

Cultural Diversity Through the Lenses of Teachers: A SWOT Analysis

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Abstract

Türkiye hosts a diversity of numerous cultural groups regarding its location and social structure. The inclusion of these culturally diverse groups in the education system makes it necessary to evaluate teachers' perspectives and experiences on differences. The purpose of the study is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of cultural diversity as well as the opportunities and threats that cultural diversity poses to teachers. The research is designed as a qualitative phenomenological study to reveal the perceptions of the participants about the cultural diversity that exists in schools. In this study, teachers were reached by using the snowball sampling method of the purposive sampling approach. 118 teachers who are still teaching in Türkiye's various regions during the 2021-2022 academic year voluntarily filled out the online form. The data obtained were transferred to the MAXQDA package program and similar expressions were gathered under four main themes: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The main themes were created to consist of the steps of the SWOT analysis. Then, content analysis was applied to the data categorized according to the SWOT analysis steps. According to the findings, the strengths of cultural diversity in the classroom mostly gathered around "knowledge construction" and "supporting creativity". The findings also indicated that teachers' views on the weaknesses of cultural diversity mostly gathered around "difficulty addressing all differences" and "lack of communication", and teachers' views on the threats against cultural diversity mostly gathered around "cultural conflict" and "cultural insensitivity". Finally, teachers also believe that "learning cultural components" and gaining new experiences" are the most important opportunities for cultural diversity.

Keywords: Cultural Diversity, Multiculturalism, SWOT Analysis, Qualitative Research

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Introduction

The migration of people with different cultural backgrounds from the areas where they live to different regions enriches the cultural diversity of the countries (Berry, 2016; Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010; Hurn & Tomalin, 2013; Karakaş & Erbaş, 2018; Sides & Citrin, 2007; Schwartz, 2004). It is a well-known fact that there have been great human migrations all over the world, especially in the last 20 years. According to United Nations Data (2018), more than 250 million individuals, or approximately one out of every 30 people, including all voluntary and forced migrations, are defined as international migrants. Another well-known fact is that Türkiye is one of the countries that is most affected by these migration movements and hosts a great deal of cultural diversity (Erbaş, 2021). Depending on various migration movements, the demographic structure of the Republic of Türkiye is constantly changing (Bülbül & Köse, 2010; Yılmaz, 2014). When we examine these data specific to Türkiye, we see that human mobility has reached large numbers. According to the data of the General Directorate of Migration Management (2022), the number of Syrians under temporary protection in our country is more than 3.6 million, which indicates that one out of every 25 people living in the country is Syrian. Changes due to migration also directly affect diverse student populations in schools (Figen, 2015). For instance, based on the data gathered from the General Directorate of Migration Management (2022), 1.7 million children of migrant families are of school age (between 5 and 18 years old). Moreover, Türkiye is not just a country that had differences with its immigrant population. Due to its location and historical characteristics, there are many religiously, linguistically, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse human communities in Türkiye (Aydın, 2012). Having that many diverse children in the classrooms undoubtedly provide different experiences to all components of the school such as teachers, administrators, parents etc. Evaluating all aspects of these experiences should also guide the policies to be determined on cultural diversity issues in the future.

Similarly, the increase in cultural diversity in societies highlights the necessity of adopting new policies in teacher education (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Cherng & Davis, 2019; Miller-Dyce & Owusu-Ansah, 2016; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). It is frequently mentioned in the literature that teachers need to be educated to meet all kinds of demands (social, cultural, and intellectual) of students while working with more diverse class populations (Eryaman and Evran, 2019; Milner, 2010; Warren, 2014). According to Cherng and Davis (2019), policymakers should take an action for necessary change in teacher education programs to make teachers more multiculturally aware and proficient. It is frequently stated in the literature that the desired result cannot be achieved with only the changes made by the policymakers, in addition to these changes, teachers should also take steps to internalize cultural diversity and multiculturalism (Banks, 1995; Grant & Sleeter, 2003; Nieto, 2004). For instance, Nieto (2004) identifies that teacher should become a “multicultural person” (p.383) to develop the right multicultural understanding. According to Nieto (2004), there are several steps that

teachers should follow to become a multicultural person. First, teachers should actively participate in the social events that provide an opportunity to learn about cultures deeply. Second, teachers should gain appropriate levels of multicultural perspectives that exempt from all types of biases and racism. Third, teachers should have the capacity to evaluate the reasons behind all kinds of problems arising from cultural disagreements in the classroom or school from different perspectives. Nieto (2004) argues that to be able to properly support cultural diversity, teachers should develop a multicultural understanding consisting of four levels, which are called “tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation, solidarity and critique”(p.384). Although the word “tolerance” come up with positive thoughts in our minds, according to Nieto (2004), someone who is at the tolerance level is at the lowest level in developing multicultural understanding. The researcher defines tolerance as “having the capacity to bear something, although not necessarily to embrace them”(p.385). According to the researcher, if individuals are at the lowest acceptance level, they recognize the differences and avoid rejecting them. Teachers, who are at the respect level, identified by Nieto (2004) as another level, interpret it as accepting to allow students with differences to see themselves in educational activities and to offer content that is inclusive of all cultures. Finally, teachers who are at the level of affirmation, solidarity and critique believe that discussions that arise from cultural conflicts are inevitable, but instead of escaping from them, teachers should support the educational environment with correct criticism.

According to Inglis (2008), enabling students to learn together in a classroom with a lot of cultural diversity is one of the most challenging tasks for today's teachers. Cultural diversity in classrooms is a reality, and researchers should attach importance to identifying the experiences of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms, as well as analyzing teachers' multicultural understanding and attitudes. Thankfully, some studies examined teachers' experiences with culturally diverse classrooms within the Turkish context (Arar et al., 2019; Karşlı-Çalamak & Kılınç, 2021; Kotluk & Aydın, 2021; Sarı & Yüce, 2020; Tonbuloğlu et al., 2016; Yıldırım, 2019). For instance, Sarı and Yüce (2020) interviewed teachers who have a culturally diverse student populations in their classrooms. The research findings indicated that teachers had problems with time and classroom management due to not having enough experience, they could not find the right ways of communicating with these students, and they sometimes exhibited negative attitudes and could be prejudiced. In addition to these findings, Karşlı-Çalamak and Kılınç (2021) completed research with teachers, and the findings indicated that teachers have difficulties finding economic and educational resources that support culturally diverse students in classroom settings. As can be seen in various research, teachers have similar and different difficulties in culturally diverse settings.

The cultural diversity that exists in classrooms is not only a topic that creates problems; but also a situation that brings wealth (Davis et al., 2022). For this reason, it is important to carry out a

multidimensional process by including possible advantages and disadvantages of cultural diversity in research. Based on this point of view, this study aims to analyze the experiences of teachers in a culturally diverse environment, not only in terms of problems, threats, and weaknesses; but also their views on the opportunities and strengths that this diverse learning environment will provide.

The purpose of the study is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of cultural diversity as well as the opportunities and threats that cultural diversity poses to teachers. Within this scope, the main problem and sub-problems of the research were formed.

Research Questions

1. What do teachers think about cultural diversity in the classroom?
 - 1.1. What are the strengths of cultural diversity in the classroom according to the teachers?
 - 1.2. What are the weaknesses of cultural diversity in the classroom according to the teachers?
 - 1.3. What are the potential opportunities for cultural diversity in the classroom according to the teachers?
 - 1.4. What are the possible threats against cultural diversity in the classroom according to the teachers?

Methodology

Research Model

The research is designed as a qualitative phenomenological study to reveal the perceptions of the participants about the cultural diversity that exists in schools. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018), the phenomenology design is the most appropriate design for “studies that aim to investigate a phenomenon that is not completely unfamiliar, and we cannot fully comprehend” (p. 69). In this study, it was appropriate to examine the views of teachers on cultural diversity, which they constantly encounter in the classroom, within a phenomenological design.

Participants

In this study, teachers were reached using the “snowball sampling” (Creswell, 2012, p.209) method of the “purposive sampling” (Creswell, 2012, p.206) approach. The snowball sampling method is a form of purposive sampling approach that occurs when the researcher communicates with one or more of the participants and proposes other accessible participants (Creswell, 2012, p. 209). With the advice of the teachers in the study, other participants were reached and informed. It was aimed to reach more data by sending the online form to the teachers who voluntarily participate in the research. These steps were followed in order, and communication was established with 141 teachers

working in various regions of Türkiye, who are still teaching in the 2021-2022 academic year, and agreed to voluntarily fill out the online form. In the first stage, the forms of 23 teachers who had no logical answer and gave incomplete information were not taken into consideration, and data were formed with a total of 118 teachers. Forms that are considered appropriate to be used are coded as T1 (*as in teacher*), T2, T3,..., T118 (*pseudonym*) instead of real names. Demographic information of the participants is also shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	78	66.1
Male	40	33.9
Seniority		
Less than a year	32	27.1
1 to 5 years	22	18.6
5 to 10 years	18	15.3
10 to 15 years	17	14.4
15 to 20 years	15	12.7
More than 20 years	14	11.9
Education level		
Undergraduate	100	84.7
Graduate	18	15.3
Total	118	100

As seen in Table 1, female teachers (66.1%), teachers working in the first year of their profession (27.1%), and teachers with bachelor's degrees (84.7%) are the groups with the highest number of participants in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected by applying the semi-structured forms prepared by the researcher to the participants. These forms were applied to the participants via the online form. In the study, initially, the answers given by the teachers to the online forms were examined and 118 of all collected data were accepted as valid. Analyzes were made on these online forms and a word document was created for each question by giving a descriptive code to each of them. The collected data were transferred to the MAXQDA package program and similar expressions were gathered under four main themes: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The main themes created to consist of the steps of the SWOT analysis and content analysis was used. The data was categorized according to the SWOT analysis steps. Thus, the participants expressed their views on the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the scope of the research. According to Helms and Nixon (2010), the SWOT analysis is a technique that has been used frequently in academic studies in recent years, and it is a technique that countries use to shape the structure of many organizations, including determining their policies. The fact that the SWOT analysis method generates more understandable results and that it can be applied in any field, from finding a solution for a simple subject to solving problems with

more complex structures, makes this technique advantageous (Sarsby, 2016, p.3). For reliability, the codes that emerged because of the researcher's analysis and the codes created by two different field experts on the data were compared. To ensure the reliability of the data obtained through content analysis, the “Number of Agreements / (Number of Agreements + Disagreements) x 100” formula developed by Miles and Huberman was used (Saban, 2008, p.467). Accordingly, the reliability rate among the researcher was $P = 663 / (663 + 56) \times 100 = 92.21\%$ and it seems the internal validity of the study was ensured. To ensure the external validity of the study, the sample of the study was chosen in a way that allowed generalization.

Findings

In this part of the study, the findings obtained from the collected data are included.

The SWOT Matrix of Cultural Diversity in Classrooms

The views of the teachers on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of cultural diversity in the classroom were categorized and shown in Figure 1.

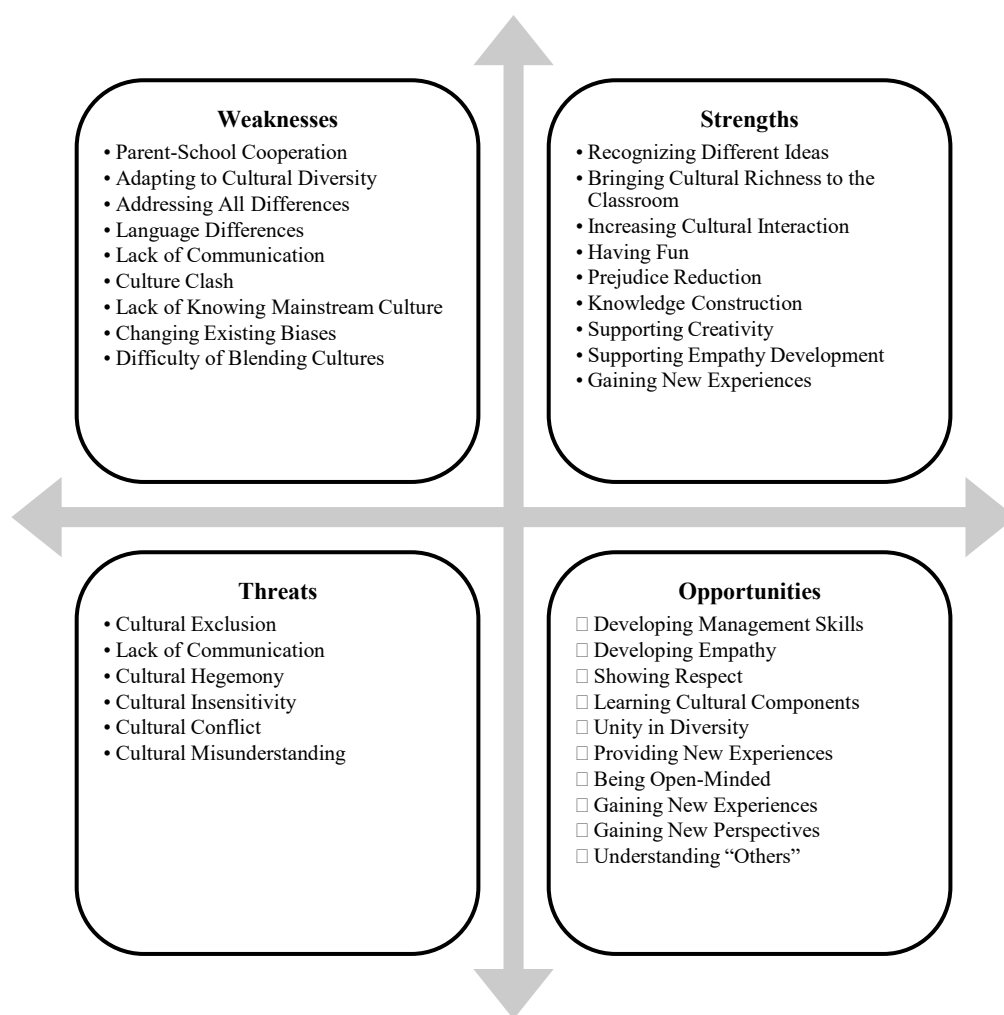


Figure 1. The SWOT matrix of cultural diversity in classrooms

Teachers' Views on the Strengths of Cultural Diversity

In the first sub-problem of the research, the teachers' views on the strengths of cultural diversity and the codes obtained are shown within the word cloud created as in Figure 2 (*all word clouds created on www.wordart.com*).



Figure 2. Codes associated with the strengths of cultural diversity

In Figure 2, high-frequency codes that teachers often mention are expressed in large fonts, and as the frequency of the codes decreases, the point size decreases. A total of 9 codes were created from the teachers' views and 160 expressions were obtained. The frequencies and percentages of the codes are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of the codes corresponding to the strengths of cultural diversity

Codes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Knowledge Construction	46	28.75
Bringing Cultural Richness to the Classroom	36	22.5
Recognizing Different Ideas	20	12.5
Gaining New Experiences	15	9.4
Increasing Cultural Interaction	14	8.75
Supporting Empathy Development	14	8.75
Prejudice Reduction	10	6.25
Having Fun	3	1.85
Supporting Creativity	2	1.25
Total	160	100

In the first sub-problem, in which teachers' views on the strengths of cultural diversity were coded, a total of 9 codes were created from the views. Table 2 shows that these codes are collected mostly in the “*Knowledge Construction*” and least in “*Supporting Creativity*” codes. Examples of teacher views from which these codes were created are shown below.

“Since cultures have the task of conveying their characteristics, cultural elements and information coming together in the same class will provide new gains. In this way, a lot of information will be gained at the same time.” (T14) (Knowledge Construction)

“Different cultures mean different perspectives. Cultural diversity means interpreting and seeing subjects from different perspectives for students. This could be eye-opening.” (T49) (Knowledge Construction, Recognizing Different Ideas)

“Students in culturally diverse classes have the chance to learn about different cultures. In addition, these students also develop an understanding of tolerance.” (T63) (Supporting Empathy Development, Recognizing Different Ideas)

“It provides the opportunity to get to know different cultural structures and reinforces the students' sense of cooperation.” (T112) (Knowledge Construction, Supporting Empathy Development)

“Within diversity, students will teach each other the positive behaviors of their own cultures through peer learning. In addition, there will be the opportunity to process a multi-colored lesson.” (T42) (Increasing Cultural Interaction, Gaining New Experiences)

“Sensitivity to different religions, languages and cultures is formed. Learning about the differences and similarities of their own cultures enables children to understand and empathize with their peers in the classroom.” (T108) (Prejudice Reduction, Supporting Empathy Development)

“There is a cultural richness in the classroom. Everyone can learn from each other. Diversity comes in different ways and attracts attention.” (T26) (Bringing Cultural Richness to the Classroom, Increasing Cultural Interaction, Having Fun)

In addition to the views received with direct quotes from the teachers, when we examine the relationships between the codes that emerged from the teachers' views on the strengths of cultural diversity, we see that the relationships seen in Figure 3 emerged.

CODING SYSTEM	S.C.	P.R.	H.F.	I.C.I	B.C.R.C.	R.D.I.	G.N.E.	S.E.D.	K.C.	TOTAL
S.C.										0
P.R.								5	2	7
H.F.				1	1					2
I.C.I			1		3		2		1	7
B.C.R.C.			1	3		3	3	2	5	17
R.D.I.					3			1	5	9
G.N.E.				2	3				4	9
S.E.D.		5			2	1			6	14
K.C.		2		1	5	5	4	6		23
Σ TOTAL	0	7	2	7	17	9	9	14	23	88

S.C.: Supporting Creativity, P.R.: Prejudice Reduction, H.F.: Having Fun, I.C.I: Increasing Cultural Interaction, B.C.R.C.: Bringing Cultural Richness to the Classroom, R.D.I.: Recognizing Different Ideas, G.N.E.: Gaining New Experiences, S.E.D.: Supporting Empathy Development, K.C.: Knowledge Construction

Figure 3. Table of code relationships showing the intensities of the intersections of teachers' statements on the strengths of cultural diversity

As can be seen in Figure 3, it has been determined that there are 88 different relationships between the codes. Coded teachers' view on the strengths of cultural diversity mostly intersected with "Knowledge Construction" (23), "Bringing Cultural Richness to The Classroom" (17), and "Supporting Empathy Development" (14). In addition, it has emerged from the findings that knowledge construction (6 different codes) and bringing cultural richness to the classroom (6 different codes) are the codes that are most quantitatively associated with other codes.

Teachers' Views on the Weaknesses of Cultural Diversity in The Classroom

In the second sub-problem of the research, the teachers' views on the weaknesses of cultural diversity and the codes obtained are shown within the word cloud created as in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Codes associated with the weaknesses of cultural diversity

A total of 9 codes were created from the teachers' views about the weaknesses of cultural diversity, and 165 expressions were obtained. The frequencies and percentages of the codes related to weaknesses of cultural diversity are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages of the codes corresponding to the weaknesses of cultural diversity

Codes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Difficulty Addressing All Differences	52	31.5
Lack of Communication	29	17.6
Changing Existing Biases	20	12.1
Culture Clash	16	9.7
Difficulty Adapting to Cultural Diversity	15	9.1
Difficulty of Blending Cultures	15	9.1
Language Differences	12	7.3
Parent-School Cooperation	3	1.8
Lack of Knowing Mainstream Culture	3	1.8
Total	165	100

In the second sub-problem, in which teachers' views on the weaknesses of cultural diversity were coded, a total of 9 codes were created from the views. Table 3 shows that these codes are collected mostly in the “*Difficulty Addressing All Differences*” and least in “*Parent-School Cooperation*” and “*Lack of Knowing Mainstream Culture*”. Examples of teacher views from which these codes were created are shown below.

“When the cultural difference is added to the individual differences of all students, it becomes more difficult to find an equal sharing in teaching and dealing with students.” (T.34) (Difficulty Addressing All Differences, Difficulty of Blending Cultures)

“Cultural diversity can be difficult for the teacher in some situations. It may be difficult to adapt subject knowledge to many cultures and there may be cultural conflict among students.” (T48) (Difficulty Addressing All Differences, Culture Clash)

“Due to cultural differences, problems such as more communication and adjustment may be encountered in the classroom.” (T50) (Lack of communication, Culture Clash)

“We cannot reach every student. It may cause some communication problems between the students and us.” (T64) (Difficulty Addressing All Differences, Lack of Communication)

“It is difficult to maintain a certain level of behavior and culture in classes where there are many cultural differences.” (T26) (Difficulty Addressing All Differences, Changing Existing Biases)

“There are times when we are not enough for every student and when they are ignored, not one by one, but collectively, the group reaches and passes the midpoint. That's why students with high learning power and low learning power get the same education, so they disappear in the group.” (T58) (Difficulty Addressing All Differences)

In addition to the views received through direct quotes from the teachers, when we examine the relationships between the codes that emerged from the teachers' views on the weaknesses of cultural diversity, we see that the relationships seen in Figure 5 emerged.

Coding System	D.B.C.	C.E.B.	L.K.M.C.	C.C.	D.L.	L.C.	D.A.A.D.	D.A.C.D.	W.P.S.C.	Total
D.B.C.		4		1			4	1		10
C.E.B.	4			2		3	3			12
L.K.M.C.										0
C.C.	1	2			1	3	4	1	1	13
D.L.				1		3	1		1	6
L.C.		3		3	3		4	1	2	16
D.A.A.D.	4	3		4	1	4		1	1	18
D.A.C.D.	1			1		1	1			4
W.P.S.C.				1	1	2	1			5
Σ Total	10	12	0	13	6	16	18	4	5	84

P.S.C.: Parent-School Cooperation, D.A.C.D.: Difficulty Adapting to Cultural Diversity, D.A.A.D.: Difficulty Addressing All Differences, L.D.: Language Differences, L.C.: Lack of Communication, C.C.: Culture Clash, L.K.M.C.: Lack of Knowing Mainstream Culture, C.E.B.: Changing Existing Biases, D.B.C.: Difficulty of Blending Cultures

Figure 5. Table of code relationships showing the intensities of the intersections of teachers' statements on the weaknesses of cultural diversity

As it can be seen in Figure 4, it has been determined that there are 84 different relationships between the codes. Coded teachers' views on the weaknesses of cultural diversity mostly intersected with “*Difficulty Addressing All Differences*” (18), “*Lack of Communication*” (16), and “*Culture Clash*” (13). In addition, it has emerged from the findings that difficulty addressing all differences (7 different codes) and culture clash (7 different codes) are the codes that are most quantitatively associated with other codes.

Teachers' Views on the Opportunities for Cultural Diversity in The Classroom

In the third sub-problem of the research, the teachers' views on the opportunities for cultural diversity and the codes obtained are shown within the word cloud created as in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Codes associated with the opportunities for cultural diversity

A total of 10 codes were created from the teachers' views about the opportunities for cultural diversity, and 206 expressions were obtained. The frequencies and percentages of the codes related to opportunities for cultural diversity are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequencies and percentages of the codes corresponding to opportunities for cultural diversity

Codes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Learning Cultural Components	70	34.0
Gaining New Experiences	22	10.7
Gaining New Perspectives	21	10.2
Being Open-Minded	20	9.7
Unity in Diversity	19	9.2
Providing New Experiences	16	7.8
Developing Empathy	15	7.3
Showing Respect	15	7.3
Understanding “Others”	5	2.4
Developing Management Skills	3	1.4
Total	206	100

In the third sub-problem, in which teachers' views on the opportunities for cultural diversity were coded, a total of 10 codes were created from the views. Table 4 shows that these codes are collected mostly in the “*Learning Cultural Components*” and least in “*Developing Management Skills*”. Examples of teacher views from which these codes were created are shown below.

“It provides the opportunity to gain different perspectives, and at the same time to have detailed information about the difference. Some of the things mentioned; for example, I can encounter real-life applications of concepts such as common sense, respect, unity in diversity. I can see how much they can tolerate each other. Or how effective was what I said? When I continue with the same students in the upper grades, I can observe their changing thoughts and behaviors.” (T69) (Unity in Diversity, Gaining New Experiences, Developing Management Skills)

“It gives students the chance to experience various cultures in the same setting, fosters empathy, and is a great opportunity to teach students to be us, not “just me”. It enables students to respect differences.” (T24) (Developing Empathy, Showing Respect)

“First of all, seeing cultures other than your own makes you more culturally equipped. You are pushing yourself even more about how to teach with differences and you are pushing your limits. This saves you from being a stagnant teacher.” (T14) (Gaining New Perspectives, Learning Cultural Components)

“Students can have the opportunity to see the rituals of different cultures closely and mingle with those cultures. At the same time, we teachers see the culture of the place where we work or the culture of other places.” (T 33) (Learning Cultural Components)

“By blending different ideas and cultures, the ground can be created to reveal new ideas. In addition, students can learn to be tolerant of differences by discovering the diversity of ideas and cultures that exist in real life at an early age.” (T 79) (Being Open-Minded, Showing Respect)

“As a teacher, I can learn something as part of lifelong learning. Likewise, in the classroom, students can see different cultures and compare them with their own. It contributes to the development of synthesis skills.” (T61) (Developing Empathy, Learning Cultural Components, Gaining New Perspectives)

In addition to the views received through direct quotes from the teachers, when we examine the relationships between the codes that emerged from the teachers' views on the opportunities for cultural diversity, we see that the relationships seen in Figure 7 emerged.

CODING SYSTEM	L.C.C.	D.M.S.	D.E.	P.R.	U.D.	P.N.E.	B.O.M.	G.N.E.	G.N.P.	U.O.	TOTAL
L.C.C.		2	7	6	7	7	3	7	11	1	51
D.M.S.	2		1	1		1		1			6
D.E.	7	1		8	3	2	3	3	4		31
P.R.	6	1		8	4	1	4	2	2		28
U.D.	7		3	4		1	1	1		2	19
P.N.E.	7	1	2	1	1		1	2	1		16
B.O.M.	3		3	4	1	1		1	8		21
G.N.E.	7	1	3	2	1	2	1				17
G.N.P.	11		4	2		1	8				26
U.O.	1				2						3
Σ TOTAL	51	6	31	28	19	16	21	17	26	3	218

D.M.S.: Developing Management Skills, **D.E.:** Developing Empathy, **P.R.:** Providing Respect, **L.C.C.:** Learning Cultural Components, **U.D.:** Unity in Diversity, **P.N.E.:** Providing New Experiences, **B.O.M.:** Being Open-Minded, **G.N.E.:** Gaining New Experiences, **G.N.P.:** Gaining New Perspectives, **U.O.:** Understanding Others.

Figure 7. Table of code relationships showing the intensities of the intersections of teachers' statements on the opportunities for cultural diversity

As can be seen in Figure 7, it has been determined that there are 218 different relationships between the codes. Coded teachers' view on the opportunities for cultural diversity mostly intersected with "Learning Cultural Components" (51) and "Developing Empathy" (31). In addition, it has emerged from the findings that learning cultural components (9 different codes), developing empathy (8 different codes), providing respect (8 different codes), and providing new experiences (8 different codes) are the codes that are most quantitatively associated with other codes.

Teachers' Views on the Threats Against Cultural Diversity in The Classroom

In the fourth sub-problem of the research, the teachers' views on the threats against cultural diversity and the codes obtained are shown within the word cloud created as in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Codes associated with the threats against cultural diversity in the classroom

A total of 6 codes were created from the teachers' views about the opportunities for cultural diversity, and 132 expressions were obtained. In Table 5, the frequencies and percentages of the codes related to opportunities for cultural diversity are given.

Table 5. Frequencies and percentages of the codes corresponding to the threats against cultural diversity

Codes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cultural Conflict	41	31.1
Cultural Insensitivity	24	18.2
Cultural Exclusion	24	18.2
Cultural Misunderstanding	18	13.6
Lack of Communication	15	11.3
Cultural Hegemony	10	7.6
Total	132	100

In the fourth sub-problem, in which teachers' views on the threats against cultural diversity were coded, a total of 6 codes were created from the views. Table 5 shows that these codes are collected mostly in the “*Cultural Conflict*” and least in “*Cultural Hegemony*”. Examples of teacher views from which these codes were created are shown below.

“Their strict adherence to cultural elements to which they belong and their tendency to exclude other cultures by wrongly accepting them i a threat.” (T13) (Cultural Exclusion, Cultural Misunderstanding)

“Unfavorable examples negatively affect the classroom culture and learning environment. It is more difficult to gain academic behavior in classes where students who are very different economically and culturally are together.” T32 (Cultural Exclusion, Cultural Conflict)

“If we think that young children are very frank, there may be a fight between students due to frankness or because of imposing the truth they know. If a person who has not yet adopted his own culture is confronted with another culture and cannot synthesize the two cultures in his way, it may lead to an internal cultural conflict. It may even be a process leading to the exclusion by society.” (T61) (Cultural Conflict, Cultural Exclusion, Cultural Insensitivity)

“Along with cultural diversity, it brings various beliefs, thoughts, and experiences. Sometimes a sentence that is not wrong or hurtful to us can mean much more to the other party. It is an environment open to misunderstandings.” (T3) (Cultural Conflict, Cultural Insensitivity)

“Dealing with children and communicating one-on-one can be difficult.” (T100) (Lack of Communication)

“Cultures influence and change each other over time. In a classroom environment where diversity is high, it can lead to cultural conflict and change, leading to alienation from the original cultural roots.” (T109) (Cultural Hegemony, Cultural Conflict)

In addition to the views received through direct quotes from the teachers, when we examine the relationships between the codes that emerged from the teachers' views on the threats against cultural diversity, we see that the relationships seen in figure 9 emerged.

Coding System	C.E.	L.C.	C.H.	C.I.	C.C.	C.M.	TOTAL
C.E.		2	1	5	8	2	18
L.C.	2			1	3		6
C.H.	1			2	1		4
C.I.	5	1	2		4	4	16
C.C.	8	3	1	4		4	20
C.M.	2			4	4		10
Σ TOTAL	18	6	4	16	20	10	74

C.E.: Cultural Exclusion, L.C.: Lack of Communication, C.H.: Cultural Hegemony, C.I.: Cultural Insensitivity, C.C.: Cultural Conflict, C.M.: Cultural Misunderstanding

Figure 9. Table of code relationships showing the intensities of the intersections of teachers' statements on the threats against cultural diversity

As can be seen in Figure 9, it has been determined that there are 74 different relationships between the codes. Coded teachers' view on the threats against cultural diversity mostly intersected with "Cultural Conflict" (20) and "Cultural Exclusion" (18). In addition, it has emerged from the findings that cultural conflict (5 different codes), cultural exclusion (5 different codes), and cultural insensitivity (5 different codes) are the codes that are most quantitatively associated with other codes.

Conclusion and Discussion

Strengths of Cultural Diversity

The purpose of the study is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of cultural diversity as well as the opportunities and threats that cultural diversity poses to teachers. The first research question was created to examine teachers' views on the strengths of cultural diversity. According to findings, knowledge construction towards cultural differences and bringing cultures to the classroom are the most considered views on the strengths of cultural diversity. In this study, although teachers consider the knowledge construction towards differences as a priority, various studies have shown that teachers' skills in this dimension are not at the desired level or not a priority (Erbaş, 2019; Fullinwider, 2001; Merlin-Knoblich & Chen, 2018; Munalim, 2020). For instance, Fullinwider (2001) focuses on the idea that providing new perspectives in the construction of knowledge against differences can be an inextricable situation for the student. Instead, teachers should know which point of view should be taught for each specific situation, and then ensure that the knowledge of that situation is given to the student (Fullinwider, 2001). In other studies, Munalim (2020) and Erbaş (2019) examined teachers' practices of multicultural education within the framework of dimensions of multicultural education created by Banks (1994) and the findings of the studies indicated that

knowledge construction practices of teachers are not at a sufficient level to help students build knowledge towards differences.

The results of the study informed us that teachers have difficulty in correcting incomplete information about the diversity existing in students, especially about ethnic issues, or replacing this incorrect information with correct ones (Kuppens et al., 2019). The importance of accurately informing students about cultural diversity was frequently expressed by teachers in this study. Expanding the scope of teacher education programs and educating future teachers on how to integrate students' past lives and differences can be a solution for possible problems that may arise in the future while applying the dimension of knowledge construction of multicultural education.

Another finding of the study was that, despite teachers' belief that it is crucial to incorporate elements of cultural diversity into the classroom setting, they failed to provide detailed examples of how to do so. Pass et al. (2006) stated that bringing cultural components into the classroom environment would increase respect and tolerance among students. The researchers concluded that teachers could increase the visibility of cultures by planning activities that can be easily prepared in the classroom environment, such as "storytelling activities, food, traditional clothing, dance, cultural current events, a hands-on activity, classroom newspaper" (pp. 16-18). As we have seen in the recommended activities, teachers can easily plan activities that will improve students' perspectives on cultures. In addition, researchers recommend that organizing videoconference meetings with different parts of the world would simply support students to learn about different cultures that might exist in the classroom (Hopper, 2014; Tichnor-Wagner, 2016). For instance, Tichnor-Wagner (2016) recommends that students can learn about cultures on a global scale by using technological tools, which is one of the greatest opportunities this century has given us. Tichnor-Wagner (2016) reports that teachers will have no difficulty with planning, and they can easily inform students about cultures at the other end of the world by scheduling conference calls with international participants. Furthermore, the researcher claims that by integrating global and cultural issues into teacher's pedagogical content knowledge, creating an environment for discussion on topics that set the agenda on a global scale; and incorporating the experiences of students who have lived in different cultures into the program, they can simply bring cultural diversity to the classroom environment.

Weaknesses of Cultural Diversity

The second research question was created to examine teachers' views on the weaknesses of cultural diversity. Findings indicate that teachers stated that trying to address all cultures and the lack of communication caused by the high diversity are the weakest elements of cultural diversity in the classroom. There are studies in the literature showing that teachers have difficulties in handling all kinds of cultural diversity that students have within the scope of the lesson (Gay & Howard, 2000;

Lew & Nelson, 2016; Tiwari & Lal, 2016). Tiwari and Lal (2016) claim that teachers' access to all cultural diversity in the classroom can be overcome through various ways that they will follow in the lesson. Researchers believe that these ways are (a) discovering true ways of students' learning, (b) students' and teachers' communication channels should be open and diversified, (c) Teachers organize in-class, in-school, and out-of-school activities that make students aware of differences, (d) Avoiding prejudicial statements, attitudes, content, and actions that may exist in all components of education.

The other findings of the research indicate that communication problems can weaken ways of understanding cultural diversity in the classroom. There are several research that emphasized using the right communication ways as one of the most important skills for teachers (Chisholm, 1994; Chuang, 2013; Gay & Howard, 2000; Salerno & Kibler, 2013). According to Gay and Howard (2000), effective communication is the “heart of teaching” (p. 10) in diverse classrooms. Gay and Howard (2000) mention that students who come from culturally diverse backgrounds can communicate differently than teachers' expectations. Teachers who cannot correctly analyze the communication channels used by students cannot make sense of what they say and cannot speak the language that they will understand. For this reason, teachers need to analyze the communication channels of students to eliminate the effect of communication deficiencies in culturally diverse classes. Teachers should use appropriate language when addressing their students; if they have confusion about which terminology they will use, they should work on it to eliminate this confusion; and enrich their vocabulary about cultures (Keengwe, 2010).

Opportunities for Cultural Diversity

The third research question was created to examine teachers' views on opportunities directed toward cultural diversity. According to the findings, teachers primarily focus on learning cultural components, which is the most valuable benefit of having cultural diversity in the classroom. Cockrell et al. (1999) argue that learning the components of cultures is synonymous with “cultural awareness” (p.360) and “cultural knowledge” (p.360). Various studies show us that with the building of cultural awareness in children at an early age, they can get rid of many prejudices (Cousik, 2015; Özturgut, 2011; Sarraj et al., 2015). Furthermore, some studies indicate that supportive multicultural curricula in teacher education programs that bridge the gap between learning cultural components will educate culturally aware teachers (Cherng & Davis, 2019; Nieto, 2004; Thomas & Kearney, 2008; Yeung, 2006). As these studies suggest, the existence of cultural differences and teaching-related content will minimize possible misunderstandings and conflicts in the classroom. Providing students with all kinds of diversity in content (race, ethnicity, gender, social economic status, various disabilities etc.) will reduce the difficulty of planning education that includes all diversity. Similarly, as stated in the previous part, possible communication problems will be reduced to the lowest level among students who know each other.

Threats to Cultural Diversity

The fourth research question was created to examine teachers' views on threats against cultural diversity. According to the findings of the study, cultural diversity is perceived by teachers as a threat, mostly in terms of possible cultural conflicts that may occur in the classroom and insensitivity to cultural diversity. According to Gay's (2004) definition of "reality and representation", the correct design of the curriculum is one of the most important tools in preventing cultural conflicts that may occur in the classroom; and problems that may arise from ethnic and racial differences. The researcher claims that designing school programs equally and accurately showing diversity will prevent students with differences from seeing themselves as excluded, unimportant and alienated when they come to school.

The other major threat against cultural diversity is the possibility of cultural insensitivity in students and teachers. There are some studies claiming that teachers can remain insensitive to students who come from diverse backgrounds and this insensitivity can be related to having less experience or inadequate training about how to deal with those students (Saint-Hilaire, 2014; Yuan, 2018). However, this inexperienced situation can cause children who come from diverse backgrounds to feel less welcomed in culturally insensitive environments. (Phuntsog, 1999). The training to be given based on the importance of cultural diversity in teacher education and the idea that there can be students from all kinds of backgrounds in the classroom will help reduce the fears that teachers may have against cultural diversity. Organizing these training about students' cultural backgrounds, learning styles and the right ways of communicating with them will reduce these fears.

Recommendations

The research comes up with the following recommendations for future research.

1. Research can include in-depth interviews that reveal teachers' thoughts on cultural diversity in all its positive and negative dimensions.
2. In-class observation-based studies can be conducted to support the ideas put forward by teachers in this research or show differences.
3. Based on the findings, policymakers should plan an educational program for current teachers that includes content covering cultural diversity.
4. Teacher education policies in schools of education should be re-planned by considering diversity.
5. Research should be conducted to examine the interactions of students with differences, which are the subject of teachers' negative experiences with cultural diversity, in the classroom and school.

Conflict of Interest

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Credit Author Statement

The author confirms that he had all responsibilities for the following: conceptualization of the study and design, data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the findings, and preparation of the manuscript.

Ethical Statement

Ethics committee approval within the scope of the research has been obtained from the Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University ethics committee of scientific research with the decision numbered 19/01 on 04.11.2021.

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