

Reflections of Multiculturalism to Vocational Education

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Received: 13.04.2024

Revised : 18.05.2024

Accepted: 29.05.2024

ABSTRACT

Culture shapes people's minds, emotions and bodies, explaining how they think and perceive the world. With the increasing coexistence of different cultures today, the needs and expectations in the field of education have also begun to change. This change has also affected vocational education. Therefore, in the context of increasing globalization and cultural diversity, the effects of multiculturalism on vocational education are important. This research aims to examine the reflections of multiculturalism on vocational education. A field study was conducted within the scope of the determined keywords for this purpose. As a result of the research, it was revealed that educational policies and programs regarding the reflections of multiculturalism on vocational education should be updated. In this direction, it is seen that the most frequently experienced difficulty is the language barrier. The research suggests the establishment of language support programs and the development of projects supporting multiculturalism.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, multicultural, vocational education, reflections

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is a social structure in which people of different ethnic origins, religions, languages and cultural backgrounds live together in a society and there is mutual understanding and respect (Johansson, 2024). The basis of a multicultural society is the equal acceptance of different cultures and the interaction between these identities. Multiculturalism in education systems means managing different cultures effectively. In order to strengthen social harmony and cooperation, it is important to accept cultural differences as richness and to design educational processes accordingly (Torres & Tarozzi, 2020).

Vocational education is a type of education that aims to equip people with practical knowledge and skills in a specific profession or field (Pambudi & Harjanto, 2020). Vocational education aims to provide both theoretical knowledge and practical skills while preparing students for the business world, and is therefore considered an indispensable element of economic development (Kovalchuk et. al., 2022). In addition, it contributes to the personal and professional development of students and makes them more competitive in the labor market. In a multicultural environment, vocational education does more than just provide technical knowledge; it also improves students' intercultural communication and cooperation skills (Borge et al., 2022).

This study aims to examine the reflections of multiculturalism on vocational education. In a globalizing world, education and the labor market are increasingly faced with cultural diversity. Vocational education is not only a process that prepares individuals for the labor market, but also provides an environment where individuals with different cultural backgrounds receive education together. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of this multicultural structure on vocational education processes, to determine the difficulties encountered and the strategies that can be followed in this area. In terms of scope, basic issues such as the place of multiculturalism in vocational education, the positive and negative aspects of this process and its reflections were discussed.

Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education

Culture is the characteristics that make a person human, that are seen in all stages of life from birth to death, and are transmitted from generation to generation through socialization. n (Jahoda, 2012). The culture of a community is formed as a result of a group of people coming together, speaking a common language, exhibiting similar behaviors, sharing the same geography, and uniting in common beliefs (Ronen & Shenkar, 2013). Today, with the influence of globalization, people come face to face with people from different cultures, languages, and ethnic backgrounds more than in the past, and share the same

spaces together. This situation necessitates the formation of societies where all people are accepted with their differences, and this brings multicultural policies to the agenda (Vora et al., 2019).

Today, it has become an interactive environment where different cultures live together and cultural diversity and difference are inevitable. In this change, the phenomenon of “globalization and migration” is two important phenomena that represent the closeness and interaction of different cultures (Susanto, 2017). It is seen that the world has become smaller with globalization, the borders between countries are not clear and the interaction between different cultures has increased thanks to migration. The movement of people for various reasons due to the conditions created by globalization also affects the patterns and dimensions of interactions between people and cultures, so that in addition to globalization and migration, the social structure formed by individuals with different cultural values has become a natural situation for nations (Segal, 2019).

The 21st century society has the characteristics of a society that is differentiated in terms of culture, belief, understanding and an increasingly globalized philosophy of life (Hirschman & Wood, 2018). Today, values such as increasing cultural diversity, interaction of cultural differences and acceptance of each other's lifestyles are increasingly emphasized. In this context, it is argued that the education process should be integrated and intertwined with socio-cultural elements, and the education system should be designed and implemented from a socio-cultural perspective (Lozano & Escrich, 2017; Lin, 2020).

Multicultural education has developed along with current living conditions, and the monoculture education approach is inadequate to meet the needs brought about by globalization. It is an educational system approach that is based on the principles of education and determines the survival of a common culture as the purpose of education (Parekh, 2010). Banks (2013) defines multicultural education as an idea, a concept, an educational reform movement and a process.

The country's multicultural structure based on cultural diversity motivates the national government to bring together people with different lifestyles and respond to the needs created by cultural values. Therefore, throughout history, cultural differences have been the biggest problem in the construction of political unity in many societies (Kymlicka, 2020). However, multiculturalism should not be expressed merely as the acceptance of difference. It is also stated that legal equality of differences will be ensured (Kymlicka, 2017).

Multicultural education is defined as an educational innovation that enables students to benefit from education equally regardless of religion, language, race, gender, age, social class, and economic level (Banks, 2013). The field of multicultural education emerged with research aimed at responding to the learning needs of students from different cultural backgrounds and supporting effective teaching by teachers (Gollnick & Chinn, 2017). As these studies have grown, a rich literature on the principles and practices of multicultural education has emerged.

Vocational Education

Vocational and technical education is a type of education that provides the necessary knowledge and skills to train sectoral technical personnel needed by nations and societies and increases the competencies of individuals (Kombe & Officer, 2020).

In terms of education, vocational and technical education aims to raise a productive, qualified, innovative and effective workforce that contributes to the economy, has the necessary professional competence and meets national and international standards in cooperation with stakeholders (Oviawe et al., 2017). There are sub-objectives determined in line with this general objective. Some of these are; organizing vocational education programs for the workforce to be employed, providing individuals with the competencies and desired behaviors that sectors need, ensuring the sectoral, economic and social integration of the vocational and technical education system, providing individuals with superior skills that will keep up with information and technology and adapt to change with the digitalization process, providing a sense of profession-specific and work ethics, providing an entrepreneurial understanding in order to contribute to the formation of new business areas in order to increase employment, managing vocational and technical education with the participation of stakeholders in the environment, increasing the quality of vocational education, making human-centered development effective and ensuring the formation of new business areas (Pambudi & Harjanto, 2020).

The aims of vocational education include finding a place for countries in global competition, ensuring a sustainable economic balance, increasing the welfare of societies and establishing living standards, determining the philosophy of life, qualifying human capital, and structuring the population according to market expectations (Kovalchuk et al., 2022).

Multiculturalism in Vocational Education

Vocational education is a type of education that prepares individuals for the labor market and provides them with practical skills and technical knowledge. In this type of education, multiculturalism is gaining more and more importance due to factors such as globalization, migration movements and cultural diversity of societies (Lavrijsen & Nicaise, 2017; Eichhorst et. al., 2015).

In addition to transferring technical knowledge, cultural diversity is utilized by including people with different cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the vocational education system. Multiculturalism contributes greatly to the learning and teaching processes of vocational education. Cultural heritage, values and perspectives are transferred to the vocational education environment by students from different cultures. This provides intercultural enrichment by encouraging communication, cooperation and problem-solving processes in the classroom. Thus, students with multiculturalism in the vocational education environment understand different cultures and ways of thinking better, enabling them to be inclusive, flexible and adaptable in business life (Seitamaa & Hakoköngäs, 2024).

Meanwhile, integration of multiculturalism into vocational education is related to certain difficulties. The most serious issues in this respect are the language barriers, the problems of adaptation to education methods, and prejudicial challenges due to cultural diversity. To such an end, educators should be trained through culturally sensitive pedagogies aimed at providing students with an inclusive environment (Kang, 2020). If vocational education is combined with multiculturalism, then the contribution will be great in personal development but also in intercultural understanding and cooperation on the job market. Therefore, vocational education not only gives technical skills but also develops cultural awareness and adaptation (Sergeeva et. al., 2019).

The Effects of Multiculturalism on Vocational Education Processes

Vocational education is affected by multiculturalism in various ways. The inclusion of students from different cultural backgrounds in the educational environment requires the re-evaluation of many things, from the content of education to its methods. In this context, the impact of multiculturalism on vocational education processes has spread over a wide range, from students' learning styles to instructors' teaching methods and even educational materials (Karacabey et. al., 2017).

First of all, culturally different students may involve the learning process with different learning attitudes. Culturally, people acquire some knowledge of how to handle information, their roles while working in groups or teams and the value of individual effort. Thus, different approaches to teaching and learning vocations should be practiced with regard to the cultural difference. For instance, the receptiveness to some pedagogy types, such as group work, may differ among some of the students. This way, the learning processes will be even more efficient if the instructors conduct themselves in a manner that gives room for these differences (Fine-Davis & Faas, 2020).

One of the limitations of multicultural vocational education is the diversity in language use among practice setting. Students can also find it difficult to learn when the languages used in the classroom are not familiar to them and in addition they cannot be able to effectively communicate with their teachers. Consequently, the language support and cultural adaptation for students, alongside with their teachers, are significant barriers that have to be resolved in order to improve the educational process (Karacsony et. al., 2022). However, textbooks and any other educational material dissemination also need to be looked at from a multicultural point of view. Therefore, materials that would help students to get deeper understanding of the culture of people all over the world can contribute to the enhancement of student's activity during the educational process (Parkhouse et. al., 2019).

Multiculturalism is openness and the giving of chances but it also entails threats in vocational education procedures. Correct handling of issues to do with cultural diversity is beneficial in enhancing of professional and social relations of students. This makes sure that more equality and qualified population is available to the labor market.

Challenges in Multicultural Vocational Education

The challenges encountered in multicultural vocational education occur in various ways for both students and instructors. The first and most evident challenge would be the language problem. Students from different cultural backgrounds may not have a comfortable grasp of the language in which instruction is given, therefore may find it hard to understand the lesson. This makes the rate at which students learn to go down and takes away the motivation to learn. Language problems make communication in the class improper and negatively affect group work and discussions (Chen et. al., 2020).

The differences in learning and teaching approaches due to cultural variations are another important problem. Problem-solving strategies, the perception of authority and learning styles may vary for students who have different cultural backgrounds. Due to these differences, teachers may face some

difficulties in reaching every student with one method. Moreover, cultural stereotypes and prejudices may cause students to feel excluded in their classes, which may lower their success (Sergeeva et. al., 2019).

A proper lack of structure for educational policies and programs is also a great hindrance to becoming genuinely multicultural. The educational programs are often tailor-made for a homogeneous student body and thus fail to properly reflect cultural diversity in their model curricula. This gives the students a feeling that their cultural identities do not have a place within the educational environment. Poor training in cultural sensitivity among educators adds to the travail of multicultural classroom adjustment (Seitamaa & Hakoköngäs, 2024).

Multiculturalism brings some benefits and drawbacks to processes of vocational education. If cultural diversity is effectively managed, it allows students to develop both social and professional skills. Thus, more open and better-equipped individuals would be brought up for the labor market.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Globalization and increasing cultural diversity further raise the significance of the effects of multiculturalism on vocational education. A multiculturalist vocational education environment, in relation to this research, provides students with professional skills as well as with the skills of intercultural understanding, tolerance, and cooperation. Such an environment-where students from different cultural backgrounds study together-helps students to become more open towards different perspectives and be better prepared for the global job market. The process is, however faced with a lot of obstacles as the approaches to learning coming from different cultural backgrounds are difficulty caused by language barriers, and the inefficiency of the education system in adapting itself to the multicultural structure.

Plans should then be made to overcome the stumbling blocks and deliver finer results in a multicultural vocational education setup. The educational policies need revision, keeping foremost in mind the cultural diversity. The revision of the curriculum into an organization that espouses flexibility and diversity makes the expression of students more comfortable. Teachers shall be trained in cultural sensitivity and awareness and promote a learning environment in their classrooms that upholds respect for differences in culture.

Programs are to be developed that help to overcome language barriers through language support. With a view to enhancing the immigrant students' participation in the educational process, in particular, language learning is to be encouraged and facilities that will promote the development of the student's own language must be provided. Projects encouraging intercultural dialogue and cooperation can also play an important role within vocational education. Group projects allowing students to cooperate with peers from other cultural backgrounds will raise their cultural awareness and enable mutual learning.

In this respect, successfully implemented multiculturalism in vocational education will contribute to the development of professional skills in individuals, as well as their social adaptation and cooperation skills. For that reason, educational policies and practices should adapt to the multicultural structure in order to take cultural diversity into consideration as an enriching factor.

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