MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Mirela IBRAIMI[1], Besa DOGANI[2]

[1]*Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Tetova*
[2] *Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Tetova*
Corresponding Author: e-mail: besa.dogani-ut@unite.edu.mk

Abstract

Throughout history, the entire world has been constantly torn apart by conflicts whose origin can be attributed to the differences of the individuals. As for today, it has not changed much even in the 21st century. Multiculturalism, and the contact of members of different cultures, accompany humanity throughout its existence. The coexistence of people from different cultures, languages , and religions is recorded in the historical works of philosophers, and thinkers. If we make a journey from the global level to the European continent, we can say that thanks to the historical contexts, Europe, with its wide complex of mutual cultures and ethnic groups, is no exception. The ancient effort of humanity was to create higher civilizational units that would ensure a higher level of quality of human activity, regardless of nationality or ethnicity. This process enabled the emergence of communities and organizations such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The item multiculturalism and relations in Europe is therefore more of a political problem. The purpose of the paper was to describe the current situation and terminology related to the intercultural education of primary school teachers based on professional literature and sources, previous research, and internal knowledge. Among the most recent contributions and publications, it can also be found a historical perspective on the issue of intercultural education provided by the older literature.

Keywords: intercultural, multiculturalism, teachers, ethnic groups, languages, civilizations

Introduction

We can say that multicultural education has made significant progress in a global context during its existence. Theories and practices certainly have their place in pedagogical circles and it is not possible to neglect research projects. The first research in the field of intercultural education was conducted in the 1940s and focused on the relationship between educational attainment and cultural attitudes. Previous research was based on experimental methods, without any connection to the theoretical basis. Despite this shortcoming, the foundations for intercultural education research have been laid. A significant change in the field of intercultural education can be observed in the 1980s when intercultural education took an institutional form. The biggest pioneer in this area is James Banks, who developed the concept of the school as a multicultural social system (eng. Total school environment change). In the field of education, most of the research from this period was focused on the general characteristics, conditions, and assumptions of intercultural education. Specifically, researchers have focused on interpersonal relationships and attitudes (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman (2003), Bassey (1997), Moses (1997)), didactic methods, goals, and teaching documents (Anderson (2000), Hernandez (1989), Parker (2007), Millhouse (1996)). However, these researches do not have a more detailed insight into the problem and do not take into account the impact of the educational reality.

The first study of intercultural competencies began to appear in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States. The research was based on the need to eliminate communication barriers between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Due to the increasing number of multicultural interactions, in the years 1970-1980, the research expanded and separated into several areas (foreign trade, foreign studies, immigration acculturation, etc.). During these formative years, research mapping intercultural competencies was based on the attitudes,

values, motives, and individual perspectives of the individuals being studied. Deardroff has made a significant contribution to the field of intercultural competencies, defining intercultural competencies in more detail in his work.

Theoretical review of multicultural education and upbringing

The next chapter introduces the theoretical basis of the concept of multicultural education. Multiculturalism as we have stated presents it as a social phenomenon and reflects its impact on primary education. Intercultural issues represent an interdisciplinary theory covering the fields of pedagogy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, politics, law, etc., which has been developing in a constituted form since the 1980s. The profiling of multicultural education was influenced by a social movement in the United States that criticized the discrimination of socially or ethnically determined students and the reproduction of social inequality. At the same time, multiculturalism developed first as a description of social order and then as practical politics and political theory.

The development of the human spirit is an essential part of the social essence is the acquisition of patterns and learning by imitation. This dynamic current developed especially in France, the USA, and Canada, that is, in countries with extensive multicultural history. Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach, applied mainly in developmental psychology, became the starting point for the emergence of pedagogical constructivism, social constructivism, and activity learning. The modern concept of multiculturalism began to be conceived in the 1960s in North America in response to waves of immigration. In connection with these events, the so-called melting pot was assumed, when all cultures "merged" into a common one. However, this assumption was not fulfilled and instead of a pot, a so-called salad bowl was created, which refers to the mutual mixing of individual cultures while retaining their specificities. It is about critical race theory and the colorblind approach. Critical race theory presents the category of race as something artificial and entirely constructed by humans. In the field of education, supporters of this theory try to draw attention to the student's identity, its creation, and awareness of the existence of discrimination. In line with this theory, the colorblind approach is based on the claim that the very existence of races and the selection of people into groups constitutes covert racism. In terms of education, there is an effort to focus on the development of individual skills and abilities with an emphasis on personal and social development and critical thinking.

One cannot talk about multiculturalism and multicultural education without thinking about culture as such. Culture or civilization in the broadest ethnographic sense is "a complex whole that includes knowledge, faith, art, morals, law, customs, and all other abilities and customs acquired by man as a member of society." (Tylor, 1871)

Specificities of the primary school in the context of multicultural education: When we talk about the first phase of compulsory school attendance – primary school, it brings with it certain specifics that must be respected when implementing multicultural education. Within the implementation of multicultural education, these are mainly the particularities of younger school-aged students and the associated fear of increasing demands on the scope of the curriculum. The choice of teaching material is related to the acquisition of individual key competencies and subsequently included in the educational areas. To create a comprehensive picture of intercultural issues, it is necessary to ensure that the cross-cutting theme is intertwined with all educational areas.

In contact with practitioners, it is possible to discover that primary school students are not mature enough to absorb and understand intercultural education. The younger school age is a period in which moral reasoning is formed, the origin of which is based on the prejudices of students, regardless of the logical structure of thinking, rejecting the objections to introducing multicultural education in primary school. It is necessary to

build a base of experience for children at the youngest possible age so that the reflected context can be derived later.

The theoretical concept of multicultural education is not enough by itself. The importance of implementing multicultural education in the educational process should be emphasized for the development of the whole society. It takes concrete steps in five basic areas:

1. content integration (content integration),
2. knowledge construction process,
3. reduction of prejudices (prejudice reduction),
4. fair approach of teachers (equity pedagogy),
5. formation and strengthening of the culture and social structure of the school (empowering). (Banks, 1989)

One of the key categories of multicultural education in primary school is working with diversity. An important goal of the elementary school teacher is to learn to deal appropriately and sensitively not only with the diversity of cultures but also with the personality of the student. Appropriate treatment of diversity in the school environment can result in increased productivity, more creative problem-solving, development of moral and cognitive reasoning, improved relationships, and overall improvement in peer interactions. However, in addition to these advantages, negative influences from a culturally inhomogeneous environment can also be observed. It is about reduced work performance, rejection of new information, and the emergence of negative relationships based on selfishness, prejudices, and stereotypes, which can turn into bullying. To maximize the benefits of cultural diversity, it is essential to recognize diversity as a valuable source of progress, to support relationships in a collaborative context, and to continuously shape and develop personal identity. Thus, teachers face the task of understanding the principles of cognitive barriers, the dynamics of cultural conflict, and social reasoning so that they can nonviolently internalize democratic values, rights to life, and freedom in students. they are rooted in the general consciousness of people, individual cultures carry with them certain patterns and norms characteristic of a particular ethnic group or nation. Different ways of upbringing, different levels of physical contact, emotional regulation of the child's speech, or the degree of tolerance of the child's individuality have been recorded.

The diversity in the school environment is reflected, among other things, in the promotion of different views on family education, from which the teachers' approach also results. Family education is based on the expectations and demands of parents and the responsibility for raising children - to what extent do they attribute education to educational institutions and what to themselves? Religion, the political regime that rules in a certain country, and the ideology that is promoted at school also have an unforgettable influence. Cross-cultural differences have been noted in parents' general attitudes toward education and school performance. Educational differences also appear in students' attitudes to learning and evaluation of their school success. The differences are also reflected in the teaching process, the organization of teaching, the work of teachers in class, the communication style of teachers, and the overall educational climate in schools. The position of teachers and the respect students have for them may also differ depending on nationality.

Intercultural competence should be based on five elements: attitude, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes. It is a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures. (K.Deadorff, 2006)

Interactions between majority and minority societies can be positive, desirable, and beneficial. The overall goal of intercultural education is to see multitudes and differences as positive and to understand multiculturalism as a chance for a better world.

Methodology

The need for research on intercultural competencies is more than necessary, and for that, numerous instruments are used for their assessment of individuals. In this case, a quantitative online survey in the form of a questionnaire was conducted to test the previously stated research claims. The study population in our case includes 50 respondents, professors from several municipal secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia. The research was carried out by the general methodological procedures for scientific research work, and the implementation was planned in a precisely determined time frame, namely in September 2022. After the collection of data was completed, the phase of statistical processing followed, which allowed us to reach significant conclusions.

In the research, the research technique was surveying and the questionnaire was used as a measuring instrument The questionnaire was made of a closed and open type of questions, and respondents were able to answer with one answer from the offered options and leave their comments. It contained 11 questions. The questionnaire was sent to the respondent's e-mail addresses. In the questionnaire, it is stated that this research is carried out for the needs and purposes of producing a research paper. The results of the survey were combined and processed based on the conclusions. The methods that were used in the research were: analysis of the obtained results, survey, and statistics. A greater number of the respondents who answered the questionnaire have a degree of higher education and they were answered through Google Forms. The research was conducted throughout (8) days.

The main hypothesis of this research paper is based on the claim that teachers possess intercultural competencies necessary for their work in today's multicultural society, but these competencies differ significantly according to the age of the teacher.

	Respondents	
	F	%
Sex:		
Male	42	84
Female	8	16
Age:		
years	11	22
years	30	60
years	9	18
years	/	/
Work experience:		
5 years	8	16
6-15 years	23	46
16-25 years	11	22

26-35 years	8	16
Schools:		
СОУ Кирил Пејчиновиќ, Тетово	12	24
ДСУ Ибрахим Темо, Струга	14	28
ДСУГС Зеф Луш Марку	8	16
СОУ Гостивар	8	16
ОСУ Мирко Милевски, Кичево	8	16
T o	50	100

Table 1. Representation of respondents by gender, age, work experience, and high school where they teach

Results and discussion

The first question of the questionnaire was: State which factors contributed the most to your understanding of these concepts: multiculturalism, intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, pedagogical competence to encourage intercultural development of students, European values, European dimension? Visually represented by figure number 1.
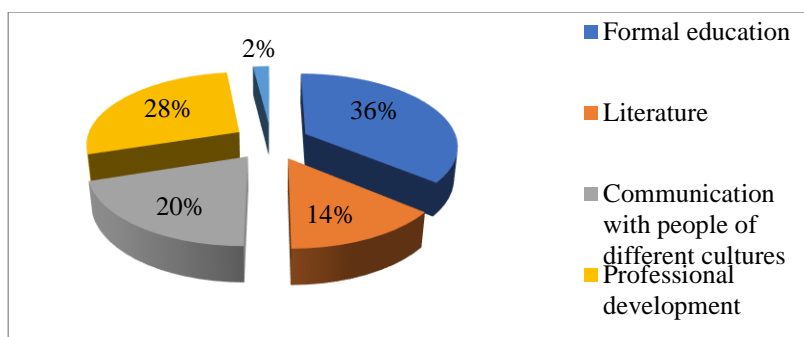

Figure 1. Response to question number 1

The second question reads: According to you, what qualities should an interculturally competent professor possess?

On this question, many respondents mention knowledge and understanding of other cultures, and qualities such as empathy, openness, ability to communicate and work in a team, and absence of prejudice are mentioned. In the development of intercultural competence, respondents recognize the importance of studies, and some emphasize that great responsibility lies within the individual and that the easiest way to acquire intercultural competence is through experience of friendship with people from different cultures. Visually, it is represented above by figure number 2.
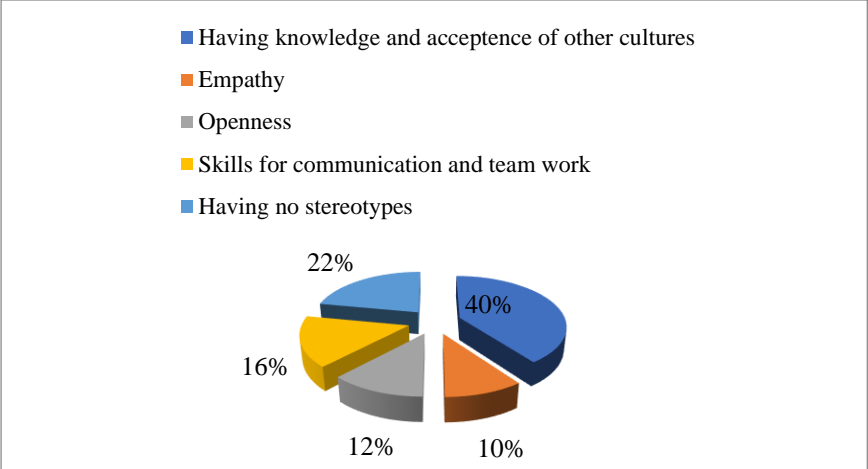
132

Figure 2: Response to question number 2

The third question reads: According to you, what roles/functions should the professor have in the multicultural hour? How should students be treated?

The following question refers to the knowledge and abilities that an interculturally competent teacher should impart to his students. On this question, many respondents remember respect for others (people, cultures...), and motivation for researching other cultures and nations. Relationship degradation. Students need to encourage feelings and attitudes of mutual respect, understanding, and liberation from prejudice. First of all, curiosity about your culture and language, respect and appreciation of your culture. Understanding, understanding, understanding, interest, curiosity. Ability to work in a team, respect differences in others, and knowledge of other cultures. Getting to know your own and other cultures, understanding cultural values, avoiding stereotypes and prejudices, understanding and respecting different people, and shaping your behavior to send positive verbal and non-verbal messages. An interculturally competent teacher needs to convey to his students the knowledge of other cultures, and the knowledge that all cultures are equally valuable, he needs to teach them about intercultural communication, to instill democratic values. We need to transfer the skills of flexibility, openness, tolerance, cooperation, ability to move and live among other cultures without developing prejudices, and stereotypes and causing conflicts. Visually it is represented by figure number 3.
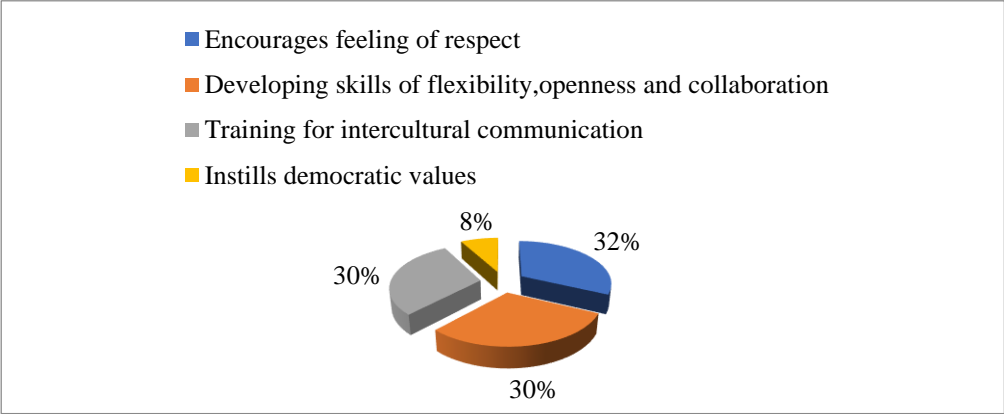

Figure 3. Response to question number 3

133

The fourth question was: Do you think you have enough intercultural competence to work in a multicultural class?

To this question, the respondents answered: A) 30 respondents answered YES, which represents 60% of the respondents, B) 15 respondents partially answered, which represents 30% of the respondents, and C) 5 respondents answered NO, which represents 10% of the respondents.
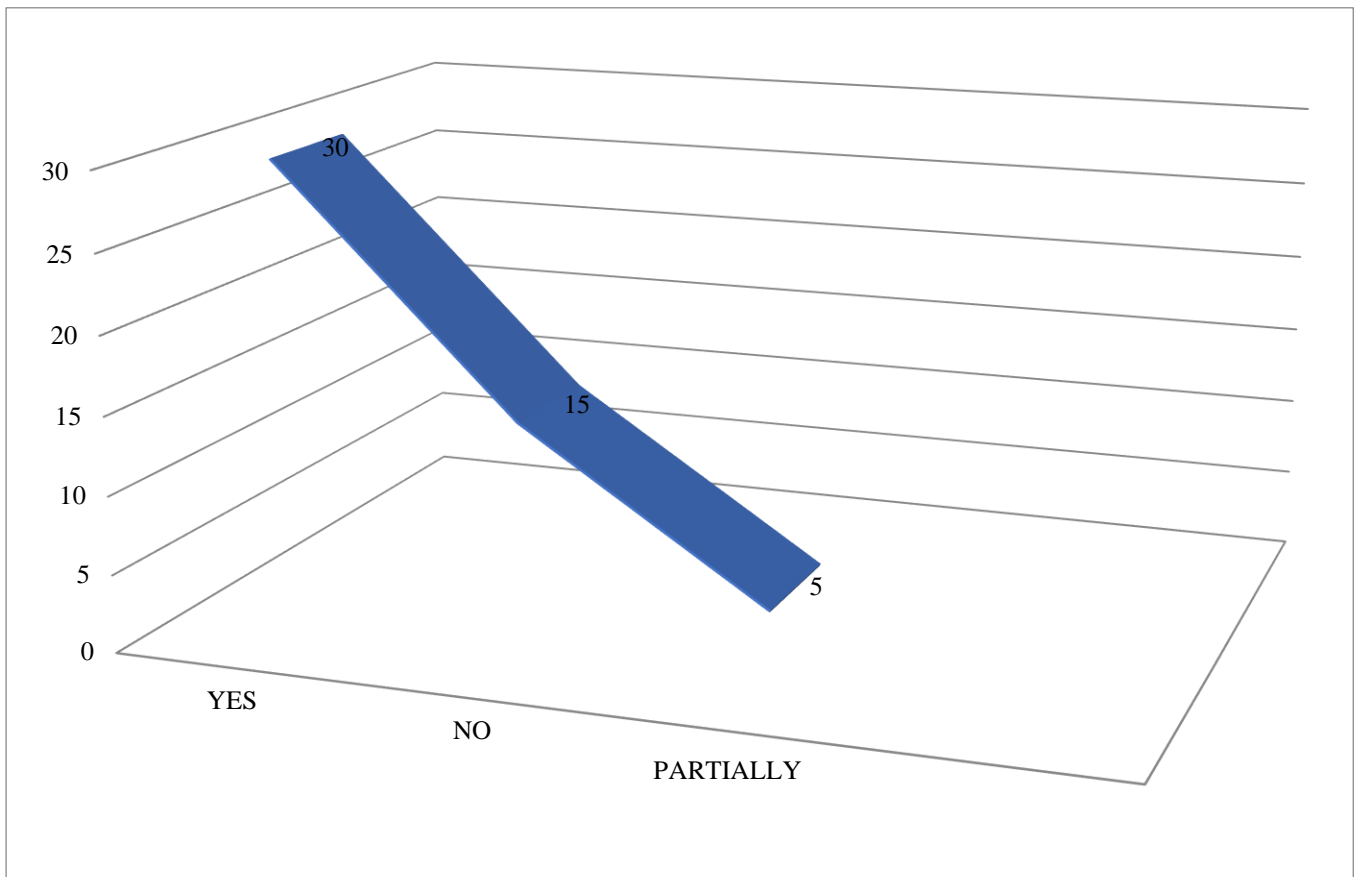
Visually it is represented by figure number 4.

Figure 4. Response to question number 4

Table 1. Results of the χ2 test for sociodemographic variables age and question number 4 of the questionnaire. The hi-square independence test determined that there was a significant statistical connection between the age of the respondents and question no.3 of the survey questionnaire

χ2 test			
	Value	df	Asymptomatic significance (two-sided)
Pearson χ2	9,497352	4	0,00
Proportion of association	4,826254	4	0,00
Probability of association	,647789	2	0,00
Number of valid cases	50		
a. 0 steel (0.0%) has an expected number of less than 5. The minimum expected number is 2.96.			

The fifth question was: Have you met these concepts in your education and school work: multiculturalism, intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, pedagogical competence to encourage intercultural development of students, European values, and European dimension?

To this question, the respondents answered: A) 34 respondents answered YES, which represents 68% of the respondents, B) PARTIALLY 12 respondents answered, which represents 24% of the respondents, and C) 4 respondents answered NO, which represents 8% of the respondents.

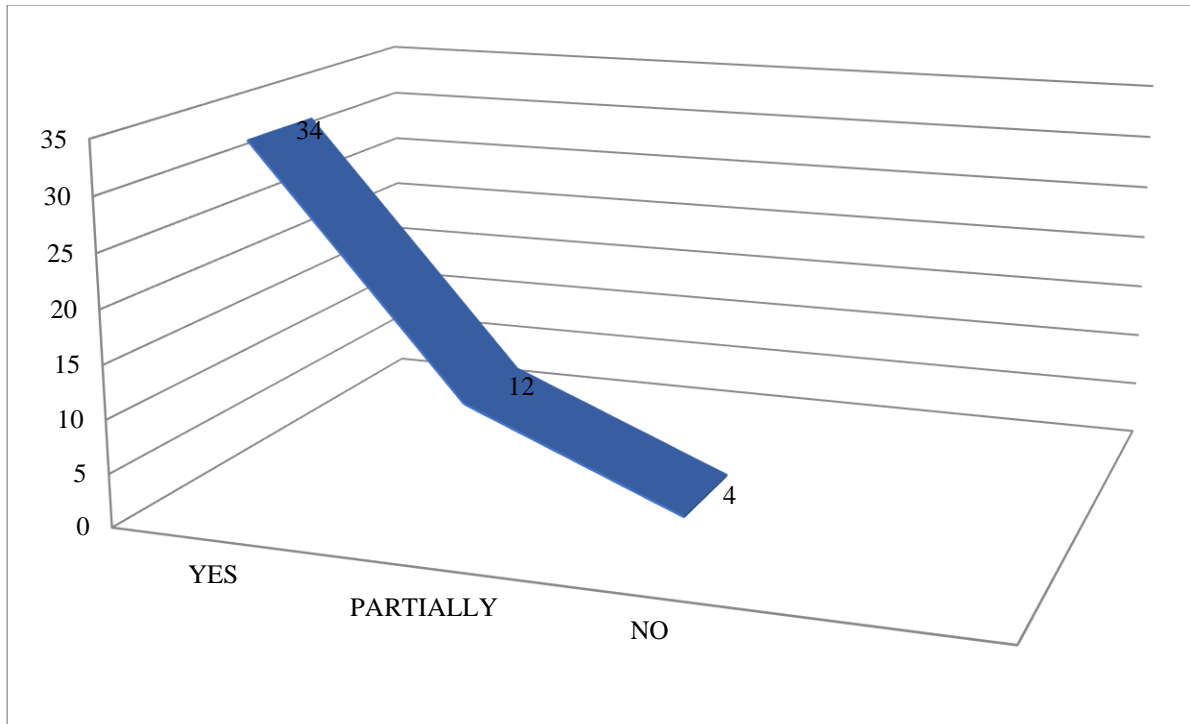It is visually represented by figure number 5.

Figure 5. Response to question number 5

Table 2.Results of the χ2 and sociodemographic variable age test and question no.1 of the survey questionnaire. The hi-square independence test determined that there was a significant statistical connection between the age of the respondents and question number 1 of the survey questionnaire

χ2 test			
	Value	df	Asymptomatic significance (two-sided)
Pearson χ2	13,285324	4	0,009986
Proportion of association	8,463224	4	0,00
Probability of association	4,231122	2	0,00
Number of valid cases	50		
a. 2 cells (50,0%) have an expected number of less than 5. The minimum expected number is 1,23.			

The sixth question reads: Did your studies contribute to the understanding of the concept of interculturalism and the acquisition of intercultural competencies?

The respondents answered this question with A) 35 respondents answered YES, which represents 70% of the respondents, B) PARTIALLY 11 respondents answered, which represents 22% of the respondents, and C) 4 respondents answered NO, which represents 8% of the respondents.

Table 3. Results of the χ2 test for the sociodemographic variable age and question no. 7 from the survey questionnaire, The chi-square test of independence determined that there is a significant statistical association between the age of the respondents and question #7 of the survey questionnaire, χ2 (4, n = 50) = 9.494373, p = 0.0595.

χ2 test			
	Value	df	Asymptomatic significance (two-sided)
Pearson χ2	9,494373 a	4	0,0595
Proportion of association	5,283521	4	,0550
Probability of association	,542	2	,0453
Number of valid cases	50		
a. 0 cells (0,0 %) have an expected number of less than 5. The minimum expected number is 2,25.			

Answers and results that we got for questions 4 4,5 and 6 are analyzed with the values of the Chi-square test because the indicator age was claimed that have an impact on the teacher's knowledge and intercultural competencies. That is why it was the main hypothesis. Answers from the respondents showed that younger teachers have more knowledge of the Concepcion of multiculturalism as much as during their studies, also during their practical work with students. With the answers that we got, we confirmed the setup hypothesis.
As we live in a multicultural world, in more and more workplaces, employees are expected to possess different competencies, including intercultural competencies. Professors are no exception, of course, the importance of possessing intercultural competencies of professors is extremely high. Although the paper states that there is no single definition of multicultural competence, it can be said to encompass a variety of abilities, knowledge, and skills that are necessary for an individual to successfully communicate with people from other cultures. In today's classes, there are more and more students who come from different countries and cultures, for whom Macedonian is not their mother language, so the importance of intercultural competence of teachers is seen in their relationship with these students. In addition, teachers should import knowledge and skills to students so

that one day they too will be equal participants in society and able to communicate with members of other cultures. Precisely because of the recognition of the importance of teachers' intercultural competencies, the research tried to find out if the selected teachers have basic knowledge about interculturalism and intercultural competencies and where they acquired this knowledge and skills (teacher studies, professional development, media, interaction with people from other crops, etc...). The research determined that the teachers' self-assessment of having intercultural competencies is positive, i.e. that they possess intercultural competencies and are interested in the contents of interculturalism, and half of the respondents work in a school where there are many students of other nationalities. All of them emphasize that interculturalism is their reality and that they have experience working with students belonging to other cultures, and on the other hand, some of the respondents have never had students from a different nationality. The problems they see in these students are mostly language barriers. The research has methodological limitations, such as giving socially desirable answers, subjectivity in the analysis of the answers, a small sample, and the impossibility of generalizing the results. However, this methodology provides an insight into the situation in five schools and fifty respondents, and the similarities and differences between their experiences can be compared. The survey shows that the respondents recognize the importance of multiculturalism and the possession of intercultural competencies, but emphasize the lack of education in this area of teacher studies. This work can serve as an introduction to further and more deeply deal with the concepts of interculturalism and intercultural competence of teachers, both in classrooms and subject teachers in secondary schools.

Conclusion

According to the previously stated educational policy, I am working on the problems of multicultural education and upbringing, as it is necessary to prepare for life in a culturally diverse society. Multicultural contacts and interactions are becoming more common and gradually becoming a common part of everyone's life. Changes in society are directly reflected in educational reality and education is forced to respond. With the introduction of intersectoral topics, this question became an integral part of the primary school. I believe that the insufficient offer of the study discipline is one of the significant shortcomings of the postgraduate training of school teachers in the area of multicultural education. About the current developments in society, each of the students must be able to complete a discipline that will prepare them for the multicultural composition of the school and the problems related to it. That can only be achieved by unifying and strengthening the high education of future teachers, both in terms of professional theory and in terms of pedagogical practice. For teachers who have already completed university training, it is necessary to expand and supplement the offer of short-term or long-term courses that are implemented as part of the education of teaching staff. Courses and seminars should be presented as open disciplines that reflect the latest knowledge in the field of multicultural education, pedagogy, didactics, and psychology and equip students with a combination of intercultural competence.
Due to the lack of experience with the multicultural composition of the teachers, teachers have concerns and problems arising from ignorance of this question. Although teachers consider multicultural education to be essential for living in a culturally diverse society, they often do not see multiculturalism at school as a problem. Due to the relatively small number of foreigners in most Macedonian elementary schools, teachers do not have to face more serious problematic situations and do not feel the need to adapt the teaching. I think that one of the shortcomings of intercultural education because it is mediated by teachers, is the fact that multicultural education is currently presented to teachers as something new, unknown, foreign. However, cultural and social diversity is a long-term issue for both the Macedonian school and the Macedonian society. It can be said that the development of multicultural education in primary school advanced significantly in recent years. As a cross-sectoral topic, multicultural education is necessarily integrated into the teaching of various subjects from the lowest departments. At the same time, most teachers are aware of and recognize the importance and contributions of this cross-sectoral topic to the development of the athlete and society as a whole. Although

there are still many shortcomings and problems that appear in the process of implementing multicultural education in educational reality, progress is already obvious. Every realized lecture or activity that leads to the development of interaction and communication between students and the world around them aims to successfully fulfill the goals of multicultural education. Even though the question of multicultural education and education is a very frequent topic for both experts and the general public, there is still relatively little research that maps the situation in basic education.

References

[1]. Banks, J. A. and C. McGee Banks. 1989.Multicultural Education, Issues and Perspectives. Boston, Allyn, and Bacon.

[2]. Byram, M. 1997.Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.

[3]. Cohen, E. G. 2002. Les défis du pluralisme en éducation: essais sur la formation interculturelle. Presses de l'Université Laval.

[4]. Deardorff, D. K. 2004. Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States. North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina State University.

[5]. Domnwachukwu, C. S. 2010.An introduction to multicultural education, from theory to practice. Plymouth, Rowman a Littlefield.

[6]. Lott, B. 2010. Multiculturalism and diversity, a social psychological perspective. West Sussex, Wiley.

[7]. Mendenhall, M. E., Stahl, G. K., Ehnert, I., Oddou, G., Osland, J. S., & Kuhlmann, T. M. 2004. Evaluation studies of cross-cultural training programs. *Handbook of intercultural training*, 129-143.

[8]. Министерство за образование и наука 2010.Чекори кон интегрирано образование во образовниот систем на Република Македонија.

[9]. Parekh, B. 2000, Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory. Great Britain, Macmillan.

[10]. Prato, G. B. (Ed.). 2016. *Beyond multiculturalism: views from anthropology*. Routledge.

[11]. Reynolds, R. L. P. A. L. 1997. Student affairs core competencies., Integrating multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. *Journal of college student development*, *38*(3), 266-277

[12]. Risager, K. 2007. Language and culture pedagogy, from a national to a transnational paradigm. Buffalo, Multilingual Matters.

[13]. Trotman, James C., et al. 2002. Multiculturalism, Roots and Realities. Bloomington,Indiana Univerzity Press, ISBN 0-253-34002-0.