The Attitudes of School Directors to the Multicultural Education in Turkey

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Abstract *The aim of this research, to determine the attitude of school directors to the multicultural education. The date of the research in the descriptive survey model was collected with the multicultural education attitude scale. The population of the research consists of the school directors which belong to public in the city of Kocaeli, and its sampling consists of 209 school directors which were appointed to the headship for the first time in 2009-2010 academic years. At the end of the research it was found out that the school directors had a positive attitude to the multicultural education. While the gender factor does not make a significant difference in the attitudes of the school directors to the multicultural education, educational level, age and seniority has made a significant difference in the attitude to the multicultural education. While the decrease is observed in the attitude to the multicultural education when age and seniority increases, the increase has been observed in the attitude to the multicultural education when the educational level increases.*

Keywords: *Multiculturalism, multicultural education, intercultural education, menagement school director*

1. Introduction

Each society consists of different individuals in terms of physical, psychological, socio-cultural characteristics. Differentiation in today's societies has begun to increase more due to the reasons like globalization, immigrations, advancements in the communication technologies and the increase of the value given to the sub cultures in the national culture in the recent years. Consequently human communities which keep the different characteristics together have brought out the multicultural society concept. According to Parekh (2000) multicultural society is a society which incorporates two or more cultural community. The variables which compose the basic categories of multicultural society are gender, race, social class, religion/ sect, language, sexual orientation, other exceptional characteristics (Banks and Banks, 2007). These social categories have an important effect on the determination of the quality of the relationships between the individuals.

The lack of acceptance which arises from cultural differences causes negative bias towards other cultural groups and their members (Dong, Day & Collaço, 2008). These bias may cause conflicts between groups. With the aim of creating solution for the conflicts between groups, the concepts such as multiculturalism (interculturalism), intercultural sensibility , intercultural communication competence, intercultural education (multicultural education) have occured.

There are two approaches regarding cultural differences in the literature. First one is the differentiation approach which focuses on the cultural differences and the problems which occur cos of these or the culture based conflicts which result from these differences. The main problem solution strategy of this approach is to bring more approaches to the cultural background of different groups. The second approach is to provide all kinds of cultural pluralism more than cultural characteristics. This approach includes to develop sensibility towards to the differences of cultures, to take these differences seriously, to develop the skills in order to cope with these. Both these two approaches are named as multiculturalism ((Leeman et al., 1996). Multicultural ideology defends a positive attitude towards cultural diversity and depending on this, that many groups with different characteristics can live together (Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2002). With this approach, in the last decade of 20th century, western European societies, they have put multicultural education on their agenda, in order to increase culture based characters in their societies (Leeman 2003).

In both global and local context, the value of the intercultural relationships is significantly important. The ability of today's individual to be effective in another culture depends on being interested in other cultures, being sensitive enough to realize cultural differences and then reshaping their behaviours in a way they can respect to the people from other cultures (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992).

According to Chen and Starosta, intercultural awareness is a pre condition for intercultural communication. When the individual's intercultural communication sensitivity increases, their intercultural communication increases as well. In the studies, it was found that the people who had high intercultural communication sensitivity were better in making intercultural communication adjustments. Nowadays, different cultures are encountered everywhere. To cope with intercultural problems, every individual needs to possess intercultural communication competence (Dong, Day & Collaço, 2008). According to Chen and Starosta, it is essential to have education on intercultural awareness, intercultural sensibility and intercultural competence topics. Therefore schools need to bring in a multicultural perspective with intercultural sensibility, intercultural communication competence and intercultural competence to the individuals. The education approach where these skills and knowledge is brought in is met with two different approaches as intercultural education and multicultural education and these are used interchangeably. While Unesco and Europen Council are using intercultural education term, OECD is using multicultural education term. In countries such as USA, UK, Canada, Australia intercultural education is an established term. Except UK, in European countries, multicultural education term is used (Leeman 2003). In this study, multicultural education concept is accepted.

Multicultural education is described as the reflection of education policies and school applications which respond to the different expectations of the society to education in order to decrease bias, conflicts of identity, power conflicts (Banks, 1999, 2009), education approach based on democratic assests to encourage cultural pluralism or mixed school understanding which pledges educational equality (Bennet 2003). In another description, multicultural education is the education which is intended to realize differences which are based on age, sexual orientation, disability, social class, ethnicity, religion, language, to accept them as normal and provide respect and tolerance to these differences (Bank & Bank, 2003).

Some authors have assessed multicultural education in freedom and justice context. In this context, multicultural education has been described as the main education and comprehensive school reform which aims to provide education despite all kinds of differences in order to advance social justice, democratic principles and interpersonal transmission in the class and school by depending on more justice for everyone, socio- political action for equality, social action and decision where students can introduce their own cultural values and ethnical characteristcs approach (Nieto, 1992, cited in Gay, 1994)

According to Gay (1994) multicultural education is an education policy, which provides life and constitutionalism to the cultural differences by being based on an education philosophy which aims to provide the students equal academic achievement, contains education programmes, teaching materials and organizational structure, is based on regulating the all components of education and education policies according to pluralism principle and has its own rules and values.

Today's learning paradigm focuses on learner's personal characteristics such as learner's age, culture, intelligence type. Many studies emphasize that culture is a determiner in students' learning (Kennedy, 2002; Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001). Therefore in the education which will be provided to individuals in the training stuff, educational appliances and programme evaluation process, to follow policies which are based on respect to the cultural differences is required (Frazier, 1977, Grant, 1977, cited in Gay, 1994). In multicultural education, the teacher has the key role however school directors have important tasks too as the ones who will form the conditions of the education programme implementation, manage the process and assess the

process are the school directors. The school management which is described as synchronization of human and material sources in the school in accordance with the instructional aims needs to be organized according to multicultural education. Besides globalization, and multiculturalism trend recently has increased the importance of being capable of communicating with people who have different cultural backgrounds. This trend causes the necessity to raise directors who will be able to act in a suitable and successful way in different cultural environments (Fritz, Möllenberg & Chen, 2002).

In the research done by Polat (2009b) the fact that many gains which require multicultural education exist in the primary education programmes which were conducted during 2004- 2005 academic year was found. The teacher and school directors have significant roles in making the students gain these successfully.

There is a consensus related to the fact that the multicultural education is effort to adapt both national and universal life oriented. The main aim of multicultural education is stated as to learn in a society where cultural variety exists (Fase,1994, cited in Leeman, 2003). Consequently the aims and the content of the multicultural education are related with questions of inequality, discrimination, ethnic/cultural difference and citizenship (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Figueroa, 1999; Banks et al., 2001; Leeman, 2003). The facilities in multicultural education aim to decrease the disadvantages for disadvantaged students and to provide extra support for their academic career (Leeman, 2003).

In the literature scan conducted by Polat (2009b) the aims of the multicultural education are listed as below:

- To increase academic success.
- To provide critical thinking related to bias in individuals.
- To configure individuals an identity with self confidence.
- To provide communication between different groups.
- To enable individuals to build empatic interaction with other individuals with differences.
- To create opportunity for individuals to expres their own values and attitudes.
- To increase respect and clemency
- To develop self ego and self confidence of the individuals
- To enable individuals to be at peace with themselves.
- To teach how to live in a multicultural environment in harmony.
- To prevent bias by providing cultural awaraness.
- To develop cultural literacy skills.
- To provide pluralism, equality and justice at school.
- To provide a critical thinking environment at school.
- To make individuals gain struggle capability in the places where bias and discriminations exist to cope with them.
- To provide cooperation in the sharing of basic skills and capabilities.

Multicultural education mostly depends on cooperative learning and building dialogue (Batelaan, Hoof &Van, 1996). Therefore a democratic, secure school environment is necessary for multicultural education. Consequently it will be easier to interact between individuals (Batelaan, 2001).

In the content of the necessary values and skills to live in an democratic society is given. Therefore school environment should be in the quality to bring in values and skills such as group spirit, responsibility, respect to others and tolerance. The characteristics of the school environment which supports multicultural education can be listed as below (Leeman, 2003):

- To honor similarities between the school team members more than the differences.
- To provide personal attendance and trust environment (between the teachers and between the students and the teachers)

- To leave an open door to solve the conflicts and justice perception.
- To emphasize student centered approach at school and the interaction between the students.
- To bring the groups which are culturally heterogeneous.
- To give opportunities for intercultural connection.
- Cooperative learning for culturally different groups
- To reject all kinds of discrimination by schools.

The school director has the main role in providing this environment. Therefore the school director's attitude to multicultural education is significant.

The authors who support (Banks, 1999, 2009; Bennett, 2003; Olneck, 2000; Banks ve Banks 2003) multicultural education emphasize that multicultural education has benefits like develop knowledge about cultural differences in individuals, develop multiple point of view, to bring in the necessary skills and values to cope with inequality, develop value and skills to protect cultural difference, develop skills and values in order to live democratically.

In the conducted research (Leeman, Gijtenbeek, & Roede, 1999) students expressed that they felt secure when they were able to reflect themselves comfortably, talk loudly about their religious beliefs, express their ideas in a free way, and when they decided what to do on their own and when they did it.

In contrast to this, they expressed that they couldnt feel secure when they were given a name, they received verbal threats, their belongings got broken or were stolen, when they were isolated or ridiculed, they were exposed to physical and psychological violence, discrimination, they were intimidated in a sexual way (by touching or looks). In the same research, the students expressed the reasons of being ridiculed as physical appearance, the way of writing and speaking, gender, homosexuality, background, religious belief, cultural difference. Besides at the end of the research, it was found out that those problems and the feelings belonging to those problems were mostly related to cultural inheritance. The responds to questions changed according to school, gender and race. These results also forms the base of the discussions within and between the students. These discussion require the directors to take them seriously and form school policies to solve the problems of multicultural education (Leeman, Gijtenbeek & Roede, 1999).

Management of the cultural differences of the school and the classroom can effect the educational aims in many ways. The critical step of multicultural education consists of the cultural sensibility and awareness of the teachers. If the teachers are not aware of their own social bias in a cultural way and they dont possess a worldview except egocentrism, their multicultural education efforts won't be effective. Moreover the teachers with high multicultural awareness see the cultural differences as a power and feel responsible in the inclusion of the multicultural subjects in the learning content and process. (Ponterotto et al., 1998).

Banks (2005, 2007) deals with the culture sensitive adequacies in three ways as individual, class and school. Here the individual level is the priority in the first degree which determines class and school levels. Consequently it is very important for the school directors to possess a multicultural education understanding as the school directors are the ones who affect the other stakeholders (teacher, student and the guardian) in terms of both authorization and leadership characteristics. The school directors who possess the multicultural education understanding will affect the regulation of the school policies and implementations in compliance with the multiculturalism understanding significantly.

The school directors who focus on this subject and think about developing a policy regarding to this subject need to form their school policies according to this understanding. The directors have a significant effect on determining a school policy and creation of culture and climate and the directors' attitudes are important in determining their quality.

The aim of the study is to determine the attitude of the school directors towards multicultural education. In order to achieve this aim, the answers for the questions below were

searched:

- How should be the attitude of the school directors to the multicultural education?
- Do gender, age, seniority and education level variables make a significant difference in the attitude of the school directors to the multicultural education?

2. Research Methodology

The research pattern is descriptive survey model as it aims to measure the attitude of school directors towards multicultural education.

2.1. Population and Sampling

The population of the research consists of the school directors which belong to public in the city of Kocaeli, and its sampling consists of 209 school directors which were appointed to the headship for the first time in 2009-2010 academic years. In this research private school directors were kept out of the research. From 203 school directors which were given the instrument, 183 of them gave feedback and 147 out of 183 were taken into process.

2.2. Instrument

As data collection instrument the multicultural education attitude scale with 20 items developed by Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig and Rivera (1998) was used. Adaptation, reliability and validity studies of the scale 13 items of which are negative and 7 items of which are positive were done by Yazıcı, Başol and Toprak (2009). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficent of the scale which was adapted as one dimensional was found 75.

2.3. Analyis of the Data

In the research in order to interpret the attitude of school directors towards multicultural education arithmetic mean was used. When the arithmetic mean was interpreted, intervals were assessed as 1.00–1.79 I definitely do not agree, 1.80–2.59 I partially do not agree, 2.60–3.39 I am hesitant, 3.40–4.19 I partially agree, 4.20–5.00 I definitely agree. Besides in order to test whether the attitude of the participants to multicultural education changes according to gender or not, t test was applied and to test whether it changes according to age, seniority and education level, Anova test was applied. The signifance of the difference was used by LSD test.

3. Findings and Discussions

In Table 1 arithmetic mean and standard deviation values which reflect the attitude of school directors to the multicultural education. It can be said that the school directors have a positive attitude to multicultural education even thought it is partial. ($\bar{x}$ = 3,68). The result of this research shows consistency with the results of the research which was conducted by Yazici, Basol and Toprak (2009) to measure the attitude of the teachers to the multicultural education by using the same data collection instrument ($\bar{x}$ = 3,53). However the school directors have a more positive attitude to the multicultural education than the teachers. At the end of the research of Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig and Rivera whom developed the data collection instrument (1998) which was conducted in USA the level of the attitude of the teachers and teacher candidates to the multicultural education ($\bar{x}$ =4.10) is higher than both levels of this research ($\bar{x}$ = 3,68) and the research conducted by Yazici Basol and Toprak.

Table 1. *The Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviation Concerning Multicultural Education.*

Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey Items Renumbered	Mean	SD.
5. I frequently invite extended family members (e.g., cousins, godparents, grandparents) to attend parent-teacher conferences.	4,46	,63
1.I find teaching a culturally diverse student group rewarding	4,39	,69
13. To be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom.	4,38	,61
18. Regardless of the makeup of my class, it is important for students to aware multicultural diversity.	4,28	,64
2. Teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of a culturally diverse student group.	4,24	,86
17. I am aware of diversity of cultural backgrounds in my classroom.	4,21	,67
14.Multicultural awareness training can help me to work more effectively with a diverse student population.	4,16	,71
11. I can learn a great deal from students with different culturally groups.	4,12	,81
10. As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job become increasingly rewarding.	4,08	,90
8. I believe that the teacher's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds.	4,00	,76
3. Sometimes I think that there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness and training for teacher.*	3,78	1,04
12. Multicultural training for teacher is not necessary.*	3,59	1,34
7. As classrooms become more culturally, diverse, the teachers job become increasingly challenging.	3,47	1,21
9. When dealing with bilingual children, communication styles often are interpreted as behavioral problems.	3,44	,83
4. Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of their students cultural backgrounds.	3,41	1,06
20. Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom.*	3,40	1,21
15. Students should learn to communicate in Turkish only.*	3,00	1,39
19. Being multi culturally aware is not relevant for the subject I teach.*	2,59	1,09
16. Today's curriculum give undue importance to multiculturalism and diversity. *	2,41	1,03
6. It is not the teacher's responsibility to encourage pride in one's culture.*	2,13	,92
Total	**3,68**	**,33**

* Items with negative content.

As it is seen in table 1 while the school directors have given an opinion on some clauses about the multicultural education at I definitely agree level, on some clauses at I partially agree level and on some clauses at I am hesitant level.

School director definitely agree on the topics like knowing the cultural background of the students, meeting with the parents in order to recognize them better in a cultural way, realizing the cultural differences of the students, teaching in a class where there are culturally different students, taking the basic needs of the students resulting from cultural differences into consideration when the teaching methods are chosen.

School directors partially agree on the topics like working with culturally different students will be helpful to have a more effective study with the student groups, the teachers have the responsibility to be aware of the cultural differences of the students, describing the role of the teachers again to meet the needs of the students with a culturally different background, the teachers need to have education on multicultural education, learning a lot from the students with culturally different background, the teachers' work will be more valuable when the class gets diverse in a cultural way.

Besides the school directors, the directors partially agree on the fact that when the class gets different culturally and when the teachers deal with the students with two mother tongues, the work of the teachers will get harder and the cultural differences of the students may cause problems for the teachers.

The school directors are hesitant about topics like the emphasis which is laid on the multicultural education in education programmes, students' learning another language besides Turkish in the multiculturalism content, inclusion of multicultural education in the teaching

subjects, the responsibility of the teachers to encourage the learners to be proud of what they produce in their own culture.

While gender does not make a difference in the perception of the attitude of the school directors to multicultural education (t=.536; p>.05), education level has made a significant difference in the attitude of the school directors to multicultural education. (F=4,644; p<.01). In the Lsd test which is applied to test in which education level groups exists significant difference, it was seen that the attitudes of 4 year license graduate and postgraduate school directors and the 2 and 3 year education institution graduate school directors had changed meaningfully. It was seen that the postgraduates had the highest attitude to multicultural education ($\bar{x}$= 3,83), this fact was followed by 4 year license graduates ($\bar{x}$=3,71), and the 2 and 3 year education institute graduates($\bar{x}$=3,55) in row. As it is seen, there is an increase in the attitude of the school directors to multicultural education when their education level is higher.

Age variable has created a significant difference in the attitude of school directors to multicultural education. (F=4,581; p<.05). In the LSD test which was applied to test in which age groups the difference exists, it was found out that the significant difference existed in the 37 and below and 43 and above age groups. The attitude of the 37 and below age group ($\bar{x}$=3,78), s in a higher level than the attitude of 38-42 age group ($\bar{x}$=3,67) and 43 and above age group ($\bar{x}$= 3,57). A negative relationship was observed between age and attitude towards multicultural education. It is seen that when the age is higher, the attitude towards multicultural education decreases.

Just like the age variable, seniority of the school directors has also made a significant difference in the attitude of the school directors towards multicultural education. (F=3,923; p<.05). In the LSD test to test in which groups there is a difference, it was seen that the difference was in the 21 year and above seniority group and 15 year and below seniority group and 16-20 year seniority group. 15 year and below seniority group has a higher attitude to multicultural education ($\bar{x}$=3,75) than the 16- 20 year " ($\bar{x}$=3,71) and 21 year and above groups. ($\bar{x}$=3,55). It is observed that the attitude decreases when the seniority rises.

4. Concluding Remarks

When the aims of the multicultural education are thought, in order to achieve these aims, the school director has a significant role. In this context, the school directors have a positive attitude towards multicultural education even though it is partial. The fact that the directors have a positive attitude towards multicultural education can be interpreted as they are susceptible to multicultural learning.

This study is important in terms of on which level the school directors have an attitude in which topics. There is no topic related to multicultural education that the school directors do not agree on. While the school directors agree on some topics definitely, they agree on some topics partially and they remain hesitant in some topics. This situation shows that the directors need to change their attitude in the topics they remain hesitant. Attitude change requires a process which can be changed in long term with persuasive information.

In the research done by Polat (2009b) the fact that many gains which require multicultural education exist in the primary education programmes which were conducted during 2004- 2005 academic year was found. However this fact has been taken into consideration by the school directors. The reason for this may be the reflection the gains and subjects of the multicultural programme in the primary education in a confidental way than a open way. The fact that the school directors couldnt realize the gains and the subjects of multicultural education in the primarcy education might cause that they couldnt see the multicultural education content as a teaching subject and therefore they couldnt see the responsbility of the teachers to teach these subjects to the students. Consequently not only in the context of pre school education but also in

the context of primary and secondary education, the school directors should be provided with multicultural awareness education.

While gender does not make a significant difference in the attitude to multicultural education, education level, age, seniority have created a difference in the attitude of school directors to multicultural education. While a decrease is observed when the age and seniority increase, when the education level increases, the attitude to multicultural education also increases as well. This situation shows the necessity of in service training regarding multicultural education of the which group.

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