained very well.

The 3 open ended questions the one optional question from the study are all listed below as separate headings and all responses for each question are interpreted and analyzed collectively.

### **1. What Do You Think are the Advantages of Multicultural Education?**

Three hundreds fifty-seven of the academicians who participated in the survey answered this question. 18 participants (5.04%) stated that multicultural education did not have advantages, 5 participants (5.04%) stated that they did not have any information, 5 participants (5.04%) stated that there should be nation culture. 329 participants (92.15%) did not make any comments on the advantages of multicultural education. Common points that were mentioned by 329 participants are as follows:

1. Each student finds a basis for self-expression and the power of expression takes replaces violence.
2. Differences are recognized, awareness is gained, positive attitudes towards others improve and negative comparisons are avoided.
3. All cultures in society make use of education equality.
4. Social union is formed, fewer problems occur, stronger progress becomes possible.
5. An environment where love rather than conflict is dominant emerges.
6. It contributes to the academic success of students.
7. It changes students' attitudes towards classes and develops the consciousness of living together.
8. Problems of those who call themselves marginalized are eliminated thanks to multicultural education.
9. It helps understanding freedom of thought.
10. It avoid the mistake of interpreting the democracy as the rule of majority
11. It enables minorities to live, think and express themselves freely.
12. It teaches people to be tolerant and to endure failures.
13. It provides equality of opportunity in education.
14. It teaches respect for others and living together.
15. It allows students who are not from the dominant culture to appreciate their own culture and be accepted in the majority.
16. It provides tolerance.
17. It allows people to reach the consciousness of their own cultures through diversity.
18. It helps building empathy, respect for human rights and love for others.
19. It allows individuals from other cultures to take part in the education process as much as others. It allows them to learn their own culture and not to alienate themselves from their cultures.
20. A teaching environment consisting of different voices, colors, opinions, lifestyles allows individuals to improve their creativity and skills to understand the world order.
21. It allows people to integrate themselves with their country and nation and to be proud of them.
22. It provides confidence to individuals.
23. It prevents cultural assimilation.
24. It helps getting rid of prejudices.
25. Individuals get the chance to express themselves while creating their identities.
26. It allows each student to experience such characteristics of his culture as religion, language, race, etc. freely.
27. Students praise their cultures.
28. It increases thinking capacity of humans.
29. It allows different traditions, customs, etc. to be recognized and experienced by citizens.
30. It provides peace.
31. It is an alternative solution for many ethnic problems in Turkey.
32. It provides fair education.
33. It improves intellectual capacity.
34. It allows novelties to emerge from the syntheses of differences.
35. It allows individuals to take courses on desired issues, languages and cultures.

If the advantages of multicultural education given above are taken into consideration, it can be said that majority of academics think that

multicultural education is a very advantageous type of education for all people, especially for students. Additionally, participants stated their opinions on multicultural education in addition to its advantages. For example, a participant said;

*It may help people realize that differences are not to be afraid of and differences do not pose an obstacle to coming together from the perspective of humanitarian values. Even if I do not mentally do ethnic discrimination, I feel uncomfortable when people speak other languages than Turkish, I feel like I'm under threat. It is easy to say that I do not discriminate, but in order to change our feelings, we need to have more information and get to know differences more. In this respect, I believe that multicultural education is useful.*

Participants advocated that having more information on cultural differences helps people to be more considerate towards other people. Moreover, some academics expressed that culture is not people's own choice and therefore everybody should have equal rights. For example, a participant said;

*Everybody should be able to express himself without feeling ashamed (there is no need to feel shame as nobody has come to world on order) and share his opinions and feelings.*

Another participant added that:

*Nobody has the right to choose. You are not born as a child of a Kurdish family because you wanted so. Therefore empathy and common sense solves this problem.*

Additionally, academics, who think that multicultural education has already been implicitly given to students by teachers and academics, stated that they have already informed their students on this issue. A participant summarized opinions of like-minded academics by saying:

*Culture, which affects education most, has always represented the majority. Each region, even each city has its own culture. If the issue mentioned here is about differences of such cultures as Kurdish, Laz, Cherkes, this can be provided by the examples given during the course and we inform our students about the principle of moving from center to the periphery. Multiculturalism is already in use in practice.*

Regarding "education in the mother tongue" issue in the multiculturalism context another academic said that;

*I've always thought that education in the mother tongue is more egalitarian. People should not be prevented from living their own cultures and they should not be separated from their origins. I think that students can express themselves better in their mother tongue.*

Another participant stated that:

*Firstly, attempting to do such first learning activities like mental designing and abstraction in a language other than the mother tongue hinders personal development of individuals. It is easier to transfer learning acquired in mother tongue to other languages. Besides making learning easier, living their cultures freely provides self-confidence to students. This is important for social and emotional development. As long as individuals live their own cultures free of such threats like feeling odd and being marginalized, they can easily integrate to social structure in which they live. In this way, the concepts of a common homeland and being a good citizen make sense. Thoughtfulness and empathy skills of citizens develop. Instead of discriminating against such issues like clothing style, faith, language; it will allow individuals to acquire a more scientific and objective point of view and it will save people from formalism. Education opportunities will increase. It will allow individuals to take courses on desired issues, languages and cultures. Therefore, it will contribute to a more liberal development of students.*

The academics, who thought that multicultural education do not have advantages did not explain why. However 5 academics expressed that national culture should be dominant rather than cultural differences. For example, a participant expressed that multiculturalism divides the nation and commonalities should be focused on rather than differences by saying;

*Multicultural education divides the nation. Everybody should be able to live their beliefs and culture freely. State should increase commonalities rather than differences.*

When all answers of academicians are taken into consideration, 92.15% of academics thinks that multicultural education has advantages.

## **2. What Do You Think are the Disadvantages of Multicultural Education?**

Three hundreds thirty-nine of the academics who participated in the survey answered this question. Fifty-seven of those academics

(16.81%) stated that they do not see any disadvantages of multicultural education and 2 of those (0.58%) stated that they did not have any information about the disadvantages of multicultural education.

The opinions of the academics on the disadvantages of multicultural education are as follows:

1. There are not qualified teachers in the field of multicultural education.
2. Teachers may not be able to reach the students from different languages and cultures.
3. Pre-school education requires more time.
4. It may lead to racist struggle among the students who think their races superior.
5. It may lead to the deterioration of the common language and structure.
6. It may damage the territorial integrity while decreasing the consciousness of unity.
7. The entire society may not be sensitive and attentive enough.
8. It is a subject open to abuse.
9. Curriculum may not be efficient and effective enough.
10. This kind of an education is incomplete if confined to class.
11. It may decrease the sense of belonging towards the country.
12. Intercultural conflicts may emerge if the attention is drawn to the differences.
13. If multicultural classes and schools are mismanaged, conflicts may emerge.
14. It is hard to apply. Therefore, practitioners should have good qualifications in terms of understanding, skills, information.
15. It may lead to misinterpretations of the nationalism concept.
16. Groupings may occur.
17. Students who do not respect personal and cultural differences may cause problems.
18. Misunderstandings may occur as it is not easy to get to know all cultures.
19. Existence of individuals who could act provocative may prevent multicultural education from reaching its goal.
20. It might make limitations and inspections harder.

The opinions on the disadvantages of multicultural education given above are based on the facts that the multicultural education is not clear-

ly understood, there might be provocations by the critics of this education and it may be applied by unprofessional individuals and therefore it may damage the integrity of the country because of misunderstandings. Thus, a participant said;

*Not disadvantages, but some difficulties may emerge while applying it. Preparing multicultural programs, organizing in service training for teachers, change of perceptions towards the issue may be the obstacles that can be dealt with in the long run.*

Regarding the difficulties of applying multicultural education and referred to the difficulty of applying multicultural education and preparations that should be carried out before the implementation process. Academics are in agreement over the importance of in service training for teachers. A participant made the following statement related to the issue:

*Problems may emerge in the classes or schools of teachers who are bigoted. Therefore, I believe that teachers have the greatest responsibility and this is a disadvantage, because, there are many factors affecting students. For example, parents, classmates, parents of classmates.*

Another participant said;

*If it is mismanaged, a conflict environment emerges, if a teacher is not efficient and experienced, students may have problems in understanding and participation and therefore they may not be successful.*

He referred to the fact that the efficiency of teachers should be improved in order not to cause conflicts and decrease the success of student in the implementation of multicultural education. Another participant said;

*There is no disadvantage. Resistance against this type of education lies behind the factors that seem to be disadvantages. This resistance is against facing the differences.*

Another participant uttered his concerns for the multicultural education as follows:

*Turkey has been passing through a fragile process because of the Kurdish question. Multicultural education studies may bother some people. The perception of multicultural education from a narrow point of view should be eliminated.*

Besides those who see the implementation of this type education wrong, there are also academics who think that the factors that seem like disadvantages of multicultural education can



be converted into advantages by the professional academics and teachers. A participant made the following statement related to the issue:

*I do not see any disadvantages. If you ask for the possible problems, conflicts may emerge but I believe that experienced teachers may convert the conflicts into advantages.*

Academics are in agreement over the fact that an efficient curriculum should be prepared for multicultural education. A participant emphasizes that the curriculum planners should also be experts in multicultural education by saying:

*The scope of multicultural education is very broad, but perceiving a cultural difference (for example, such features of students like villager-urbanite, woman-man, jobs of parents should be taken into consideration within the scope of multiculturalism) from multicultural education may lead to a discrimination. Preparing curriculums by education programmers according to their own ideas or to the popular culture by neglecting these cultures limits the education. Lack of involving the cultural features of students in all lessons is also an unfavorable situation.*

The same participant also stated that education and politics should be considered separately from each other. In his answer to this question, he said:

*In this regard, the discussions and implementations, for example on education in mother tongue, should be considered outside of politics.*

Another participant expressed his concerns by saying:

*If education program is not prepared well and it is used as an apparatus for political gain, it may create chaos. It may do more harm than good.*

Another participant said;

*By taking recent unfavorable political and social developments which took place in our country into consideration, I think that it is hard to implement multiculturalism concept, which is predominantly pronounced in foreign countries, in our country. If the graduate programs opened in different languages are criticized, then the implementation of multiculturalism from basic level to all levels of teaching-learning environment will be limited. Teachers or academics can affect the learning field by leaning to some cultures and this situation may*

*lead to unfavorable learning and undesired conflicts in the learning environment.*

In addition, she stated that political and social developments affect education and partial attitudes of teachers in implementation of multicultural education may lead to conflicts.

Another concern of academics about the problems that may occur during the implementation of multicultural education is that the integrity of the country may be damaged. A participant voiced his concern in the following way:

*It is a great advantage that people from different cultures living in the same country can understand each other, but it may also be a disadvantage that can lead to some behaviors which may damage the integrity of a country. This kind of education is needed to live in peace in the same country, but there should be a multicultural education that will change people's perspectives. A society free of prejudice is always a healthy society. This kind of an education eliminates people's prejudices against each other and provides an empathetic perspective.*

Another participant expressed the fact that multiculturalism is not a separation, differences within a society should be perceived as pieces of a mosaic:

*Implementing this type of education before laying its foundations in people's perspectives, is not an advantage, on the contrary it is a manipulation in the way towards separation. The reason is that even if the existence of many ethnic origins in our country has been known for years, we head for the multiculturalism just because of some groups' pressure. Yet, many people from different ethnic origins continue their everyday lives with their languages, cuisine, traditional pleasures. Therefore, the education part of multiculturalism studies should be prepared more carefully. This concept should be taught to children as "differences within the whole" rather than "separation" by continuing the relationship between the education system and family properly.*

After taking all the opinions of academics related to disadvantages of multicultural education into consideration, it may be said that generally, there is not a disadvantage of multicultural education but some disadvantages may emerge because of the misconducts in implementation and unfavorable interventions to the education by some groups.

### 3. How Do You Think Teachers Should be Trained for Multicultural Education?

Three hundreds thirty-eight of the academics who participated in the survey answered this question Seven participants (2.07%) said that such a training should not be given, 5 participants (1.47%) expressed that they do not have any information on this issue, 1 participant (0.29%) stated that he was undecided.

The opinions of academics about how teachers should be trained for multicultural education are as follows;

1. They should be given opportunities to do internships in different regions.
2. More than one language should be taught.
3. It can be achieved by improving the efficiency of international exchange programs.
4. Hands-on training should be given.
5. Briefings should be done about activity and material disclosure.
6. Multicultural education courses should be given at universities.
7. Teachers should respect differences and they should reach the consciousness that differences are enriching.
8. Teachers should be trained as tolerant people who are familiar with the basic principles of different cultures.
9. Seminars and in service trainings should be organized for teachers.
10. By using techniques such as drama, teachers may be lead to put themselves in the positions of others and thus their ability to empathize may be improved.
11. They should be encouraged to approach each sub-culture equally.
12. Case studies should be carried out.
13. They should be trained as scientific, rational and objective individuals.
14. They should be informed about how to approach children from different religions, languages, etc. and how to deal with the possible in-class conflicts.
15. They should take part in as many projects as possible with people from different cultures.
16. Instructors from different cultures should teach classes.
17. They should spend some time or work for some time in culturally different places.
18. Trips to near places and different schools should be organized to get to know different cultures.
19. Debates, in-class discussions, documentaries, historical events should be incorporated into courses at faculties of education.

Main opinions of academicians on how to train teachers for multicultural education are that teachers who will give this education should take multicultural education courses and instructors who will give multicultural education courses to teachers should be experts. Some academics think that multicultural education courses are long due at undergraduate level. For example, a participant said;

*This should start earlier than undergraduate level, at primary school or even at kindergarten level. Even if it is too late, teacher candidates may at least be lead to feel respect towards different cultures through empathy by using such techniques like drama.*

Participants advocated that multicultural education should start at the kindergarten level. Another participant stated that multicultural education is not a curriculum, course or subject that can be given in a university program, but rather it is an understanding. He expressed that an individual should acquire this understanding at a young age, see it around, have practical experience with it and it is very difficult to change the perspective of someone who is at university.

Besides the academics who advocate that there should be both theoretical and practical courses, there are also academics who think that practical implementations are more important for this education. A participant made the following statement related to the issue:

*Basically, theoretical and practical courses may be helpful at undergraduate level. Students should grow as individuals who respect multiculturalism and realize its rich content before becoming teachers. Courses on how to make use of this system can be given after they become teachers, especially in the last years of undergraduate program. Moreover, this understanding may be supported by in service trainings and resources may be created for those studying in this field.*

Some academics advocate that besides the courses on multicultural education, multiculturalism perception may be gained through the courses given in formation programs. For example, a participant said;

*Multicultural education should be blended into the Introduction to Education course, Psychology course and Classroom Management course. Specifically Educational Sociology course should be given as a required course and one part of it should be dedicated to inter-cultural education.*

She focused on the formation courses in his answer. Similarly, another participant emphasized that the topics of Education Sociology which covers multiculturalism should be enriched and given at faculties of education. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of trips by teachers and teacher candidates to the regions where different sub-cultures are dominant. Another participant added that:

*Teacher candidates can see the multiculturalism in the classes of School Experience and Teaching Practice, but they may not understand how to behave precisely. Lecturers and instructors should be impartial and aware of this issue. I believe that the contents of pedagogic formation courses that teacher candidates take should include issues and activities related to multicultural education.*

Another participant expressed that such courses like Intercultural Communication, and Effective Communication given in the foreign language teaching departments should be given in all departments in faculties of education;:

*There is this student profile in the faculties of education created by students from all over Turkey, and therefore I suppose that there is a multicultural environment in the faculties of education, so it is important to let the students to realize and taste this situation. Such environments in which students can get to know different cultures should be provided and cultural differences and the conflicts arising from these differences should be discussed by bringing this taboo into open. For example, such courses like Intercultural Communication, and Effective Communication given to the foreign language teaching departments should be open for all departments in the faculty of education, and by means of this, teacher candidates can produce solutions in the event of a problem when they are assigned to any part of the country.*

Additionally, a participant stated that certain criteria must be sought in students who want to enroll in the teacher training programs; democratic attitudes and behaviors should be instilled in teacher candidates in training programs and

they should be trained with a humanistic approach. The same participant also said that any person should not be a teacher

Besides teacher training, there are also comments related to teaching methods-techniques. A participant complained about the lack of studies in this field in Turkey country while stating that there should be courses related to multiculturalism in the faculty of education programs and researchers in M.A. level should be encouraged to the study this field. Another participant who believes that it is very important to create an environment for teacher candidates to get to know the multicultural structure stated that teachers should be encouraged to use the methods that allow students to put forth their cultural differences and to interact with each other.

The most important fear towards multicultural education is that national values may be lost and the integrity of the country may be damaged. Another participant voiced his concern related to teacher training:

*Firstly, the distinction between national and ethnic structure should be given and concepts should not be mixed. Reflection of ethnic diversity on the national diversity (traditions, common history, and interaction among languages) should be emphasized. Everybody should be encouraged to learn one more language apart from his ethnic language.*

A participant advocated that courses covering such international values as democracy, human rights rather than courses covering national values and multicultural education should be given. Regarding how to teach multicultural education to teachers, another participant said that there are already implemented multicultural education curriculums in the world, Turkey can prepare her own curriculum based on these curricula. In addition to that, he also emphasized that programs, based on *Multilingualism, Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Communicative Competence* concepts, should be created.

Another participant said that culture weeks in which Kurdish or other languages are taught can be organized and university students who are originally from Hatay province can organize activities covering their own cultural items. Then, students from Isparta can organize activities for the next week.

Another participant stated that he did not know how to train teachers but if "Come, come

whoever you are” philosophy is adopted, freedom of thought and tolerance can be achieved and he also emphasized the importance of upbringing.

#### 4. Please Write Anything That You Want to Add

One hundred seventy-seven academics filled the part which was left for the additional things that they wanted to write apart from the answers to the questions. Some of these academics expressed their opinions on the survey and study, some expressed opinions on multiculturalism and multicultural education and some expressed their gratitude for the topic under study. Some academics criticized the scale and open-ended questions prepared for the survey negatively (questions are partial) while some academicians criticized them positively (scale is successful and impartial). Some of the opinions related to multiculturalism and multicultural education in which academics are in agreement are listed below:

1. *If Canada is taken as an example for multicultural education, (thanks to the economic well-being) all differences are respected and people can live their differences without feeling different. The majority religion and different ethnic origins which constitute a part of country have been perceived differently for years in our country. Such freedom or multiculturalism as in America or Canada can be accepted but it should not be forgotten that we have a country squeezed between east and west, situated in the middle-east. Moreover, I do not think that there is a country as liberal as ours in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Germany, do not allow those who do not know German into the country (except touristic-business activities), Turkish people are not promoted to higher positions in Germany, they rarely gain some statuses mostly through individual efforts. There is not any mosque for Muslims to pray in Switzerland, the azan is not read aloud in many European countries. But multicultural education does not mean that other languages other than Turkish are offered in different parts of the country. As I stated above, our country, which is more liberal than European countries, accepts everybody and individuals from different religions, languages or races can even become president. In our country, mosques, synagogues, churches open their doors in the same neighborhood. In this regard, foundations of multicultural education should be laid well. We are such a society that can both highlight the differences and can act irrespective of those differences. Yet, it is normal for such a country, which was stabbed in the back even when she did not discriminate against differences to act differently at different times. Political, economic and military-technological power is the actual power that keeps the differences together. If any vulnerability is shown in these issues, no matter how much freedom is given to these different groups, they will not be satisfied.*
2. *Multiculturalism should cover further issues rather than cuisine, languages and way of dressing. It should be taught in the definition of tolerance that the rights of others should not be violated. It should be taken as a democracy and human rights education. Tolerance towards such traditional cultures acts bride exchange cannot be respected.*
3. *Even if multiculturalism is seen as diversity, it may be a sign of division and fragmentation (social disintegration) in countries that do not understand it well like Turkey.*
4. *Thank you for such a study that brings this issue forward. This issue is not avoided like a taboo in our country and there are no studies on it. We all know that different cultures bring along different personal characteristics, but we prefer keeping silent maybe because of the possible misunderstandings. If these issues are brought forward, it will be understood that it is very natural to be from different cultures and everybody can express themselves without shame as long as they do not violate the rights of others. Thanks again for the study.*
5. *It is important for lecturers who train teachers to be sensitive about the multicultural education and to have the required attitude and behaviors.*
6. *The content of multicultural education model should be prepared well, such is-*

- sues like how to give education and by whom are important. Because, a hastily prepared or ill-prepared education system will probably let the prejudices to live on. Moreover, people, who will take multicultural education, should have a pluralistic democracy understanding.*
7. *Multiculturalism seems like a good concept. Yet, multicultural education may be exaggerated and it may lead to cultural disintegration and separatism if current conditions and especially the conditions of our country taken into consideration. Social background should be strong for such concepts to be understood well. Multiculturalism and education in compliance with it may be accepted but it should be accepted in reasonable amounts without exaggeration. Children can acquire basic characteristics of their ethnic origins from their families.*
  8. *I think even if people say that I am tolerant, they are only tolerant to the people with the same label and those close to that label. Today, it might be thought that gender discrimination has decreased but it has not. People do not realize how vexatious their words or the words of others are as they are not aware of such issues. Black Sea jokes and jokes about blonde women are not jokes to be laughed at. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is unfortunately unvoiced. People can easily say "disgusting". In this regard, we have a long way to go.*
  9. *I do not think that the problems of education system arise from lack of multicultural education. Will multicultural education eliminate the problems of the education system and then will there be more successful, more creative more intelligent and happier individuals? I think that the existing education system should be analyzed well.*
  10. *There are many sources of information in a world which is going towards abolition of borders. More importance should be attached to international events to connect cultures. Individuals should take part in those events to get to know different cultures. Xenophobia should not be a frightening concept. If there are such items like radical Islam, Zionism, etc., these items should be discussed, seeds of hate against other societies should be removed from the curriculum and statements involving items of tolerance should be inserted. Especially groups with limited opportunity that might oppose to multiculturalism should be studied more. The studies of multiculturalism by developed countries should serve as a model.*
  11. *People, who are part of the existing mode of thinking, perceive multiculturalism approaches as separatist. But actually, it is the opposite. Standardization approaches polarizes society and produce contrasts. Regime in Turkey aims to generate standardized humans. Implementation of uniform dress codes is an example of this. Multicultural education broadens people's horizon.*
  12. *I think our country is not ready for this. Different societies may distort these.*
  13. *Dynamics of countries should be defined well. Each outfit does not fit everybody. It should be studied well. More importance should be given to freedom but unitary structure should not be damaged by the concept of multicultural structure. The needs of the nation should be protected rather than the interests of international capital companies. Turkey is not mentally ready for this. True democracy comes with the freedom of expression. I think it is nothing more than a wishful thinking to accomplish this in such a system. In our country where every success is punished in a way and people who are honest and honorable lose, implementation of multiculturalism/multicultural education will take a long time. It becomes even harder because of the geopolitical position. Unless an understanding which highlights the human-centered social values prevails Multicultural education will be like eating pickle and dessert at the same time.*
  14. *I do not think that you should be completely free of your nationalist sentiments to become multicultural. As for Turkey, a person who adopts Atatürk nationalism can respect multiculturalism. It makes me sad to see that recently, it has fashionable to insult Atatürk rather than to crit-*

*icize him while discussing the ethnic equality issues. These discussions have been made in the West for a long time. I believe that some values that keep the society integrity must be protected even if I am not a supporter of conservatism. Otherwise, everything we say turns into the imposition of discourse and politicians manages issues by rhetoric rather than by actions as in the case in Turkey now. We should progress without damaging the values that keep the society up while the multiculturalism develops in the country. Recipes from the West do not work out good in the East. Turkey should develop a new plan in compliance with its dynamics rather than blindly implementing theories taken from the West.*

15. *There is not such a thing like multiculturalism in societies which have union of fate. This is a forced guidance. There are not different genes in a body. Turkish nation is like one body. Yet, there are different problematic organs. These should be cleaned and the integrity of the body should be achieved.*
16. *I think that this issue is a newly discussed one that has not been built on a solid basis in many developed countries. It is a long and difficult process to function in a country like Turkey that has been built on a single culture for more than a century.*
17. *Nobody should abandon the common tongue (Turkish) but nobody should neglect other languages, either. Language and culture differences create diversity. Each culture should be served by their languages in order not to get lost.*

As can be seen from the opinions given above, some academics think that multicultural education is not useful for Turkey and some voices their concerns related to implementation problems. Some other academics put forward opinions related to points to be considered while some academics stated that it will be a fruitful reform for Turkey and they advocate multicultural education.

## DISCUSSION

Multicultural education shows respect for such differences such as religion, language, eco-

nomical status, social class, gender, age, and ethnicity and views these differences as a kind of alternative education (Gay 1994; Banks 2008; Aydin 2012a). Many developed countries solved their cultural problems (ethnic origin, gender discrimination, etc.) with multicultural education. Turkey is home to many different cultures. Problems may arise among the individuals living in the same house because of different opinions and therefore it is highly natural that problems may arise among people from different cultures. People's respect towards each other will increase and these problems will be solved when such concepts like empathy, tolerance, democracy which are principles of multiculturalism are adopted (Banks 2008). Multicultural education should be integrated into Turkish Education System in order to eliminate or minimize the cultural or ethnic problems found in Turkey (Aydin 2012a). In this survey, it is seen that majority of academics (92%) perceives the multicultural education as an advantageous kind of education. The results of the surveys carried out both in Turkey and world are in this direction.

Bigatti et al. (2012) studied the perception, belief and behaviors of lecturers towards multicultural education and whether these variables changes according to the titles or departments of the lecturers in a mixed research carried out at a big city university in the US. In the qualitative part of the survey, such questions as "how do you define multicultural education", "how are you interested in this education" (what do you do for this education to come true), "what are the benefits of multicultural education" and "what are the obstacles before the multicultural education" were addressed to lecturers. As a result of this research, the results indicate that lecturers define multicultural education by using different teaching pedagogies and materials. Additionally, lecturers stated that they make use of different materials while implementing multicultural education. Moreover lecturers identified the most important of benefit as the contributions of multicultural education to learning of students and the biggest obstacle before the multicultural education as the student resistance towards this education. In the quantitative part of the research, it is pointed out that there are differences among the opinions of lecturers related to multicultural education based on their titles. As a result of the study, it is found out that a very small group stated adverse opinions

and a thumping majority of 340 lecturers who completed the survey demonstrated positive attitude and behaviors towards multicultural education. A similar research to Bigatti et al. (2012) was carried out by Johnson and Inoue (2003) in Guam University and it was pointed out that the biggest obstacle before the multicultural education is negative behaviors of lecturers. Likewise, the majority of academics in Turkey is of the opinion that lecturers in the faculty of education should be given specific trainings by experts. Otherwise, teachers as the practitioners of multicultural education will not be sufficient and very serious problems will emerge while implementing multicultural education.

As academics expressed, teachers have the greatest responsibility to help students learn such concepts like equality, tolerance, empathy and peace which are inevitable issues of multicultural education. The opinions of academics on how teachers should be trained in terms of multicultural education are is that teachers first develop their own perceptions and attitudes of multicultural education. Teachers can implement multicultural education in the best way if they accept the naturalness of cultural differences and the need to behave everybody equally. The role of teachers which is the most important role in multicultural education has led many researchers to study this issue. Taylor (1999) studied teachers of primary and secondary level in his study titled "Teachers Attitudes' toward Multicultural Education". The results of that study points out that 82% of teachers agreed that their work load will increase if the schools gives multicultural education, 84% agreed that teachers have the responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural background, 88% agreed that being an effective teacher means being culturally aware, 88% agreed that they can learn cultural backgrounds of students from the students, 84% agreed that they have to be aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds in their classroom, 88% agreed that all students need cultural awareness. 80% of the participants disagreed with the idea that differences should be emphasized in some courses. Moreover, in that study it was pointed out that teachers find multicultural education useful, colleges should prepare teachers for diversity, multicultural teacher training should be a prerequisite for this education, and teachers with multicultural awareness are more effective.

Ford and Quinn (2010) study on the perceptions of 113 teacher candidates related to multi-

cultural education in John Carroll University. The results suggest that teacher candidates find training with student groups with cultural differences satisfactory (75%), they see it necessary to be aware of students' cultural backgrounds (78%), they see it necessary to encourage students to be proud of their cultures (71%) and they see it necessary to respect students with different cultures (88%). In this study academics are asked about how to train teachers in the field of multicultural education and results are similar to Ford and Quinn (2010). Generally, academics in Turkey think that teachers should respect students from different cultures.

Estupian (2010) studies the perceptions of students of associate degree teacher certification program and professors in California State University and found out that all participants think that these programs prepare them to be teachers at classes involving different student groups. Moreover, teacher candidates expressed that teachers should graduate from certification programs with the ability to implement multicultural education. Additionally, majority of the participants expressed the need for a well-prepared multicultural education program. Academics in Turkey think that teachers should be subject to multicultural education training programs before the implementation of multicultural education system.

Muniz et al. (2010) tried to learn opinions of undergraduate students related to multicultural education in their study. Researchers' results pointed out that majority of the students had positive attitudes and beliefs for multicultural education. Moreover, students had the idea that working with groups from different cultures would increase sharing and provide equality. Additionally, participants expressed that multicultural approaches and strategies should be put into use in order for an effective multicultural education.

Bekerman (2004) studied gains of Muslim and Jewish students going to the same school thanks to multicultural education in Israel. As a result of the study in which opinions of families were collected, it was found out that multicultural education increased the success of students who are from different cultures and improved their understanding and respect towards each other. As can be understood from this research, conflicts arising from cultural differences are solved and academic success of students increase in countries where multicultural education is implemented.

## CONCLUSION

Researches carried out in the field of multicultural education shows that lecturers, teachers, school principals, students and parents support multicultural education and find multiculturalism positive. When multicultural education is taken into consideration from the perspectives of lecturers, teachers, school principals, students and parents, these requirements emerge:

1. Multicultural education should be offered by professional teachers,
2. Extensive certification programs should be prepared for teachers to be experts in the field of multicultural education,
3. Lecturers and teachers who provide multicultural education should be individuals who are fair, respectful of cultural differences and have a high understanding of multiculturalism,
4. A very good education program should be prepared in order for multicultural education to be achieved.
5. Multicultural education should start at kindergarten,
6. Multicultural education should be integrated into the contents of all courses.
7. Appropriate materials should be used in compliance with appropriate (multicultural) method-technique-strategies.

These requirements were also mentioned by academics in this study.

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