



JSSE

[Journal of
Social Science
Education](#)

2021, Vol. 20(1) 91-117

Edited by:
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Article

Multicultural Competencies of Social Studies Teachers: A Qualitative Study

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Keywords: social studies teacher, multicultural education, competencies, education of refugee students.

Purpose: Turkey is a country hosting many people of diverse religious beliefs (e.g., Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) and a great variety of ethnic origins (e.g., Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Slavs, Arabs, Romanians and Kurds). It is also subject to continuous migratory flows from neighboring countries and beyond. Due to these factors, it has become increasingly evident that a more multicultural educational approach is warranted. In this study, researchers analyzed the level of competency in teachers required for the implementation of such approaches within the framework of individual/personal, classroom, and institution/school levels in order to identify the capabilities of social studies teachers' multicultural competencies.

Method: In this study, researchers used a basic qualitative research design. Using a semi-structured interview technique, one-on-one interviews were conducted with 16 teachers from 8 schools with different socio-economic backgrounds and foreign student numbers. The data was analyzed with a thematic analysis approach.

Findings: What was found in the course of the work? This will refer to analysis, discussion, or results. The findings of the study showed that teachers' multicultural competencies were weak in individual/personal, institutional/school levels and in the integration of cultural characteristics into teaching at the classroom level. However, participating teachers indicated stronger multicultural competencies in other subcategories of the classroom level.

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Suggested citation:

Karadağ, Y., Kesten, A., Özden, D. Ö. (2021): *Multicultural Competencies of Social Studies Teachers - A Qualitative Study*. Journal of Social Science Education 20 (1). <https://doi.org/10.4119/jsse-3473>

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests: none

1 INTRODUCTION

The Turkish Republic's multiculturalism is a legacy handed down from its predecessor, the vastly multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-confessional Ottoman Empire. The Empire covered a substantial geographical area over three continents and contained followers of all three Abrahamic religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) and many ethnicities (e.g., Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Slavs, Romanians, Albanians, Tatars, Arabs, Assyrians, Kurds and Gypsies). This vast Empire was also well known for its relative tolerance of its minorities owing to its much-vaunted Millet System (Karpaz, 1985). This diversity left a broad society structure in the Anatolia, the center of the Empire, a diversity inherited by the newly established Turkish nation state (Kazgan, 1983). However, the nation-state structures and nationalist movements that emerged in Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries also affected the Republic of Turkey where particular importance was given to efforts to highlight the Turkish identity (Güvenç, 1993). This played a key role in the study of Turkish identity, language and culture (Atatürk Supreme Council for Culture, Language and History, 2020). On the other hand, there is a limited number of multicultural studies on the identities, languages and cultures of other ethnic groups. This is due to multiculturalism being described by many as a concept that disrupts national unity and something that damages the unitary state structure (Cırık, 2008). The dominance of the nation-state concept and the acceptance of anyone connected to the Republic of Turkey with a citizenship bond as Turkish can be argued as further reasons for the lack of attention to other cultural, linguistic and religious identities in the country (Demir, 2010). Because of these reasons, content and concepts about multiculturalism have not been given enough space in teaching programs in Turkey (Açıkalın, 2010; Akhan & Yalçın, 2016; Cırık, 2008; Keskin & Yaman, 2014; Şimşek et al., 2019) and only a small number of studies concerning multiculturalism had been carried out in the country by the turn of the 21st Century (Günay & Aydın, 2015).

The start of Turkey's accession process to the European Union and the arrangements made by Turkey within the framework of the European Union harmonization laws in the early 2000s have contributed to the acceleration of the studies on multiculturalism. Within the framework of said harmonization laws of the European Union, studies were carried out on international social and cultural phenomena where educational environments endeavored to accommodate the diverse linguistic, cultural and religious characteristics of different groups of people residing in Anatolia (Cırık, 2008). Furthermore, war, political and social upheaval and economic difficulties primarily from the Middle East, have contributed to a significant increase in the number of refugees entering Turkey in recent years. As of 2019, Turkey houses 3.9 million refugees within its borders which makes it the country hosting the most refugees in the world (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019). Undoubtedly, the country's geographical location as a 'bridge' between Asia and Europe and the "open-door policy" implemented in regards to the acceptance of refugees were major factors of this development (Pirinççi, 2018). Moreover, immigrants from the Central Asian Turkic Republics, Afghanistan and a host of countries from the African continent due to social and economic reasons have contributed to the development of the multicultural society structure in Turkey. Managing this

process properly and ensuring much needed social cohesion have become important in Turkey as in many other countries who experience the same phenomena (Karadağ, 2019). Accordingly, it is fair to state that the number of studies on multiculturalism in Turkey have in the last decade (Günay & Aydin, 2015) and the concept of multiculturalism has become a topic of discussion in many areas, particularly in education. Accordingly, the notion of multiculturalism has been addressed under the following titles in this study: i) multicultural education, ii) multicultural education and the education of refugee students in Turkey and iii) studies on multicultural education in Turkey.

1.1 Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is an approach based on the idea that students should have equal learning opportunities in schools, regardless of their gender, social class, ethnicity, language or cultural characteristics (Banks, 2015). In schools applying this approach; (i) topics are prepared by taking into account the cultural heritage, experiences and perspectives of different students, thus allowing learners to recognize their own culture and so they can feel being proud of their positive self-perception and identity; (ii) mistakes made in the education of students with different cultural characteristics are recognized and aim ought to be minimized; (iii) stereotypes about various groups in society aim to be prevented and (iv) pupils are taught how to communicate with different students from a variety of backgrounds (Gay, 1994a, 1994b).

Due to its nature, the social studies course comes to the fore in realizing multicultural education, as the aim of the course is to develop young people's ability to make informed and logical decisions in a mutually interdependent world within a democratic society with cultural diversity (National Council for The Social Studies, 1994). Accordingly, the place of multicultural education in social studies curriculum is of great importance. Multicultural education in social studies is necessary for students in that it gives them sufficient knowledge about their immediate surroundings and other communities in their countries; It emphasizes common ideals and values of diversity in society; and advocates for democracy, equality and social justice (Zong, Garcia & Wilson, 2002). Through social studies education, students can understand the differences existing in society and solve problems with tolerance, mutual respect, respect for differences, responsibilities and a high level of awareness (Rufaida, 2017). Furthermore, the effective handling of multicultural education in social studies teaching is also valuable for students in understanding the mutual relations of people living in different geographies around the world and to have a versatile world view as a global citizen. Indeed, the global refugee problem experienced today is related to the education received by students in today's social studies classes (Reynolds, 2019). At this point, the idea of creating a better nation and world, which is one of the main tenets of multicultural education, can be realized by individuals who can make effective decisions and are aware of their responsibilities within social studies education (Zong et al., 2002). Realizing multicultural education efficiently and understanding its features depends on teachers. Educators should first learn the necessary concepts, principles, theories and practices in multicultural education and develop the required pedagogical knowledge and skills needed to teach the course effectively. They should also

examine their own racial and ethnic attitudes to respond creatively and effectively to the increasing diversity they are encountered with in the classroom (Banks, 2014). Indeed, this whole process requires teachers to have multicultural competencies and sensitivities.

There are various studies and classifications regarding multicultural teacher competencies in the literature (Banks, 1991; Gay, 2000; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). One of these studies belongs to Banks (1991). Based on Banks' research, Taylor and Quintana (2003), addressed multicultural teacher competencies along personal/individual, classroom level and institutional/school lines. In terms of competencies at the personal/individual level, teachers should (i) explore their own cultural identity, (ii) be familiar with the history of their own cultural identity, (iii) evaluate the level of racism and cultural centralization in their society, and (iv) realize their ability to use bi-cultural communication skills. Within the context of the classroom, teachers should possess capacities including (i) not seeing minority students as 'others', (ii) understanding the importance of classroom culture and its impact on other students, (iii) creating a respectful classroom environment using curricula, teaching methods and materials intended for multiculturalism, and (iv) improving communication between students and themselves. At the institutional/school level, teachers should possess the ability to (i) address open tasks or philosophies dealing with multiculturalism and reflecting them onto school policies and practices, (ii) create multicultural environments and provide active support, and (iii) provide administrative and financial support for multicultural education practices.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) also provide six different characteristics defining teachers with multicultural competencies. These are as follows;

1. They have sociocultural consciousness. Teachers recognize that there are many ways to perceive reality, and society's social order influences these ways.
2. They approve the views of students from different backgrounds and see students as a learning source for all students instead of seeing their differences as inconveniences.
3. They see themselves as responsible and capable of making educational changes, which will in turn render schools more responsive to all students.
4. They understand how students build knowledge and how they can aid their students in the process of building said knowledge.
5. They know about the lives of their students.
6. They prepare an ideal educational setting by using the knowledge obtained from students about their lives in teaching unfamiliar topics.

1.2 Multicultural Education in Turkey and The Education of Refugee Students

Within the scope of multicultural education in Turkey, it is observed that emphasis on the Inclusive Education Model and "General Competencies for Teaching Profession" accepted by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is centered on organizing teaching content and activities by taking into consideration personal and cultural differences. In regards to

competencies for the teaching profession, emphasis is placed on; teachers considering the natural, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the environment they work in; arranging course contents and teaching materials tailored for students with different learning styles, skills and interests; realizing the existence of individual differences and acknowledging them; and organizing activities and celebrations supporting diversity in schools (Aktekin, 2017; MoNE, 2017).

Similarly, when examining the social studies curriculum in Turkey, diversity becomes an important component of the course. In addition, achievements such as questioning prejudices about differences in order to live in harmony in society, respecting the variety of cultural characteristics of other individuals, recognizing and respecting different cultures and questioning stereotypes about different cultures constitute a significant place in the program. Furthermore, through the social studies curriculum, students can acquire skills (e.g., empathy, critical thinking, cooperation, innovative thinking, social participation, identifying stereotypes and prejudices) and values (e.g., justice, peace, solidarity, sensitivity, equality, freedom, respect, love and helpfulness) that are essential in multicultural education (MoNE, 2018).

When analyzing the social studies undergraduate level program in Turkey, which is one of the most important courses on multiculturalism and multicultural education, reveals that there have been no courses directly related to multiculturalism or multicultural education. However other courses have addressed themes individually such as equality, freedom, human rights, language, culture, ethnic origin, the education of special needs students, learning differences and cultural diversity, which are the building blocks of multiculturalism and multicultural education. "Special Education and Inclusion", which is one among such courses and a vocational knowledge course, includes subjects such as; individualization of education, mainstreaming and support special education services, characteristics of different disability and ability groups and approaches and teaching strategies for different groups. The "Human Rights and Democracy Education" field education course discusses topics such as; introducing the concepts of democracy, freedom, equality; different understandings of democracy, rights, freedoms, children's and women's rights and problems stemming from human rights. The "Character and Value Education" course deals with issues such as intercultural differentiation in character and value education and the culture of coexistence and the crisis of values and education in modern and multicultural societies. In vocational knowledge elective courses, "Inclusive Education" deals with the definition, approaches and strategies of inclusive education, inclusive curriculum and materials, attitudes and values in inclusive education, characteristics that differentiate students, effective communication, language used, differentiation of teaching and examples and methods and techniques. "Individualizing and Adapting Teaching", one of the vocational knowledge courses, deals with the importance of individualization in education, what needs to be done, and the long-term and short-term arrangements that can be made in classes and schools. Besides these courses, "Culture and Language", one of the general knowledge electives, addresses the sources and elements of culture, individual and social culture, national identity and language, national cultures, globalization, multilingualism and multiculturalism. One of the elective courses of the field education, "Contemporary World Issues" addresses ecological and social problems, population, racism, human rights issues; and the "Globalization

and Society" course includes issues such as pluralism and multiculturalism, and multicultural education practices. Considering all these lessons and their content, it is possible to suggest that the social studies undergraduate degree program in Turkey does give a degree of importance to multiculturalism and multicultural education (Council of Higher Education, 2018). After evaluating all of these courses and their content, it is possible to indicate that the importance put on multiculturalism and multicultural education has increased in Turkey in recent years.

The number of foreign children who were of school age by the year 2018 in Turkey was 1,234,439. Of these, 728,211 (58.99%) were attending school (MoNE, 2018b). The number of foreign students still at school age and waiting to begin education was 506,228. This number is increasing daily. Of those receiving education, the majority of students were Syrian (585.668), followed by Iraqi (57.089), Afghan (29.136) and Iranian (7.660) (MoNE, 2018b). Two different models have been adopted for the education of these students. In the first model, foreign students are educated in Turkish alongside Turkish citizens, while in the second model, students are taught in their mother tongue in temporary education centers (Aktekin, 2017). "The Foreign Student Information Management System (YÖBİS)" has been developed to organize the students' conditions in schools, track their academic development and offer graduation information (Aktekin, 2017; MoNE, 2018b).

In 2016, the MoNE prepared a plan to meet foreign students' educational needs. Within the scope of this plan, the "Inclusive Education Model" was adopted, and studies were carried out primarily for language teaching, integration of students into schools, school construction and regulation of teacher competencies. In line with this model, 1582 educators and 50.348 Syrian teachers were trained through the "Education of Syrian Teachers" project carried out under cooperation between the MoNE and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) within the scope of in-service training to increase the quality of activities carried out in temporary education centers. Furthermore, 1185 school counselors were trained as mentors for teachers with foreign students in their classes. In addition, 105,512 teachers with foreign students were given training and a handbook was prepared for them (Aktekin, 2017; UNICEF, 2018). Another study carried out was to expand on inclusive education through 10 modules as in the following; Introduction to inclusive education; theoretical and conceptual environment; inclusive teaching and assessment; inclusive learning environments (physical and psychosocial), school, family and community partnership; working with children with disabilities; teaching Turkish as a second language; working with children who have been subjected to violence; working with children under temporary protection; working with children affected by migration and terrorism; and working with children affected by natural disasters (MoNE, 2018c). To get teachers more acquainted with the new education model, 1672 teachers were coached as mentors in all 81 provinces of the country (MoNE, 2018c). Moreover, in 2017, The Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) program was launched by the MoNE, the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, The Turkish Red Crescent and UNICEF to increase the participation rates of refugee students in education. With this program, financial support was provided to the families of refugee students attending schools (MoNE, 2017b; UNICEF, 2018). In 2018, the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), which aimed to give a second chance to refugee students in the 10-18

age group who did not attend school, was launched for the same purpose. Within the scope of the ALP, certified training and language courses approved by the MoNE were provided in 70 public education centers operating in 12 provinces (MoNE, 2018d; UNICEF, 2018). Various units work collectively within the scope of the education of foreign students and develop education policies throughout the country. However, despite the multitude of reforms and improvement efforts in fields including curriculum, material and technology, the need to adopt multicultural education approaches for the education of foreign students is increasing by the day. Furthermore, taking into consideration the studies on multiculturalism throughout the world and the educational environments developed within the scope of refugee education, these efforts are still in their infancy in Turkey.

1.3 Studies on Multicultural Education in Turkey

Although there have been studies conducted in Turkey in different fields related to multicultural education, this section references studies about issues related to the criticisms of multicultural education in the country and the attitudes, opinions, perceptions and competencies of teachers toward multicultural education. Critics of Turkish multicultural education generally points out that although there have been studies on multicultural education, the number is still insufficient and that the concept has not been fully comprehended. For example, Cırık (2008) points out that the concept of multicultural education has been misunderstood in Turkey and has been perceived by some as an application that could divide the country and harm the unitary state structure. Similarly, Açıkalın (2010) expressed that the effects of the multicultural education approach in Turkey haven't made a significant impact. Besides such research, there are also those examining the modes of multicultural education within the social studies curricula from its inception to the present day in Turkey. One of these studies belongs to Akhan and Yalçın (2016) which examines the place of multicultural education in social studies curricula in 1961, 1962, 1968, 1988, 1993, 1998 and 2005. An analysis of the general aims and achievements of social studies curricula reveals that references related to multicultural education were included more in each renewed program. Accordingly, 4 of the 18 goals (22.2%) in the 1962 primary school program and 4 of the 28 goals (14.3%) in the secondary school program were found to be related to multicultural education. Furthermore, 6 of the 17 general goals (35.3%) in the program of the 2005 social studies curriculum were found to be suitable for multicultural education while 31 out of 174 educational targets (17.8%) complied with the principles of multicultural education. Similarly, upon analyzing the results of the studies on multicultural education in the 2005 social studies program, Cırık (2008) found that 16 of the 93 learning objectives (17.2%) in the social studies course were related to multicultural education; while Keskin and Yaman (2014) found the ratio of objectives emphasizing multicultural education to all attainments approximately 13%. Şimşek et al. (2019) found that only 63 out of 2675 learning attainments, that is, 2.3%, were related to multiculturalism in Primary Education programs (Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy, Social Studies, Play and Physical Activities, Folk Culture, Life Science, Music, Physical Education and Sports, Law and Justice, Communication and Presentation Skills, Basic

Religious Knowledge, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, English, Turkish, Science, History of the Turkish Revolution and Kemalism and Mathematics). Specific to the 2018 social studies curriculum, it was determined that only 12 of the 131 learning acquisitions (9.1%) were related to multiculturalism. Şen (2019) research which analyzed the form of citizenship education in the 2018 social studies curriculum, shows that the program intensively reflected traditional citizenship education, emphasized learning at the level of knowledge, neglected the teaching of citizenship skills, was unsubstantial in terms of recognizing social differences, was based on the concept of de-politicized citizenship, avoided the concept of human rights with a single problematic reference and gave priority to the collective (state, country, nation, etc.) over the individual. Şen (2019) also found that an ethno-cultural ideology of nationalism prevailed in the program. Indeed, considering all of these studies, it is possible to state that multicultural education has been included in the curricula over the past sixty years. However, this has been considered insufficient and has not met the desired expectations. Of course, upon evaluation it should be taken into consideration that studies on multicultural education conducted in Turkey are still in their infancy while the multicultural education development process goes back as early as the 19th century in countries such as the United States and Canada (Sielke, 2014).

There are various studies examining teachers' attitudes (Çekin, 2013; Özdemir & Dil, 2013), opinions (Aslan, 2017) and perceptions (Başarır, Sarı & Çetin, 2014; Rengi & Polat, 2014) within the scope of multiculturalism. In the research conducted by Çekin (2013), one of the studies that examined teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education found that on the whole, religious education teachers had a positive attitude towards multicultural education. Özdemir and Dil (2013) also examined the attitudes of high school teachers working in various branches towards multicultural education and found them to be positive. Aslan's (2017) research, which examined social studies teachers' views on multiculturalism, yielded remarkable results. In this study, female teachers defined multicultural education as one given to individuals with different beliefs, while male teachers defined it as the education given to students with different beliefs and races (Aslan, 2017). Considering the views of male and female teachers on multicultural education, it is possible to state that their thoughts were solely religion and race-based and did not consider other dimensions of multicultural education such as age, gender, culture, language, social class, disability and different sexual orientations. This was due to the teachers' insufficient knowledge about multicultural education and the view that multiculturalism is considered solely within the confines of race and religion, a common misconception in Turkey. Similarly, Başarır et al. (2014) examined the multicultural education perceptions of teachers in secondary and high schools and found that teachers addressed multiculturalism in terms of race, ethnicity, language, religion and social class, but failed to recognize its age, gender, culture, language, disability and sexual orientation dimensions. Other results in Aslan's (2017) research evinced a deficiency in knowledge from teachers regarding different cultures and that they were faced with negative situations in the classroom with their pupils such as students excluding each other, exhibiting biased behavior and disrespecting each other. Another study examining teachers' perceptions of multicultural education belongs to Rengi and Polat (2014) who examined classroom teachers' perceptions of cultural differences and intercultural sensitivities. The results obtained indicated that the most striking

phenomenon in terms of the cultural difference perceptions of classroom teachers was linguistic differences and a high level of intercultural sensitivity.

There are various studies on multicultural teacher competencies with teachers from different branches (Bulut & Başbay, 2014; İsmetoğlu, 2017; Kotluk, 2018; Polat, 2013). For example, the study by Bulut and Başbay (2014), conducted in the survey model with 413 teachers working in primary, secondary, general high schools and vocational-technical high schools, concluded that teachers perceived themselves to be competent. The study conducted by İsmetoğlu (2017) examined the multicultural competence levels and quality of work-life perceptions of 327 branch teachers (Turkish, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Ability courses and Vocational courses). This study used the relational survey model and found the multicultural competencies of the branch teachers to be close to high. In the quantitative dimension of the study in which Kotluk (2018) worked with mixed research methods, they concluded that the self-efficacy perceptions of preschool, primary, secondary and high school teachers regarding education sensitive to cultural values were at a high level. Polat's (2013) study examined the multicultural competence perceptions of secondary education teachers with mixed research methods, and in the quantitative dimension determined that they had a high level of multicultural competence perception. An overall assessment of the studies conducted to determine the multicultural competencies of teachers in various branches illustrated that teachers had a high or sufficient level of multicultural competence. Undoubtedly, this result is a welcome development for a country like Turkey, which hosts a large refugee population and students from different ethnic groups. However, it should be taken into consideration that these studies were mostly carried out through quantitative methods and the data was obtained through scales and questionnaires. Scales and questionnaires are a data collection method widely used in areas such as sociology and psychology, and especially in education. Although scales and questionnaires provide an advantage to researchers in many subjects, they have disadvantages also, especially in providing in-depth knowledge and information about the case examined, motivating participants, the participants' correct understanding of the items of the scale or questionnaire and determining the accuracy of the answers given by the participants (Balci, 2020). Indeed, in studies which examined teachers' views on multiculturalism with qualitative research methods (Aslan, 2017; Başarır et al., 2014), it is apparent that teachers still did not have a clear understanding of multiculturalism. Undoubtedly, this situation causes the quantitative and qualitative research results in the literature to yield different results.

In the literature, there are various studies conducted with mixed and quantitative research methods regarding the multicultural competencies of teachers. However, there was no research directly focused on determining the multicultural competencies of social studies teachers. Therefore, it is important to determine the multicultural class environment competencies of social studies teachers who work in such surroundings and who are tasked with equipping their students with the necessary knowledge, skills and values regarding cultural differences and citizenship awareness in the contemporary world.

In this context, the aim of this study was to examine the multicultural competencies of social studies teachers. The following questions were put forward for research questions in the study:

1. What are the multicultural competence levels of social studies teachers at the personal/individual level?
2. What are the multicultural competence levels of social studies teachers at the classroom level?
3. What are the multicultural competence levels of social studies teachers at the institutional/school level?

2 METHOD

2.1 The Model of the Research

In this study, the qualitative research approach was adopted, and the basic qualitative research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) was used. The basic qualitative research method, which is one of the most used qualitative research designs in educational research, focuses on how individuals interpret facts in their lives, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they add to their experiences. The primary purpose of the basic qualitative research design is to reveal and interpret these meanings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this context, this design was preferred as this study aimed to determine how social studies teachers perceive and interpret their competencies in multicultural education environments and what meanings they attribute to their respective experiences.

2.2 Participants

The participant group in the study consists of social studies teachers working in Samsun province in Turkey. The data collection process started in March 2017 and finished in June 2019. Maximum variation sampling and deviant case sampling, which are among purposeful sampling methods, were used to identify the participants. The maximum diversity sampling was employed primarily, and the report of the Middle Black Sea Development Agency TR83 Region Districts Socio-Economic Development Index (2014) on the socio-economic levels of the districts of the Samsun province was analyzed. This analysis showed that Atakum, İlkadım, Tekkeköy and Canik Districts, which had four different socio-economic levels, were selected based on their development rankings. This working group was determined to obtain data from teachers working in different socio-economic regions. Afterwards, within the context of deviant (i.e., extreme) case sampling, the data related to the number of foreign students in secondary schools affiliated by the MoNE in the Districts of Atakum, İlkadım, Tekkeköy and Canik were obtained from the Samsun Provincial Directorate of National Education and analyzed. In light of such data, one school with the highest and another with the least number of foreign students in each district were identified since the aim of this study was to reflect the possible changes in teachers' perceptions about cultural sensitivity competencies in schools with a high or a low number of students from diverse backgrounds. The number of foreign students in schools was not included in this study as permission to do so could not be obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education. As a result, two volunteer social studies teachers, each from eight schools in four districts were selected, and data was obtained from sixteen social studies

teachers in total. The participants were given pseudonym beginning with the first letter of the district where they work. Descriptive information about the participants is provided in Table 1:

Table 1. Descriptive Details of the Participants

Participant*	Gender	Years of Service	District
Tamer	Male	5	Tekkeköy
Tayfun	Male	10	Tekkeköy
Tenzile	Female	15	Tekkeköy
Temel	Male	5	Tekkeköy
Cansu	Female	22	Canik
Canan	Female	17	Canik
Ceren	Female	7	Canik
Ceyhun	Male	15	Canik
İlknur	Female	19	İlkadım
İdil	Female	20	İlkadım
İsmail	Male	32	İlkadım
İrem	Female	17	İlkadım
Aslı	Female	33	Atakum
Aylin	Female	24	Atakum
Ayşegül	Female	24	Atakum
Açelya	Female	26	Atakum

* All names are pseudonyms

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

In the basic qualitative research design, data is usually collected through interviews, observations or document analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, the data was obtained by using the semi-structured interview technique (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The interview questions were prepared based on the “multicultural teacher competencies” determined by Taylor and Quintana (2003), who used Banks’ (1991) multicultural education outlines where the sections considered to better reflect the characteristics of the research group from these competence areas constituted the framework of the interview form. Details on the multicultural teacher competencies discussed in the context of the study are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Multicultural Teachers' Competencies

Competency Level	
Personal/Individual Level	Exploring cultural identity and being familiar with personal cultural history.
Classroom Level	Understanding the classroom culture and its impact on learning. Creating a classroom environment which respects all cultures represented in the classroom and school. Communicating with all students and ensuring communication between students. Placing students' cultural characteristics into teaching.
Institutional/School Level	Organizing multicultural educational activities. Providing administrative and financial support for multicultural education.

Source: Adapted from Taylor & Quintana, 2003

Some of the questions asked in the interview were (i) 'To what extent did you explore your own cultural identity?', (ii) 'What kind of activities do you do to create a respectful classroom environment for your students with different cultural values?', and (iii) 'If I worked with you at the institutional/school level, what kind of activities being carried out about the characteristics regarding multiculturalism would I observe from you?'. Probe questions were also used to obtain more in-depth data. Two experts examined the interview questions for validity and reliability, and researchers made necessary corrections. Moreover, the interview questions were finalized after a preliminary interview with two teachers not participating in the study. The participants were informed that their identity would remain confidential. Interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and then transcribed. Three authors of this study conducted the data analysis separately and the findings were unified as the result of this analysis.

The thematic analysis approach was used for data analysis. Thematic analysis refers to researching and defining categories that have meaning concerning research questions and can establish links between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Researchers identify patterns in the data using thematic analysis and determine and categorize themes. After identifying relationships between categories, coding is revealed while maintaining its connections with independent data sources (Ayres, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis focuses on three general objectives, which are to examine common aspects of the data, differences, and relationships between them (Gibson & Brown, 2009). The themes and patterns in the data can be determined either inductively or deductively (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, researchers used the deductive approach, which is based on researchers performing a more detailed analysis of the data within the scope of the main fields created by the researchers and influenced by their theoretical or analytical interests in the field. Accordingly, the multicultural teacher competencies determined by Taylor and Quintana (2003) were established as the basis, and the personal/individual level, classroom level and institutional/school level competencies formed the themes. Categories and codes were specified around the created themes, and the common aspects, differences and relationships in the data were examined.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Individual/Personal Level

The participants' multicultural competencies consist of sub-categories of details concerning the exploration and the history of their own cultural identity.

3.1.1 Exploring one's own cultural identity

Except for two participating teachers, the majority of the participants stated that they did not exert any special efforts to explore their own cultural identity. Some of the participants stated that they did not explore their own cultural identity as they considered it within the framework of people-nation; therefore, they believed that it was sufficient to be familiar with Turkish history. However, others stated that they did not consider it essential to explore their own cultural identity. Some of the views were as follows:

Ceyhun "... I did not do general research, frankly speaking, I did not see it important to know that my lineage goes back to this or that ..."

Aslı "... I know my past as a nation, I am part of it and I did not do any special research..."

Although the participants stated that they did not undertake any special research, they expressed that they got the details about their own cultural identity through asking their family elders or using the new e-government pedigree application. For example, Temel said, "I was wondering where we came from, but I did not research by going to the source itself. I asked family elders." Likewise, Aylin and Cansu stated that they obtained the information from their mothers and fathers, and then they confirmed this information through the e-government pedigree application. Aylin's thoughts on this subject were as follows:

"... I learned it based on the information my father told me. There is also a pedigree in the e-government, and I confirmed what my father said through it..."

Unlike other participants, some of the teachers said that they showed special efforts to learn their own cultural identity. For example, Canan went through registry office archives through an acquaintance and learned about her cultural identity. İrem stated that she got extensive knowledge about her cultural identity through consultation with a large number of family members. It can be said that the participants who researched their cultural identity benefitted from the e-government family tree application, from asking family elders and by accessing the archives in the registry office.

3.1.2 Knowledge about the history of one's own cultural identity

The majority of the participants were found to possess rather general and superficial knowledge about the history of their cultural identity. The main reason for this may be that the teachers did not consider it necessary to carry out any research about their cultural identity as

they defined themselves within a broad national identity. The information they obtained was incomplete or inaccurate. Some of the quotations supporting this theme were as follows:

Tamer "I just looked at the pedigree and did not do any research. It was seen that we were in the center of Artvin... We do not know if we have any relatives during the Dardanelles War and the War of Independence, so I do not have any information from the past."

Tenzile "I looked into it as I am a historian, but everyone would say something different. For example, my grandfather used to say that they were from the Terme District of Samsun, but my grandfather's elder brother used to say Trabzon. We learned that we were not from there when the pedigree application came out, but we could not go into more detail."

Ceyhun "I know my father, my grandfather, I mean the recent past. I am not someone who believes too much in the ethnicity concept or that my background is important. For this reason, I do not know much."

Two participants (i.e., İrem and İsmail), on the other hand, were considered to have more in-depth knowledge about their cultural identity due to the detailed information provided. İrem's detailed research on her cultural identity and the consistency of the information obtained from the family elders improved her level of knowledge. Moreover, İsmail, despite not conducting any particular research other than asking his family elders, also obtained detailed awareness of his heritage due to the more in-depth knowledge of his family elders. Based on these findings, it can be said that curiosity about history, a desire for research and inquiry, and effective communication with family members were needed for the participants to possess a more comprehensive knowledge of the history of their cultural identity.

3.2 Classroom Level

Teachers' multicultural competencies at the classroom level are comprised of subcategories, including understanding classroom culture, understanding the impact of classroom culture on learning, creating a classroom environment that respects different cultures, communicating with students and ensuring communication among students, and placing students' cultural characteristics into teaching.

3.2.1 Understanding classroom culture

Participants generally defined classroom culture as a vivid environment that reflects the cultural diversity bringing differences together. For instance, İdil gave a voice to these thoughts, saying, "*... cultural diversity is coming, individuals who exhibit different behaviors with many different structures in the classroom...*" and Açelya said, "*... a colorful class is coming with differences...*" Furthermore, the participants mostly emphasized that the diversity in each class came together differently and a culture belonging to that class developed. Tayfun's statements, "Naturally, each class has a different culture. The atmosphere created here and the culture brought by child blends and interacts with others. This creates a different classroom environment..." supported these findings.

The participants stated that the cultural structure of each class was a result of many interactions. Interactions with the family, social environment and teachers were especially important in regards to the culture of the classroom. For example, İlknur's statements about the importance of family and social environment for the classroom culture supported this judgment:

"... families are much more conscious in some classes. For this reason, students are also conscious. However, in some classes, the low socioeconomic level of parents or social environment reflects onto the child unavoidably. This in turn affects the other students in the classroom. Therefore, I think the most important factors affecting the classroom culture are the family and social environment..."

On the other hand, Aylin's comments revealed that teachers were crucial elements in terms of influencing the behavior of the classroom and the students and that even the appearance of the pupil could be a reflection of his/her teacher: *"... for example, I know the students. I ask whose students they are. Then I can guess. This could be a student of this teacher because that student resembles that teacher in behavior and appearance..."*

3.2.2 Understanding the impact of the classroom culture on learning

All of the participants stated that classroom culture had a great impact on learning. While some participants focused on the positive effects of a classroom culture on learning based on the harmony of diversity, some participants expressed negative aspects. For instance, İdil said, *"... it has a great effect on learning because, when a classroom culture is formed, the consciousness to collaborate develops in the classroom, and this has a great impact on everything such as academic success, listening to the teacher, how to behave in the class and getting the right to talk"*. This comment emphasizes how a harmonious classroom increases group awareness and academic success, and facilitates the application of class rules. Moreover, Temel expressed that harmony in a classroom and a feeling of value nourished by classroom amity contributed to students' active learning process in the class saying *"... the classroom culture has a great impact on learning. Students express their ideas in some classes because they feel valuable, but in some classes, even if they know the answer to a question or feel they have something to share, the kids are hiding themselves."* Part of İlknur's view on the effects that arise when a positive classroom culture is not created was the following: *"... if a positive culture could not be created, there may be students who stand out constantly while I teach in the classroom, while others withdraw from the lesson so as not to stand out. They may experience fear of being excluded by others. They are afraid of what others will say and cannot move freely..."*

The participants stated that in classrooms where there was no harmonious classroom culture or a negative classroom culture was present, students exhibiting negative behavior generally affected their peers. In such an environment, students' interests towards lessons can decrease, classroom order cannot be ensured, a lack of help among peers can be observed, and a fear of being intensely criticized and feelings of exclusion can prevent students from attending the lesson. Tenzile expressed her view on this finding by saying, *"... the classroom culture definitely affects learning. Students who have bad habits or unwanted behaviors in*

negative classroom environments affect their friends and the course success among hardworking students decreases.”

3.2.3 Creating a classroom environment that respects different cultures

A great number of the participants stated that they paid attention to their approaches regarding students from diverse cultures, avoided discriminatory actions, and exhibited exemplary positive behaviors to create a classroom environment that respects diversity. In addition, these teachers attempted to become more acquainted with different cultures allowing students from such cultures to adapt to the class more easily. The teachers prevented pupils from exhibiting negative behaviors by being sensitive while creating, promoting and applying classroom rules. Canan remarked, *“What I care about most is not marginalizing. Everyone is equal in the whole class, regardless of language, religion, race, color, human is human. I pay attention to this...”* indicating that she avoided a discriminatory approach. İrem stated, on the other hand, *“... there are students of various ethnic backgrounds in the classroom. We ensure students from different ethnic backgrounds learn the rules in Turkey. At the same time, we are explaining to students from different ethnic backgrounds our rules, which state that Turkish students should respect them...”* showing that she paid attention to introducing and applying rules. Ceren said, *“I avoid generalizations. When I say generalization, I mean generalizations such as Syrians such and such or the socio-economic level of this neighborhood is low, and etc... We do not face problems with accommodating/integrating Syrian students in our school. Some schools face many such situations. The main reason for the absence of such problems here is the lower socio-cultural level of this school...”*. Here, Ceren expresses that she avoided prejudices arising from generalizing towards different cultures. Ceren also stated that no discriminatory or negative behaviors towards different cultures were exhibited at the school or classroom level, which was attributed mainly to the school’s low socio-economic level. It is considered that Ceren’s view on this is based on the fact that low socio-economic level families in Turkey find it easier to adapt and accept different cultures. Another reason behind such a view may be that the migrant Syrian and Turkish students being at the same socio-economic level contributed to the prevention of any problems.

Some of the participants stated that they drew attention to differences to create a respectful classroom environment and emphasized promoting values such as freedom and equality. They also ensured that students developed their empathy skills in order to make them understand individuals from different cultures and cooperated with parents and the guidance service when necessary. Contrary to these views, İdil and Ayşegül, who were working in schools with a high number of foreign students, stated that they experienced problems in their schools and classrooms, such as the participation of foreign students in the lessons and different cultural groups accepting each other. The teachers expressed the following to indicate that they could not find a solution in creating a respectful classroom environment due to the problems:

İdil "... there are constant problems in the school and classroom. Foreign students are locked together and they are not sharing with Turkish students. Turkish students do not approach them positively. When we try to explain the situation to Turkish students, they say they should not have come. So, I can't do anything individually in the school and classroom..."

Ayşegül "... in general, foreign students sit in the back row, they do not come to the lesson, they play outside, we cannot mark them absent, some come in without knocking the door at the end of the lesson, they fight at the breaks, we cannot do anything ..."

It is possible to state that the problems experienced by teachers in regards to creating a respectful classroom environment stemmed from the Turkish and foreign students' negative attitudes towards each other; students not sharing socially or culturally with each other; and foreign students' failing to adapt to the school and classroom culture. Although there are many reasons for the emergence of these problems, it can be said that language problems, cultural differences and social environments are most prominent.

3.2.4 Communicating with students and ensuring communication among students

The participants stated that, with a unifying style, they tried to expand students' different perspectives to ensure that they gained empathy skills to avoid discrimination, to communicate with students and to assure communication among students. Besides, some participants stated that they allowed foreign students to express themselves. The participants tried to communicate with students having language problems through body language and used a translator or a different language for better communication. They also intended to strengthen communication through games and drama activities. Some of the statements supporting these findings were as follows:

Tayfun "If the students do not know Turkish, I ensure they participate in the lesson through games. I consider game as a form of communication and when you say let's play, it draws in the child who normally stays out of the class. This case positively reflects on the class and me..."

Ayşegül "... foreign students can speak very little Turkish. Some can't speak at all. In such cases, I use their friends who can speak Turkish as translators. We try to communicate with our body language; sometimes, we try to speak in English. Between classes, I give children lessons on reading, writing and practical speaking..."

İlknur stated that she did drama activities to strengthen communication in her classes. She indicated that these activities captured the attention of many students in the classroom and strengthened communication. When the statements of the participants were analyzed, it was observed that many different techniques were used for communication. In addition to the efforts to connect with students to ensure appropriate communication among them, some teachers expressed noticeable problems in strengthening connections. For instance, İdil said, "... those who cannot speak Turkish are just sitting in the classroom. They cannot participate in any activities. I am trying to teach Turkish too, but I have not been educated on how to teach Turkish. I don't know how to do it. Kids do not want to communicate either because they do not understand what we are saying most of the time and remain as spectators..." İdil pointed

out that students were enrolled in schools without learning Turkish, did not understand the lessons, and had difficulties in communication. Thus, it can be said that some teachers' efforts to connect with students and provide communication among students were aimed to overcome the language problem.

3.2.5 Placing students' cultural characteristics into teaching

The findings of the study showed that a great number of the participants did not make any special efforts to place students' cultural characteristics into their teaching but acted within the scope of the related topics in the curriculum. When faced with a relevant topic in the curriculum, they tried to put different cultures into teaching by allowing these students to introduce their own culture and share examples from their lives. Aylin's statement of "... I share within the topics the memories and events of children who lived in those areas. I give examples from my own life..." supported these findings. Most of the participants explained their lack of special effort was due to their heavy workload and their concerns about meeting their agenda. Tenzile's statement which supports these findings were as follows;

"...frankly, there is no way followed on this matter. As a teacher, your hands are tried. You are explaining/outlining the topic and just when the child begins to comprehend it, you switch to another topic. The time is not enough. Like a horse race, we want to tell the children something within the limited time we have ..."

Three teachers, who showed extra effort in placing cultural characteristics into teaching, stated that they used games, held drama activities and gave homework to research different cultures. For instance, Canan stated the following about the cultural characteristics of the refugee students in the class to indicate that they benefited from drama and project assignments in integrating cultural features into the program: *"...within the topics of the social studies lesson, we have enacted through drama such activities such as asking for a girl's hand in marriage and sending off soldiers and married couples. I gave local dishes, clothes or jewelry as project assignments. We did a puzzle about the economic and cultural features of the geographical regions..."*

3.3 Institutional/School Level

The multicultural competencies of teachers at the school level is made up of subcategories consisting of organizing multicultural educational activities, administrative support towards multicultural education, and financial support towards multicultural education.

3.3.1 Organizing multicultural educational activities

The responses to the activities participating teachers performed for multicultural education at school level showed that 12 of the teachers did not prepare any activities. The participants provided various explanations for the reasons behind this subcategory. The reasons for doing no multicultural educational activities included deeming multicultural educational activities unnecessary due to the existence of some topics and activities within the program, time

constraints, and insufficient knowledge of their students. For instance, Ceyhun's statement of "... as an activity, I did not do any activities related to various cultures. Personally, I do only the activities in the textbooks, which are our guide. I can't say I'm doing any other activity..." expresses that he followed the textbooks for activities and did not do anything else. Tamer stated he could not fully know the students; thus, he could not do any activities by saying "... I did not do any activities involving multiculturalism. I'm new to the school so I am only slowly starting to know the students..." Although most of the participants did not do any activities related to multicultural education, they provided examples of activities that could be done and felt the need to express some activities performed by other teachers in their school or other schools. Although they had different ideas about activities or appreciated some of the activities they observed, their failure to do such activities themselves constituted a contradiction and an interesting finding for the study. Some of the related statements were as follows:

Cansu "... for example, I really liked what the private school did. Dividing the seven geographic regions into seven groups of students, they introduced them to the clothing of those regions..."

Açelya "... last year our music teacher made a choir while making preparations for the 23rd of April..."

Temel "... I talked about doing such an activity with our music teacher. I said why don't we make a short film where we can promote our culture? ... But we couldn't work it out..."

Four of the participants stated that they benefitted from activities such as drama, cultural trips, folk dances, art, seminars and projects to promote cultural values in their schools within the framework of multicultural education. Some of the views about multicultural educational activities were as follows:

Ceren "... we did choral work with foreign students. We also held theatre activities with Syrian and Turkish students about speech and accents..."

İrem "... we had a project earlier this year. We went to places that are culturally valuable in Samsun; we visited museums..."

Aylin "... we attended the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey Science Fair. We prepared a social studies project on the adaptation of foreign students to our country and the impact of war on education. I brought a teacher who spoke Arabic from the university. They gave a conference to Iraqi and Syrian students..."

3.3.2 Administrative and financial support for multicultural education

The study's findings showed that 14 of the participants did not provide any administrative support to students for multicultural education. These participants thought that there was no ongoing or planned activity in which they would provide administrative support or that even if such an activity was held, they felt that the school management should be responsible. Tayfun's statements of "... I do not provide such support. There is no administrative support either. I think we do not have such an understanding. There is a dominant and basic culture. I do not

think there is an education system and administrative understanding that generally supports multiculturalism..." supported these findings.

Two of the participants stated that they provided some administrative support to students for multicultural education. For instance, İsmail stated that he held meetings with families from different cultural groups and managed the activities to ensure family integrity within the school. İlknur, on the other hand, stated that she prepared a project, where she was the coordinator for the integration of immigrant students through art.

Upon analyzing participants' opinions regarding financial support for multicultural education, the findings of the study revealed that 13 of the teachers did not provide financial support, as was the case for administrative support. The study showed that three of the participants provided financial support to acquire books, stationery and clothes required for multicultural educational activities, and covered the expenses for cultural trips.

4 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers analyzed the multicultural competencies of social studies teachers in various schools in the Samsun province of Turkey. In this context, the collected findings from the research were gathered under three themes, Individual/Personal Level, Classroom Level, and Institution/School Level.

This study showed that, at the individual/personal level, the majority of teachers did not explore their own cultural identity and that there were several reasons behind this. Firstly, they considered it within the framework of people-nation and therefore believed their general knowledge of Turkish history was sufficient. Secondly, knowledge of their own heritage gained from family elders was deemed sufficient. And lastly, they believed that the information obtained from the upper-lower lineage inquiry in the e-government application provided sufficient information about their cultural identity. Furthermore, the study provided evidence that most teachers possessed rather general and superficial knowledge about the history of their cultural identity. The reasons behind this can be explained by the fact that the teachers did not conduct any research; the information they obtained was incomplete or incorrect; and they did not attach importance to the ethnicity concept or the history of their cultural identity. Based on these results, it can be said that the majority of teachers had low multicultural competences at the personal level. Quantitative studies analyzing the multicultural competencies of teachers in various branches in the related literature (Bulut & Başbay, 2014; İsmetoğlu, 2017; Rengi & Polat, 2014) indicated high multicultural competency levels. It can be said that the quantitative dimensions of the studies in the literature employing mixed-methods on the multicultural competencies of teachers showed similar results. The main reason for the research results varying from the research in the related literature is that this study was conducted with qualitative research methods and consequently more in-depth information could be attained. This difference may be due to the use of limited quantitative assessment tools developed within limited dimensions in such research and that teachers in Turkey are not familiar enough with the multicultural education concept.

The study showed that the teachers perceived the classroom culture as colorful environments, reflecting cultural diversity and differences. Furthermore, it was observed that the teachers thought that each class created a local culture of its own over time and many different factors such as family, social environment and teachers themselves were influential in creating this culture. It was stated that when a positive and harmonious classroom environment was formed, an increase was experienced in students' motivation towards lessons and academic success. This is consistent with the literature which argues that multicultural education increases students' motivation and academic success (Banks, 2014, 2015; Gay, 1994a). The teachers also stated that classroom culture was important for classrooms to create their own chain of rules and for these rules to ensure order in class, lessons and homework whereby the students feel happy and valued. The participants stated that in classrooms where there was no harmonious classroom culture or a negative classroom atmosphere was present, students with undesirable behaviors generally affected their peers, an increase was observed in the lack of interest towards lessons, classroom and lesson order could not be ensured, a lack of help among peers was observed, and the fear of being intensely criticized and of exclusion prevented students from attending lessons. Upon analyzing the findings, it can be said that teachers' ability to understand classroom culture and its impact on learning is strong.

The study demonstrated that most participants avoided discrimination and tried to set an example in order to create a classroom environment reflecting different cultures. Most participants showed sensitivity towards learning cared about learning different cultures while trying to prevent negative behavior through the creation of classroom rules. Furthermore, some of the participants preferred drawing attention to the various differences of the classroom in order to ensure the adoption of values such as the freedom and equality of all students; empathy activities, and cooperation with parents and providing guidance service when necessary. In light of these results, it can be said that the majority of teachers had worked to create a multicultural classroom environment as they perceived it. Although these efforts seem a little behind the multicultural educational approach practiced in other countries, considering that such implementations in Turkey are in their infancy, these early efforts and applications undertaken promise hope. Despite this, two teachers in the study expressed that their efforts were fruitless and this draws attention to the existence of conflict and intolerance between different cultural groups in the classroom. Congruent with in the related literature, the greatest problems faced by teachers in multicultural education practices were undesired student behaviors and classroom environment problems, and that teachers did not consider themselves sufficient at this point (Başarır et al., 2014).

The study indicated that the participants tried mainly to avoid discriminatory behaviors by communicating with students and facilitating communication among students in the classroom; utilizing a unifying tone, expanding students' different perspectives; and to ensuring they gain empathy skills. In addition to this, efforts such as allowing students to express themselves in the classroom; trying to communicate with students experiencing language problems through the use of body language, the use of a translator or a common foreign language; and strengthening communication through games and drama activities were examined. On the other hand, some teachers pointed out the language problems stemming from enrolling foreign

students in schools without them having a sufficient command of Turkish. Moreover, teachers who did not express this situation as a problem did mention their extra efforts to communicate with such students. Students who came to schools without learning Turkish, faced difficulties both in understanding lessons and communicating with others. Therefore, teachers tried to solve this through individual efforts. According to the findings, it can be said that the teachers mostly displayed great effort to improve their ability to connect with pupils from different backgrounds and to strengthen communication between students. However, they faced difficulties due to language problems. It is considered that teachers' progressive attitudes towards different cultures may in turn positively affect their communication skills and their use of various strategies. Indeed, studies within the academic literature in Turkey analyzing the attitudes of both professional and prospective teachers towards multiculturalism validate the views of the teachers in our study (Çekin, 2013; Özdemir & Dil, 2013). Also, similar to these findings of this study, Erdoğan's (2018) research found that about half of the teachers did not experience any problems with their students who had different cultural characteristics. However, some teachers experienced various problems with students and the families of students related to academic difficulties, language problems, adapting to school, prejudice against different origins, indifference to school, not valuing education and not sending girls to schools (Erdoğan, 2018). The study by Demirçelik (2012) determined that students with different cultural backgrounds could not immediately adapt to school conditions and consequently experienced both adjustment and communication problems.

In terms of teachers' competencies in accommodating students' cultural characteristics into teaching, this study reveals that most teachers did demonstrate show any efforts due to concerns about meeting the curriculum agenda and other reasons, but showed efforts in the topics related to cultural features when following the syllabus. The most common practice in this context is allowing the students to introduce their own culture and giving examples from their own lives in the classroom. Three teachers who displayed extra effort stated that they used games, drama activities and assignments for researching different cultures. Based on the findings of the study, it can be said that the majority of the teachers were weak in terms of placing the cultural characteristics of students with different cultural backgrounds into teaching. According to the opinions of some teachers, it can be said that the main reasons for this weakness could be inappropriately designed curricula, broad contents in curricula, and not devoting enough time required for teaching the lessons into such practices. Indeed, according to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 data, the ratio of Turkish teachers who integrate global problems into the curricula and adopt learning and teaching practices is 67.7% (Turkish Education Association [TED], 2019). The average rate for this is 79.9% in The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Furthermore, the ratio of teachers who teach students how to deal with ethnic and cultural discrimination is 74%. This rate is behind the average of OECD countries (79.2%). Polat's (2013) study reveals that all teachers except for one had a positive opinion about carrying the cultural characteristics of students into the classroom, but were concerned that certain problems could arise when differences were acknowledged in the classroom. Aslan (2017) examined the views

of social studies teachers on multicultural education and found that the teachers adopted a student-centered approach in their lessons.

In conclusion, 12 of the participants did not carry out any activities in multicultural education for reasons that include; considering multicultural education unnecessary due to relevant topics planned in the course program not being able to devote adequate for teaching multicultural education; and having insufficient knowledge of their students. The participating teachers eagerly expressed opinions about giving suggestions for activities and appreciated the activities performed by others. The study also revealed that a small number of participants performed theatre shows within the framework of multicultural educational activities, organized cultural trips, and benefited from folk dances, arts, seminars and projects for promoting cultural values. The findings of this study are in parallel with the TALIS 2018 report data (TED, 2019). The report indicates the ratio of teachers that organized a multicultural event in Turkey at 41.8%, while 48.5% of teachers showed support for students by holding activities or organizations involving different ethnic and cultural identities. However, these rates still lag below the average of OECD countries (55.3% and 61.3%, respectively). Finally, in terms of administrative and financial support competencies for multicultural education, the study documented that most participants did not believe that multicultural education was necessary. They expressed that school administrations should be responsible for administrative support. On the other hand, it was determined that two of the participants provided administrative support to students such as organizing multicultural activities and coordinating projects for immigrant students, while three provided books, stationery and clothes required for multicultural education activities, and also provided financial support for cultural trips. Based on these results, it can be said that teachers' competencies are weak in terms of organizing activities for multicultural education and providing administrative and financial support.

Certain suggestions were made based on the results of this research. In this context, besides the basic qualitative research studies in which researchers study different dimensions of multicultural competencies in more depth, mixed-methods research approaches can be used in future studies in which qualitative and quantitative research methods are used together in order to determine the multicultural competencies of teachers. Multicultural competencies can be observed in classrooms and institution/school environments by conducting case study research studies and evaluating through rubrics. Moreover, teachers' competencies and opinions can be analyzed in highly diverse samples. Last but not least, evaluations can be made with more holistic data on multicultural education by determining the perspectives, practices, and competencies of national education officials of provincial directorates and school principals. We also recommend improving the quantity and quality of in-service training to raise the awareness of teachers in Turkey about globally accepted perceptions of multicultural education and to develop their multicultural identity prevalent in the contemporary era.

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