# The Perceptions and Views of Early Childhood Education Pre-service Teachers on Multiculturalism

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**Problem Durumu**

International boundaries have started to disappear with globalization and the development of technology (Ramsey, 2004). The interaction between people and communities has increased. Depending on it, the monocultural structure has become to be replaced by a multicultural structure and multiculturalism. In other words, multicultural structure emerged in the communities. The multicultural structure has brought along changes in society. One of these changes has been experienced in preschool classroom environments, and multicultural early childhood education classrooms have emerged.

Early childhood education classrooms are the first place which children encounter as a learning environment. The child and the teacher first interact here and create learning and teaching. Their interactions affect children's developmental outcomes and classroom climate (Melhuish et al., 2013). Specifically, multicultural classrooms may create a positive or negative climate based on teacher and children interactions (Gazelle, 2006). In this context, one of the early childhood education teacher's roles should support children's entire development and sense of belonging to establish a positive climate in multicultural classrooms (Tabors, 1998). In this regard, teachers' education received during bachelor's years on this issue has a vital role.

University education has an impact on pre-service teachers' perceptions and views on several topics. They shape their educational philosophy and teaching methods (Banks, 2000). It affects children's education and their development. In this regard, we can say that university education can have an impact on pre-service teachers' perceptions and views on multiculturalism, and it can affect children's development. Based on this, it is important to investigate pre-service early childhood teachers' perceptions and the views on multiculturalism.

In this sense, the purpose of the study is to investigate pre-service early childhood education teachers' perceptions and views on multiculturalism. Based on this purpose, the research questions were organized as follows:

RQ1: Is there any relationship between pre-service early childhood education teachers' academic year and their perceptions regarding multiculturalism?

RQ2: What are the views of pre-service early childhood education teachers on multiculturalism?

**Yöntem**

In this study, an explanatory sequential design mixed method involving collecting qualitative data based on quantitative data analysis was conducted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The sample was selected by using the purposive sampling method. Based on this, 200 pre-service teachers from 6 different universities in Ankara was sample in current study. Because of the epidemic conditions, participants were invited to the study through e-mail. In the quantitative part of the study, Multiculturalism Perception Scale (MPS) developed by Mehmet Fatih Ayaz in 2016, and Demographic Information Form prepared by researchers was used. These instruments were delivered via an online platform, which is Google Forms. In the data analysis process, SPSS software program was used to conduct descriptive statistics technique.

Based on the scale scores, the interview questions were prepared by researchers for qualitative phase of the study. According to Dukes (1984), sample should be between 3 and 10 in a qualitative study. Depending on it, in qualitative phase of the study, the sample was selected 10 volunteer preservice teachers who completed the scale and want to share their experiences. The interviews were conducted by using an online communication tool, which is Zoom. The interviews were recorded as audio file. After interview process, these files were transcribed through MAXQDA 2020 software program. After transcriptions, the data was analyzed by using content analysis method.

To ensure validity and reliability for the current study, firstly the scale items were checked by using primary analysis and pilot study. Also, researchers used some strategies to ensure validity. The expert opinion was taken from 2 experts in the filed of early childhood education. In addition, the pilot study was conducted. Depending on the expert opinions and pilot study, the interview questions were rearranged. Moreover, researchers used inter-coder method to ensure reliability (Fraenkel et al., 2015).

**Beklenen/Geçici Sonuçlar**

Although the study was not completed yet, the pilot study and primary analysis showed that there is no significant difference between pre-service early childhood education teachers' academic year and their perceptions regarding multiculturalism. For the second research question, primary results show that taking university education, considering social -structure and cultural differences, can contribute to pre-service early childhood teachers' perceptions on multiculturalism. On the other hand, most of them did not see themselves as multicultural educators. Based on this, they mentioned that they did not take any course about multiculturalism during their bachelor years. Also, they believed that a new course on multiculturalism and multicultural education should be added to the current curriculum of the early childhood education program in the universities.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** multiculturalism, early childhood education, pre-service teachers

**Kaynakça**

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