



Pre-Service Ece Teachers' Experiences in Implementing Multicultural Education

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Article History	Abstract
Received August 08, 2023	<p><i>This research explores the essential importance of pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers having a strong comprehension and proficiency in intercultural instruction. This research focuses on examining the practical experiences of 168 pre-service ECE teachers from four institutions in Kalimantan. The main objective is to investigate how these teachers negotiate the implementation of multicultural education throughout their field placements. The research utilizes a descriptive quantitative research methodology by conducting surveys. Pre-service ECE teachers utilize a variety of methods to introduce and commemorate cultural diversity among young learners. These activities encompass field visits, media exploration, cultural performances, and storytelling to cultivate comprehension and admiration for diverse cultures. Although a few individuals encounter difficulties when carrying out tasks, the majority enthusiastically adopt interactive methods to enhance their experiences and expand their viewpoints. The assessment of multicultural education entails the quantification of engagement, comprehension, and reactions, thereby emphasizing specific domains that require enhancement. Efforts to tackle negative attitudes focus on promoting inclusive dialogues and cooperative endeavours, while refraining from punitive actions. Engaging parents, cultivating intercultural comprehension, facilitating discourse, and commemorating festivals all contribute to establishing inclusive educational environments where diversity is respected and celebrated. This research emphasizes the crucial significance of a comprehensive approach to multicultural teaching for pre-service ECE teachers. It also highlights the necessity of ongoing evaluation to enable the continuous enhancement of practices in this important educational field.</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education has both normative and empirical aspects, requiring a thorough examination of its idea, the urgent requirement for educational change, and the complex process of implementation. Based on normative principles, multicultural education aims to create a situation where students from various backgrounds, including religion, culture, ethnicity, social and economic class, gender, and disability, have equitable access to educational opportunities (Banks and Banks 2019).

In Indonesia, the actual observations reveal a wide range of cultural differences, which are influenced by the historical and social aspects that define the way people think, act, and behave in different communities and locations. Nevertheless, the presence of several cultures might result in intercultural conflicts if not handled with mutual comprehension and regard, hence requiring educational initiatives infused with a multicultural outlook. To effectively resolve conflicts and promote understanding, it is necessary to enable a diverse community to cultivate open-mindedness and welcome diversity.

Indonesia's vast diversity encompasses various ethnicities, religions, cultures, and regional languages across the entire span of the country, from Sabang to Merauke. Although the diversity is a valuable asset to the nation, if not managed properly, it could potentially lead to the emergence of conflicts. The importance of multicultural education arises as a crucial necessity, promoting not only knowledge but also active and constructive involvement with diversity (Logvinova 2016). It is imperative to impart this education at an early stage to ensure the maintenance of unity in the face of these disparities. An investigation into the implementation of multicultural education in West Kalimantan following ethnic conflicts revealed that it significantly enhanced students' comprehension of historical events and the current state of multiculturalism. However, certain difficulties arose, namely

stakeholders' unease in confronting negative histories and deficiencies in analytical reasoning, potentially strengthening preconceived notions (Nakaya 2018). The suggestion is to incorporate multicultural education into transformative citizenship education. The Indonesian communities strongly embrace multicultural education paradigms, such as cultural preservation, social justice, equality, unity in diversity, and social interaction. By adopting and implementing these values, communities progress towards harmonious cohabitation. A meta-analysis conducted on multicultural values at public universities suggests the need for further investigation at private and religious institutions, with a focus on larger and more diverse samples. Additional inquiries should explore the perspectives and application of multicultural values by educators, students, policymakers, and communities, enhancing the longitudinal comprehension of multicultural education within communities. This highlights the imperative to integrate multicultural education into the social structure of Indonesia to achieve a future that is both harmonious and inclusive (Jayadi, Abduh and Basri 2022).

Based on factual data, educational gaps favour certain groups while excluding others based on factors such as religion, socioeconomic class, or cultural attributes (Banks and Banks 2019). Education reform is essential to ensure equal opportunities for all students, requiring a comprehensive transformation of the educational environment beyond mere curriculum changes (Banks 2015).

Children's awareness and understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity begin at a young age, with important cognitive milestones occurring about 10-11 years old (Piaget and Weil 1951). Preliminary research indicates that children as young as 3-4 years old are capable of recognising distinctions in gender, ethnicity, language, and disability issues, which can shape their attitudes towards race and culture (Murphy and Laugharne 2013).

Educators often face difficulties in managing their classrooms. These obstacles are a major cause of job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates, especially among new educators (Dicke, Elling, Schmeck et al. 2015). Teachers must demonstrate adaptability to meet the demands of multicultural education, which requires providing diverse students with individualised academic support (Agirdag, Merry and Van Houtte 2014). Efficient classroom management is crucial for promoting student engagement and enabling learning, necessitating educators to consistently evaluate and improve their instructional methods (Lew and Nelson 2016).

Classroom management refers to a diverse range of strategies that extend beyond academic learning and can include the management of social relationships and behaviour (Greenberg, Putman and Walsh 2014). The main objective in a multicultural educational environment is to create a positive and respectful learning community that welcomes diversity and offers a safe environment for students to express their viewpoints and emotions in a constructive manner (Cartledge, Lo, Vincent et al. 2014).

The success of multicultural education extends beyond the confines of the classroom and is closely linked to the cultural atmosphere of the school, fostering equality among individuals of different genders, races, and social classes. Institutional leaders and teachers play a critical role in reshaping the school atmosphere to promote kindness, openness, and tolerance (Banks 2015, Gay 2015, Manning, Baruth and Lee 2017). To establish an empowering school culture for students from diverse backgrounds, it is necessary to analyse many factors such as student grouping, involvement in activities, academic assistance, and administrative services. It is imperative for educators, who are catalysts for change, to guarantee that their instructional methods, encompassing verbal exchanges as well as assessment and evaluation, are free from any form of prejudice (Amthor, Ramona and Roxas 2016, Ghosh and

Galczynski 2014).

The objective of this research is to address the primary research inquiry: "In what ways can pre-service ECE teachers facilitate successful multicultural education for children, incorporating both in-classroom and extracurricular environments to cultivate comprehension, admiration, and collaboration among children from various cultural backgrounds?" The study examines a wide range of possibilities for pre-service ECE teachers to incorporate multicultural components, not only in the formal learning setting but also in extracurricular activities. The primary emphasis is on endeavors to foster comprehension, admiration, and collaboration among children from diverse cultural backgrounds. The research seeks to offer a thorough understanding of strategies and methods that pre-service ECE teachers can utilize to establish a supportive environment for children to develop their understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, while also promoting positive cooperation among them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To foster an enriched understanding of cultural diversity in education, pre-service ECE teachers employ diverse strategies. Notably, field trips to places of worship enable direct interaction with religious practices to broaden cultural insights. The researchers gathered six prior studies pertaining to the attitudes, preparedness, and implementation experiences of prospective teachers in the context of multicultural education. However, none of these studies specifically focused on prospective teachers specializing in early childhood education.

The research conducted by Durmuş and Korkmaz (2023) emphasizes the necessity of enhancing the incorporation of multicultural education within pre-service teacher training programs (Durmuş and Korkmaz 2023). The findings indicate that pre-service teachers possess a modest level of perception with

regards to intercultural education. However, there exists potential for enhancement in this area. The results additionally highlight the significance of gender-based discrepancies in perceptions. The report proposes the incorporation of a specialized course on multicultural education and the augmentation of extracurricular activities as measures to improve readiness.

The research conducted by Daniela Silva (2022) highlights the need of teachers possessing a comprehensive awareness of culture within the framework of multicultural education. The findings of the study indicate that bilingual pre-service teachers possess a more profound comprehension of culture, despite the absence of statistically significant disparities between the groups. This emphasizes the significance of cultivating a sophisticated comprehension of culture among all pre-service teachers in order to proficiently execute intercultural education (Silva 2022).

The study conducted by Taylor, Kumi-Yeboah, and Ringlaben (2016) examines the perceptions of pre-service teachers towards multicultural education. The research underscores the significant importance of multicultural education in acknowledging and addressing the socio-cultural, religious values, and cultural backgrounds of students from varied backgrounds. There is a need for reform in teacher training and curriculum development to incorporate multicultural education as a fundamental component of teaching and learning across all levels of education (Taylor, Kumi-Yeboah and Ringlaben 2016).

The study conducted by Nektaria Palaiologou and Catherine Dimitriadou (2013) examines the imperative of revising the curricula of undergraduate teacher education programs in Greece in order to effectively address the challenges and complexities associated with multicultural and intercultural education. The results of this study are consistent with previous research worldwide that emphasizes the significance of teacher education and training in the context of

multicultural/intercultural education. These findings underscore the urgent need for reform in curriculum development (Palaiologou and Dimitriadou 2015).

The research conducted by Vincent, Kirby, Deeds, and Faulkner (2014) examines the implications of intercultural education requirement on pre-service teachers specializing in agriculture education. The findings indicate that the implementation of a multicultural education requirement in isolation has minimal impact on addressing teaching difficulties. However, when delivered by an agriculture teacher educator, notable distinctions arise. This highlights the significance of teacher educators in influencing the multicultural teaching perspectives of pre-service teachers (Vincent, Kirby, Deeds et al. 2014).

The qualitative study conducted by Shlomit Oryan and Rachel Ravid (2019) examines the experiences of pre-service teachers as they engage in the delivery of multicultural education. The research demonstrates the ways in which this particular encounter facilitates internal clarification and the development of one's identity as an educator who is receptive to cultural diversity within a multicultural setting. This underscores the significance of integrating theoretical knowledge, practical fieldwork, reflective writing, and dialogue within teacher preparation programs in order to adequately equip prospective educators (Oryan and Ravid 2019).

The research gap in this study becomes apparent when compared to the available literature. Although numerous studies have explored the attitudes, readiness, and implementation experiences of pre-service teachers in the field of multicultural education, there is a noticeable lack of research specifically focusing on early childhood education (ECE) teachers. Previous research offers valuable insights into the wider scope of multicultural education. However, none of these studies explicitly focus on the distinct circumstances of pre-service teachers who are

specialising in early childhood education.

Durmuş and Korkmaz emphasize the necessity of enhancing the integration of multicultural education in pre-service teacher training programs. However, their focus is on a wider range of potential teachers, without specifically emphasizing early childhood education (ECE). Daniela Silva's research highlights the significance of teachers having a thorough understanding of culture, although it does not solely focus on teachers in early childhood education. Taylor, Kumi-Yeboah, and Ringlaben highlight the necessity of reviewing teacher training and curriculum development, but they do not specifically address early childhood education. Palaiologou and Dimitriadou emphasize the necessity of revising curricula in Greece, however they do not directly address the training of early childhood educators. Vincent et al. specifically examine the consequences of intercultural education requirements, however their research is limited to the field of agriculture education, rather than early childhood education. Lastly, Oryan and Ravid investigate the encounters of pre-service teachers in imparting multicultural education, without explicitly mentioning the domain of early childhood education.

Hence, the research gap pertains to the lack of studies that specifically examine the attitudes, readiness, and implementation encounters of pre-service teachers specializing in early childhood education in the context of multicultural education. This discrepancy highlights the necessity for focused research in order to fully comprehend and address the distinct difficulties and prerequisites faced by early childhood educators in promoting multicultural education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study's conceptual framework centers on the multicultural awareness of early childhood education (ECE) pre-service teachers. It aims to examine the factors and effects that shape their attitudes and views

towards multiculturalism. The primary objective is to augment comprehension, admiration, and collaboration among children from various cultural backgrounds. The framework recognizes the past focus on policies and modifications in teacher education to address the increasing variety in educational environments, highlighting the significance of multicultural education ([Durden, Escalante and Blitch 2014](#)).

Pre-service early childhood education teachers are those who are currently enrolled in a teacher education program to obtain teacher certification. These students participate in closely monitored teaching experiences in real-world settings, obtaining assistance and direction from university staff and collaborating teachers. Universities are providing training to individuals with little or no previous teaching experience in order to prepare them for careers as professional educators. These individuals are specifically being taught to teach early childhood programs, such as kindergarten and playgroups, which cater to children between the ages of 0 to 6 years old.

The framework emphasizes the two fundamental assumptions that guide efforts in multicultural teacher education. Multicultural teacher education research, policy, and practice exhibit notable divergence in their philosophical foundations and pedagogical methodologies. However, it is crucial to explore two underlying assumptions that continuously guide these endeavors. One prevalent idea is that pre-service teachers, in their capacity as learners, frequently exhibit a deficiency in cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness, which consequently hinders their ability to deliver teaching that is sensitive to the needs of a varied student population ([Warren 2017](#)). Multicultural awareness is a fundamental aspect of multicultural competency, serving as a cornerstone for the enhancement of educational abilities and professional knowledge among practitioners who engage with varied populations ([Hall and Theriot 2016](#)).

One additional premise of the reformation of multicultural teacher education is that increased levels of multicultural consciousness are correlated with enhanced pedagogy. This is due to the fact that teachers' comprehension of and regard for cultural distinctions can foster positive connections with students and the community, as well as direct endeavors to establish a constructive classroom environment (Agirdag et al. 2014, Cherng and Davis 2017). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of empirical evidence supporting this association, as only a limited number of research have investigated the extent to which the multicultural ideas of pre-service teachers are linked to quantifiable teaching competencies. Nevertheless, there is a lack of actual evidence that substantiates this correlation, thus requiring additional investigation.

Multicultural education encompasses a diverse range of political viewpoints and pedagogical techniques (Cho 2017). Despite these variations, there is a prevailing agreement that cultivating multicultural understanding is imperative for educators in order to foster positive outcomes for all kids. Multicultural awareness encompasses the teachers' cognizance of matters pertaining to cultural pluralism within the educational setting, their adeptness in addressing such matters, and their attentiveness towards them (Abacioglu, Volman and Fischer 2020). The conceptual model for multicultural education and training delineates intercultural awareness as an essential facet of cultural competencies. This encompasses the professional aptitudes, emotional dispositions, and behavioral attributes that practitioners must possess in order to effectively engage with heterogeneous populations (Sandell and Tupy 2015).

The approach incorporates Milner's (2006) study on the development of pre-service teachers suggests that interactions that foster cultural and racial awareness are among the three crucial and indispensable experiences for enriching candidates' comprehension and knowledge of diversity. The proposition that

the development of multicultural awareness may come before the development of other types of intercultural competencies, such as perspective taking, acceptance of diversity, and anti-racist behavior, aligns with the theoretical framework of intercultural sensitivity and multicultural development (Milner 2016). This framework suggests that there is a positive association between comprehension and an individual's sensitivity towards diverse cultural perspectives. The topic of discussion pertains to the significance of diversity and its role in fostering the acquisition of effective cultural competences (Tonbuloglu, Aslan and Aydin 2016).

The second section of the conceptual framework explores the factors that influence intercultural awareness, with a particular emphasis on the important roles played by race and previous exposure to diversity. The study by Cherng and Davis (2019) highlights the significance of teachers' racial identification in shaping their interactions with pupils and their overall understanding of diversity (Cherng and Davis 2017). The findings of a research investigation examining the influence of pre-service teachers' racial identification on their interactions with students indicate a correlation between teachers' perspectives on race, the potential impact of their own racial identity on student interactions, and their broader comprehension of diversity and multiculturalism. Previous studies have indicated that the attitudes and implicit assumptions of educators regarding race have an impact on the quality and nature of the feedback they offer to students in educational environments, as well as the types of social assistance they extend to individuals (Harber, Gorman, Gengaro et al. 2012). Previous studies have examined the impact of teachers' racial biases and attitudes on students' educational encounters. Research on racial prejudice has demonstrated that even modest forms of bias can have a detrimental impact on interpersonal interactions and further escalate tensions between different groups. This has significant consequences for the quality of teacher-student

relationships (Xu, Macrynika, Waseem et al. 2020).

The second factor mentioned for shaping pre-service teacher multicultural beliefs is prior experience with diversity (Chao, Takeuchi and Farh 2016). The constructivist perspective of teacher development suggests that intercultural exposure and engagement with society beyond the personal sphere can serve as a catalyst for critical self-reflection, through which individuals can learn to shed their own racial, ethnic, and cultural views (Bezard 2016, Cherng and Davis 2017). Careful integration of coursework and field experience - in particular, immersing the pre-service teacher in a diverse school community - raises the greatest probability of changing multicultural attitudes. Pre-service teachers become more aware of the importance of understanding cultural differences after working with students who have a different social identity than themselves (Warren 2017).

The last section focuses on culturally sensitive learning practices, highlighting the necessity for educators to utilize culturally sensitive instructional approaches. Gay (2018) defines culturally responsive teaching as teaching that builds on the personal and cultural strengths, intellectual abilities, and prior knowledge of diverse students (Gay 2018). Culturally responsive teaching is an educational approach that acknowledges the significance of incorporating students' cultural

backgrounds into every facet of the learning process (McKoy and Lind 2016, Samuels 2018). Culturally relevant pedagogy encompasses three key characteristics. Firstly, it involves the provision of quality and appropriate academic support that aligns with students' expectations. Secondly, it necessitates the cultivation of cultural competency by altering the curriculum to reflect diverse perspectives and experiences. Lastly, it emphasizes the establishment of meaningful relationships with students and their families, so fostering a sense of connection between the educational environment and the students' homes (Ladson-Billings 2014).

Culturally responsive education encompasses both ideological and ethical dimensions, in addition to its methodological aspects. This approach can be characterized as an ideological undertaking that incorporates concepts related to reality, representation, equity, justice, social transformation, as well as educational principles such as personal relevance, cultural significance, and academic agency and excellence. These ideas are specifically applied within the ethnic and racial demographic contexts of various countries and their educational institutions. The theoretical underpinnings of culturally responsive pedagogy encompass various principles, one of which posits that educators' perspectives and dispositions towards ethnic, racial, and

Figure 1
Research's Conceptual Framework Flowchart

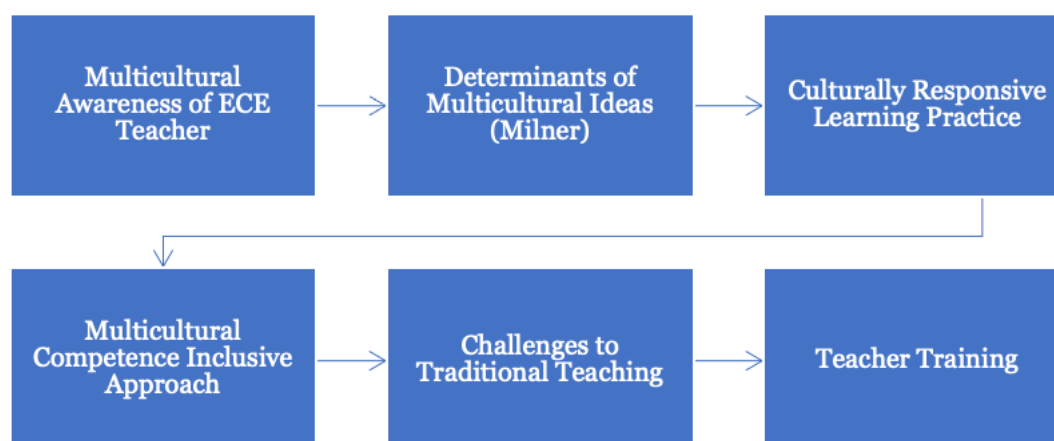


Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Institution	Year	Respondents' Gender Breakdown	Sample
UIN Antasari Banjarmasin	2018	Male 3, Female 63	Male 3, Female 27
	2019	Male 2, Female 62	Male 2, Female 23
UIN Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda	2018	Female 31	Female 19
	2019	Male 2, Female 25	Female 16
IAIN Palangkaraya	2018	Female 38	Female 22
	2019	Female 18	Female 13
IAIN Pontianak	2018	Male 2, Female 58	Male 1, Female 20
	2019	Female 53	Female 22
Total		Population 357 individuals, Sample 168 individuals	

cultural diversity significantly influence their instructional practices (Bonner, Warren and Jiang 2017). Another concept posits that culture exerts an influence on the nature and content of children's learning experiences, both within and beyond the boundaries of educational institutions, as well as on the instructional approaches employed by teachers (Nelson and Guerra 2013).

A culturally responsive approach to education requires comprehensive training of teachers and school staff (McKoy and Lind 2016). This training should cover aspects such as cultural awareness, multicultural competence, diverse teaching strategies, introduction to different cultural values, and strengthening positive relationships between students from various backgrounds (Khalifa 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is descriptive quantitative using survey methods. This research involved 168 pre-service ECE teachers who had implemented practical field experience from four universities in four provinces on the island of Kalimantan, namely UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, UIN Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda, IAIN Pontianak, and IAIN Palangkaraya. This survey was conducted from June 12 to August 18, 2023 (Table 1).

The population consists of 357 pre-service ECE teachers. Isaac Michael's table

indicates that a sample size of at least 155 pre-service ECE teachers is necessary when using a significance level of 10%. This condition is met by a sample size of 168 potential ECE teachers.

This study aims to obtain a description of the experience of interaction with the themes of multicultural education for pre-service ECE teachers during the practical field experience. Data on the participants' intercultural education experiences during practical fieldwork was gathered through the utilization of a Google Form questionnaire containing seven questions, namely:

1. How do you involve children in understanding and appreciating cultural diversity outside the classroom setting?
2. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of multicultural teaching in an early childhood classroom?
3. How do you handle situations where children show negative attitudes or do not value cultural diversity?
4. To what extent do you involve parents in children's multicultural education?
5. How do you promote cooperation and intercultural understanding among the children in your class?
6. How do you facilitate dialogue and discussion between children from different cultural backgrounds?
7. How do you involve children in celebrating different cultural celebrations or festivals inside and outside the classroom?

The questions above were constructed based on the Four Indicators for Assessing

Culturally Responsive Teaching put out by Geneva Gay (2018), namely integrating diverse viewpoints into teaching, exhibiting cultural awareness, fostering positive student interactions, and promoting respectful and dignified communication (Gay 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in early childhood education entails giving different aspects different priorities in order to guarantee an inclusive learning environment. Including a variety of viewpoints in instruction is one of the main goals. Teachers concentrate on closely analyzing the national, regional, and ethnic contributions to the material, as well as social and cultural diversity, potential prejudice, and international perspectives. Understanding regional and global issues that are pertinent to the subject matter is emphasized in classroom activities.

Respecting multiculturalism is another of CRT's top priorities. Incorporating children's language, culture, family, and community into learning activities is the teacher's aim. Teachers should create routines that promote trust in a multicultural setting with a strong display of various cultural components. These teachers consistently set an

example of respect for every student and create an atmosphere in which students are willing to return the favor.

A good teacher in this field will use a range of strategies to help children develop social skills, kindness, cooperation, and conflict resolution. These strategies are centered on building positive relationships between children. Their classrooms are places where goodwill and compassion are fostered by means of prosocial advocacy, kindness recognition, inclusivity, friendship skills practice, and the promotion of empathy in times of conflict.

Teachers who place a high priority on respectful interaction and who carefully adjust their communication style to account for gender, cultural, physical, and intellectual differences. They should use a range of communication techniques that take into account linguistic diversity, gender-neutral language, cultural diversity, and the need to modify communication styles to accommodate different physical or intellectual needs. In the end, qualified teachers in this subject enable learners to respectfully converse with one another despite differences.

How do you involve children in understanding and appreciating cultural diversity outside the classroom setting?

Figure 2
Strategies for Introducing Cultural Differences by Pre-service ECE Teachers

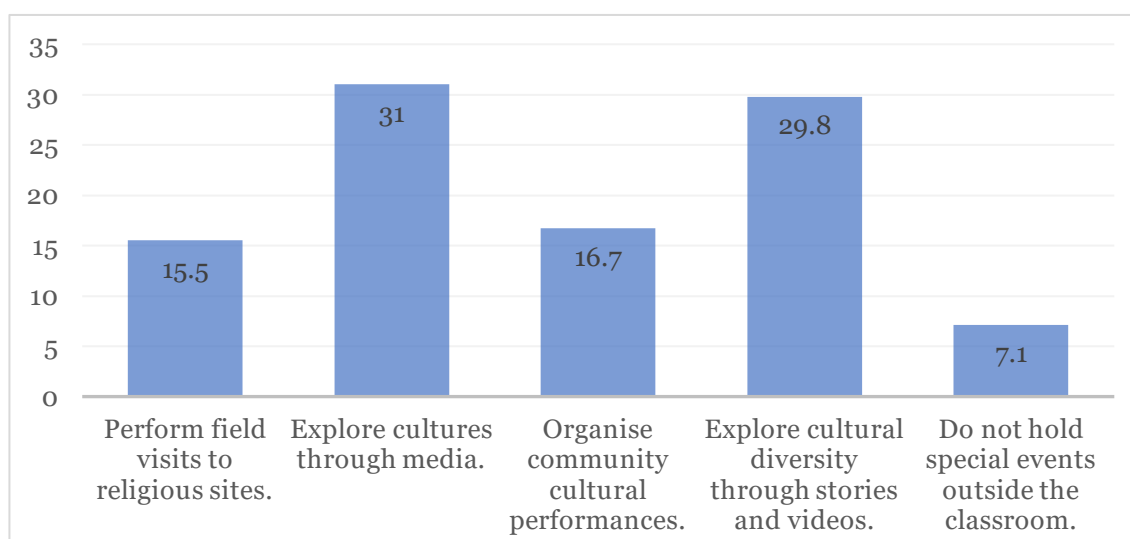
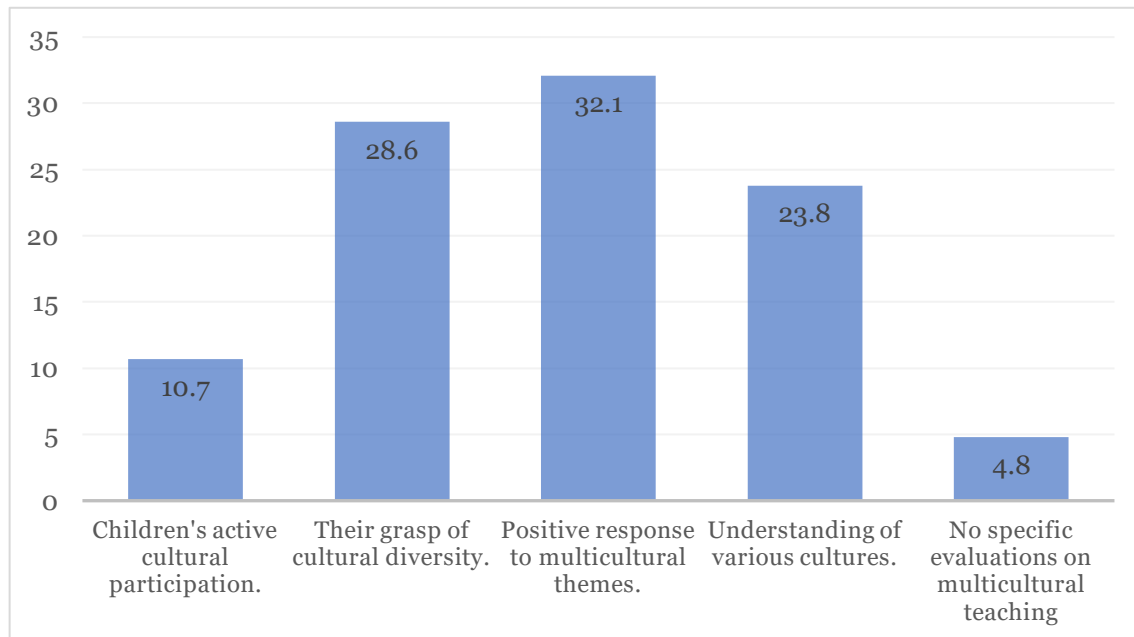


Figure 3
Strategies for Evaluating Multicultural Education by Pre-service ECE Teachers



Conducting field visits to various places of worship (15.5% or 26 participants): This activity involves children directly visiting different places of worship, so that they can experience and understand various religious practices from different communities. Such field trips can open children's insight into cultural and religious differences (Figure 2).

Using media to explore different cultures (31% or 52 participants): This approach relies on using media, such as videos, images, or other digital resources, to bring cultural diversity into the classroom. This medium allows children to observe and learn about cultures from different parts of the world without having to travel to those places.

Organizing cultural performances involving the local community (16.7% or 28 participants): Involving the local community in cultural performances allows children to interact directly with people representing different cultures. Activities like this can enrich children's experiences about the culture and values held by the local community.

Reading stories or watching videos about cultural diversity (29.8% or 50 participants): These activities offer a more relaxed way to introduce children to cultural diversity.

Through stories or videos, children can understand other people's life stories and different traditions and cultural values.

Not doing special activities outside the classroom environment (7.1% or 12 participants): A small number of respondents stated that they did not carry out special activities outside the classroom environment to understand and appreciate cultural diversity. There may be various reasons behind this, such as limited resources or a different curriculum focus.

How would you evaluate the effectiveness of multicultural teaching in an early childhood classroom?

Children's active participation in cultural activities (10.7% or 18 participants): This indicator measures the extent to which children actively participate in cultural activities involving various cultures. This percentage shows that there is still room to increase children's participation in multicultural activities (Figure 3).

Children's understanding of cultural diversity (28.6% or 48 participants): This indicator shows the extent to which children understand cultural diversity through

multicultural teaching. This percentage indicates that there is a large proportion of children who demonstrate an understanding of cultural diversity, but there are still a small number of children who may need more support.

Children's positive responses to multicultural themes (32.1% or 54 participants): This indicator measures how positively children respond to the multicultural themes being taught. This percentage shows that most children show a positive response to multicultural teaching, but there are some who may not respond enthusiastically.

Children's knowledge of different cultures (23.8% or 40 participants): This indicator measures the extent to which children have acquired knowledge of different cultures through multicultural teaching. This percentage indicates that most children have acquired knowledge about different cultures, but there are still some who may need more exposure to cultural diversity.

Not conducting a special evaluation of multicultural teaching (4.8% or 8 participants): This percentage indicates that there are some classes or education systems that do not carry out a special evaluation of the effectiveness of multicultural teaching. This

may make it difficult to know to what extent multicultural teaching is successful or needs improvement.

How do you handle situations where children show negative attitudes or do not value cultural diversity?

Involving children in discussions about respecting all cultures (38.1% or 64 participants): This is a very good step. Engaging children in open discussions about cultural diversity can help them understand how important it is to respect and value other people's cultures. Discussions can include the positive values of different cultures and how each culture is unique and makes important contributions to society (Figure 4).

Using concrete examples of the positive impact of cultural diversity (44% or 74 participants): Providing concrete examples of how cultural diversity has had a positive impact in everyday life or in the history of society can help strengthen children's understanding of the importance of diversity. It can also help them see how intercultural collaboration can lead to something positive.

Fostering intercultural collaborative activities (16.7% or 28 participants): Engaging children in collaborative activities that involve

Figure 4
Strategies for Dealing with Negative Attitudes by Pre-service ECE Teachers

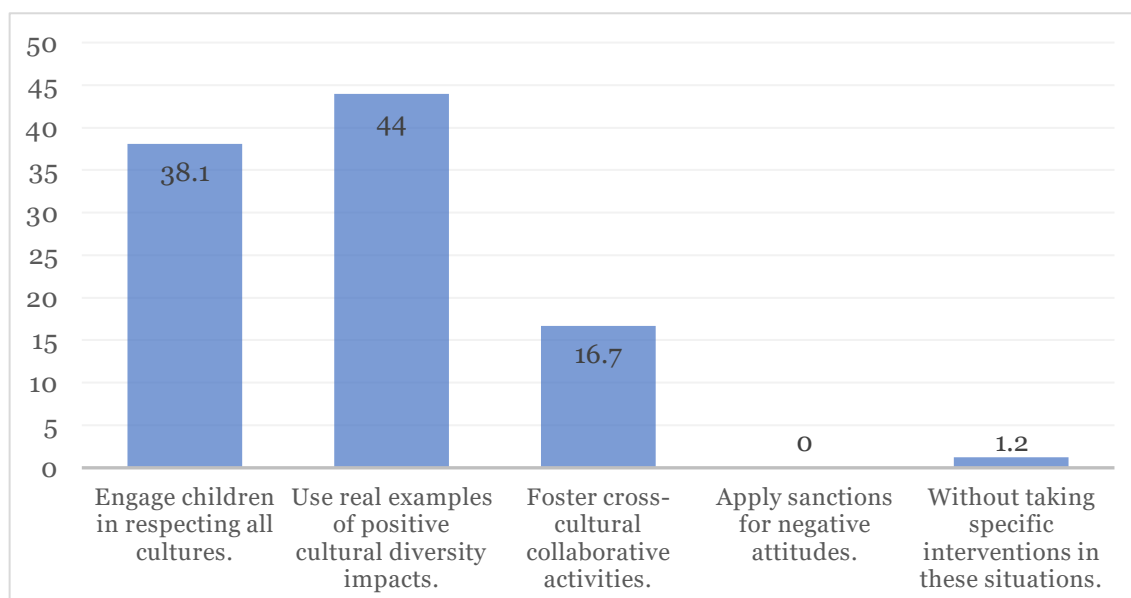
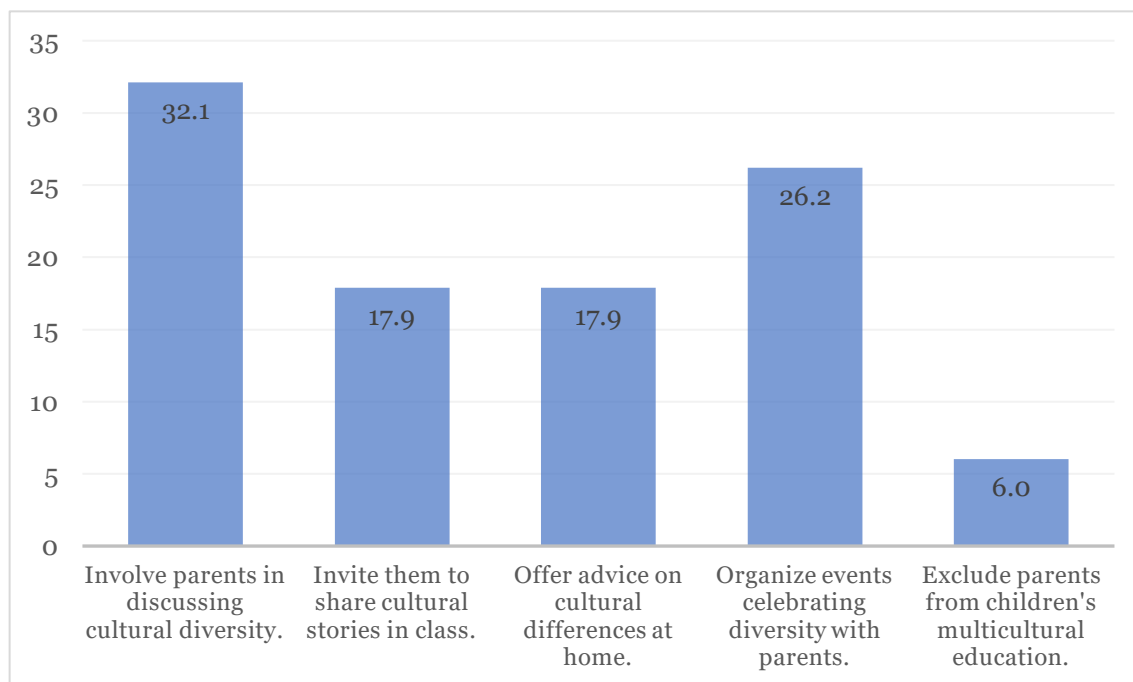


Figure 5
Strategies for Involving Parents in Multicultural Education by Pre-service ECE Teachers



multiple cultures can help reduce negative attitudes and increase mutual understanding. Activities such as group projects representing different cultures or multicultural festivals can create opportunities to interact in positive and meaningful ways.

Sanctioning children who show negative attitudes (0%): The percentage data shows that no one uses sanctions as a measure to resolve the situation. Relying on sanctions may not always be effective in building a deep understanding of cultural diversity and can lead to further negative feelings or opposition.

Taking no specific action to address the situation (1.2% or 2 participants): While this percentage is low, taking no specific action may not help address issues of negative attitudes or a lack of respect for cultural diversity. It is important to take proactive actions in supporting positive experiences in multiculturalism.

To what extent do you involve parents in children's multicultural education?

Involving parents in discussions about cultural diversity in the classroom (32.1% or 54 participants): This is an effective approach to

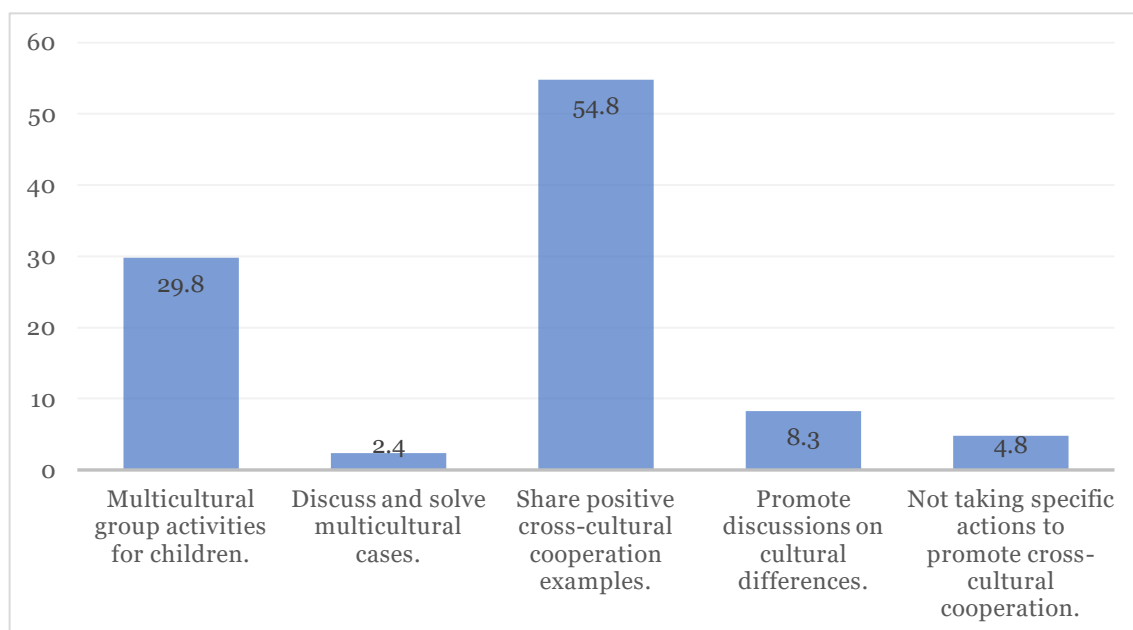
involving parents in multicultural education. Discussions about cultural diversity can provide an opportunity for parents to participate and provide their perspectives. It can also help parents understand what is taught in the classroom and support the implementation of multicultural values at home (Figure 5).

Inviting parents to share stories of cultural traditions in the classroom (17.9% or 30 participants): Inviting parents to share stories and cultural traditions from their backgrounds is a great way to celebrate diversity in the classroom. This can help children understand and appreciate the different cultures that exist in their community, as well as help parents feel more involved in their children's education.

Providing advice to parents about cultural differences at home (17.9% or 30 participants): Providing advice and guidance to parents on how to deal with cultural differences at home can help create an environment that is inclusive and respects diversity. It can also help parents feel more prepared and support their children in pursuing multicultural experiences.

Organizing events that involve parents

Figure 6
Strategies for Increasing Intercultural Understanding by Pre-service ECE Teachers



celebrating cultural differences (26.2% or 44 participants): Organizing events or activities that involve parents celebrating cultural differences is a great way to build bonds and mutual understanding between parents, children, and teachers. Events like these can create a positive and inclusive environment in schools.

Not involving parents in children's multicultural education (6% or 10 participants): Although this percentage is low, not involving parents in multicultural education is unfortunate. Involving parents can increase the effectiveness of multicultural teaching and help create a richer and inclusive educational environment.

How do you promote cooperation and intercultural understanding among the children in your class?

Group activities involving children from different cultures (29.8% or 50 participants): Involving children in group activities representing different cultures can help build intercultural cooperation and understanding. When children work together toward a common goal, they can learn from one another, share ideas, and appreciate diverse

perspectives (Figure 6).

Discussing cases requiring multicultural problem solving (2.4% or 4 participants): Using cases or scenarios involving multicultural issues in learning can help children understand and overcome the challenges faced in diversity situations. This can encourage intercultural discussion and collaboration to find win-win solutions.

Providing positive examples of intercultural cooperation in stories (54.8% or 92 participants): Providing positive examples of intercultural cooperation in stories or real-life examples can inspire and inspire children to work with people from different cultures. These stories can also help shape positive attitudes towards diversity and understand that cross-cultural collaboration can lead to positive results.

Promoting discussion of cultural differences among children (8.3% or 14 participants): Facilitating open discussion of cultural differences among children can help them understand and appreciate perspectives and values from different cultural backgrounds. Such discussions can open doors to a deeper understanding of diversity and reduce prejudice or negative stereotypes.

Not taking specific action to promote intercultural cooperation (4.8% or 8 participants): The data indicates that a small proportion of classes or educational systems may not have taken specific action to promote intercultural cooperation. Taking proactive action to create an inclusive and respectful environment for diversity can have positive benefits for children in the long term.

How do you facilitate dialogue and discussion between children from different cultural backgrounds?

Encouraging children to share their cultural stories and experiences (57.1% or 96 participants): Encouraging children to share their cultural stories and experiences can open doors to understanding and respecting diversity. This provides an opportunity for each child to understand each other's cultural differences and strengthens mutual understanding and friendship (Figure 7).

Arranging children in pairs to introduce each other's culture (19% or 32 participants): Arranging children to pair up and introduce each other's culture is an effective way of introducing children to each other about their

cultural backgrounds. This allows them to ask each other questions and understand the unique aspects of different cultures.

Providing time for discussion of cultural differences in class (16.7% or 28 participants): Setting aside time in class for discussion of cultural differences is a good way to deepen children's understanding of diversity. This kind of discussion can create an open and inclusive environment, where children feel comfortable talking about their culture without fear of being judged.

Discussing social issues related to cultural diversity (3.6% or 6 participants): Facilitating discussion of social issues related to cultural diversity can help children understand and overcome challenges faced in a diverse society. It can also build their understanding of the importance of appreciating and respecting cultural differences.

Not facilitating discussions between children of different cultural backgrounds (3.6% or 6 participants): Although this percentage is low, not facilitating discussions between children of different cultural backgrounds can result in children missing out

Figure 7
Strategies for Facilitating Cultural Dialogue by Pre-service ECE Teachers

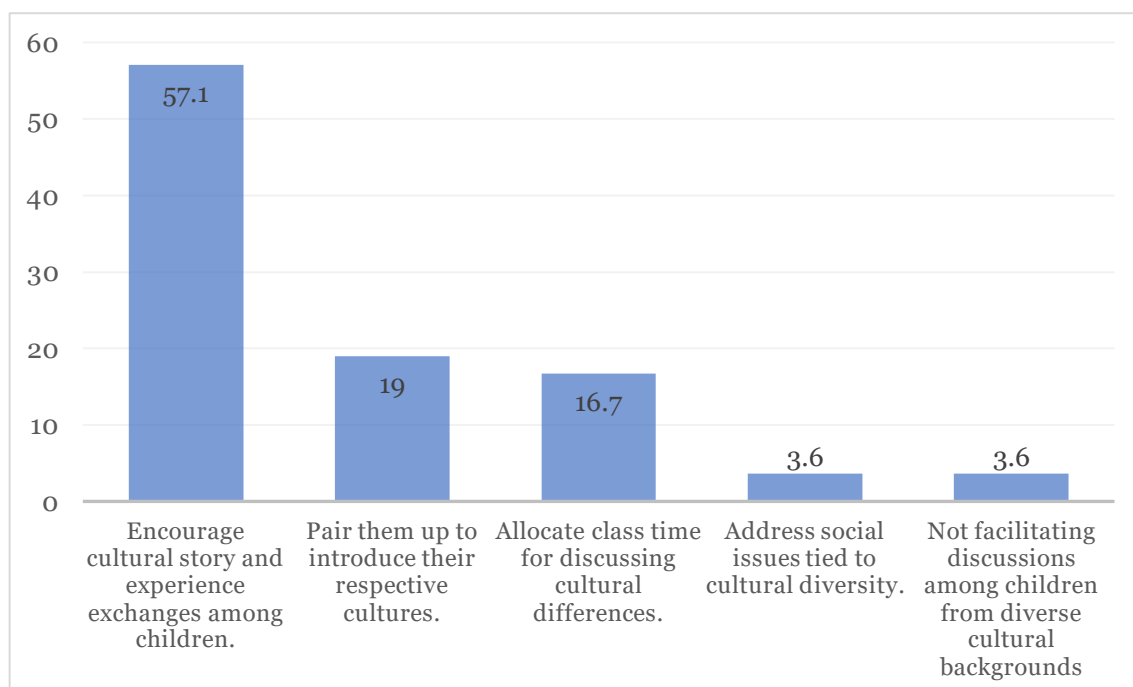
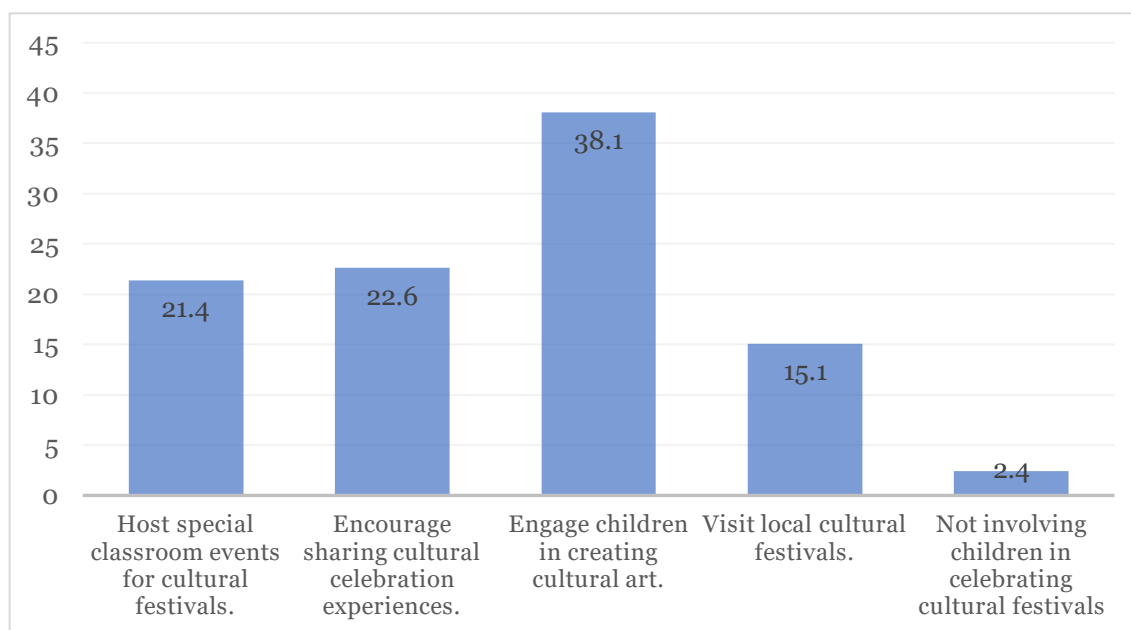


Figure 8
Strategies for Celebrating Cultural Festivals by Pre-service ECE Teachers



on valuable opportunities to learn about diversity and build strong intercultural relationships.

How do you involve children in celebrating different cultural celebrations or festivals inside and outside the classroom?

Organizing special events in the classroom to celebrate cultural festivals (21.4% or 36 participants): Holding special events in the classroom is a great way to introduce children to different cultural festivals and celebrate them together. Such an event could include film screenings, art and cultural displays, traditional games, or culinary events representing a particular cultural festival (Figure 8).

Encouraging children to share their experiences of cultural celebrations (22.6% or 38 participants): Encouraging children to share their experiences of cultural celebrations from their own backgrounds can provide valuable insights into diverse cultures in the classroom. It can also help children get to know each other and appreciate each other's cultural differences.

Inviting children to create art works related to cultural celebrations (38.1% or 64

participants): Involving children in creating art works related to cultural celebrations can be an interesting creative activity. Children can draw, color, or create other works of art that represent a particular cultural festival. Such activities can strengthen understanding of diversity and provide an opportunity to talk about cultural festivals.

Visiting cultural festivals in local communities (15.1% or 25 participants): If possible, visiting cultural festivals in local communities can provide valuable learning experiences for children. This will provide an opportunity for them to experience first-hand the celebration of different cultures and understand more deeply about cultural practices and traditions.

Excluding children from celebrating cultural festivals (2.4% or 4 participants): This percentage indicates that a small proportion of classes or the education system may not involve children in celebrating cultural festivals. Involving children in cultural festival celebrations can provide positive benefits in supporting multicultural education and respecting cultural diversity.

Discussion

There are several strategies expressed by pre-service ECE teachers in increasing understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in their class. First, by conducting field visits to various places of worship, children can directly interact with various religious practices, thus broadening their cultural horizons and understanding religious differences. Visiting places of worship of other religions can significantly contribute to the development of multicultural values by fostering understanding, empathy, and respect for different belief systems and cultures (Jackson 2018). The second approach involves using media such as videos and images to introduce cultural diversity in the classroom environment, providing opportunities for children to learn about cultures from around the world without having to physically travel. In addition, involving local communities in cultural performances has also proven effective, where children can interact with representatives of various cultures, thus enriching their experience in understanding culture. For a more informal approach to learning about cultural diversity, reading stories or watching videos about other people's lives, traditions, and cultural values can be effective alternatives. Books, videos, and pictures serve as potent tools in promoting multicultural education by offering immersive experiences, visual insights, and diverse perspectives. Through literature, readers delve into the lives of characters from various backgrounds, nurturing empathy, and critical thinking. Videos and documentaries provide visual engagement, real-world context, and personal stories that humanize different cultures, while visual art captures the aesthetics and symbols of diverse communities, bridging linguistic and cognitive barriers. These mediums collectively cultivate understanding, empathy, and a broader worldview, fostering respect and appreciation for the richness of global diversity (Ghosh and Galczyński 2014).

Despite the positive inclination towards promoting multicultural education, certain

participants expressed their inability to organize specific activities beyond the classroom setting. This reluctance could be attributed to various factors, including limited financial resources, a curriculum that prioritizes different subjects, and a lack of proper training in teacher education programs. These challenges may hinder educators from implementing diverse and immersive experiences that extend beyond traditional classroom boundaries (Coronel and Gómez-Hurtado 2014).

Data in this research shows that multicultural teaching in early childhood education has achieved some success in increasing children's understanding of cultural diversity and achieving positive responses to multicultural topics. However, there are still opportunities to increase children's active involvement in cultural activities and strengthen their understanding of different cultures. Therefore, a special evaluation of multicultural teaching is important to measure its impact and achieve more optimal results in the future.

In the face of negative attitudes or a lack of respect for cultural diversity, pre-service ECE teachers choose a compassionate, supportive, and educative approach. Combining approaches that involve open discussion (Woodley, Hernandez, Parra et al. 2017), provide concrete examples (Kumar, Zusho and Bondie 2018), and encourage cross-cultural collaboration (Nishina, Lewis, Bellmore et al. 2019) can help create a classroom environment that is inclusive and respectful of cultural diversity.

Involving the role of parents in children's multicultural education is an important step. This can help build a strong relationship between the classroom and home environment, strengthen children's understanding of cultural diversity, and build continuity in support of multicultural values outside the classroom context (Sleeter 2014). Various approaches such as discussions, sharing stories, providing suggestions, and holding events are considered effective in

achieving this goal.

To encourage cross-cultural cooperation and understanding among the children in the classroom, participants engage them in group activities involving different cultures, present positive examples of cross-cultural cooperation in stories, and facilitate open discussion about cultural differences (Teo 2019). These actions can help create a classroom environment that is inclusive, respects diversity, and promotes a deeper understanding of diverse cultural viewpoints (Arvizu and Saravia-Shore 2017).

Involving children in various cultural celebrations and festivals is a powerful way to instill an appreciation for diversity and promote cross-cultural understanding (Gibbs 2017). This can be achieved through several impactful strategies. Firstly, organizing special events within the classroom dedicated to celebrating different cultures allows students to engage directly with various traditions and customs (Hollins 2015). Secondly, encouraging children to share their own experiences and family traditions helps them feel valued and contributes to a rich exchange of perspectives (Coyle, Amory, Kiernan et al. 2014). Thirdly, engaging in art activities related to cultural celebrations enables students to creatively explore and express their understanding of different cultures. Lastly, whenever feasible, taking students on visits to local cultural festivals offers a firsthand experience of diverse traditions and fosters a sense of connection to their community's multicultural aspects (Killick and Foster 2021).

Multicultural education that is culturally responsive faces a number of challenges, especially in dealing with the complexity and diversity of the student population (Lew and Nelson 2016). However, multicultural education also offers a number of opportunities to create a more inclusive, equitable, and relevant educational environment for all students. Challenges in implementing multicultural education include limited awareness and understanding of the diverse needs of students and the importance of multicultural education among teachers and

school staff which has led to a lack of implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices (Parkhouse, Lu and Massaro 2019). Limited resources and support are also obstacles in adopting a diverse and culturally oriented approach to the learning process in schools. Besides that, an imbalance between educational policies and curricula may not fully take into account the cultural diversity of students, creating additional challenges in achieving inclusive education (Raihani 2017, Taylor et al. 2016). Efforts to create an inclusive educational environment are also constrained by a lack of commitment and support from both the authorities and society as a whole (Aronson and Laughter 2016, Gay 2018).

However, there are a number of opportunities in which multicultural education can be used to create an educational environment that is inclusive and supportive of all students aiming to unleash their potential regardless of cultural or ethnic backgrounds. In this effort, it is important to help students understand and appreciate cultural differences, build strong multicultural competencies, and enable them to contribute actively and sustainably to society (Sady, Žak and Rzepka 2019). In this regard, curricula and teaching methods should be designed to be more relevant and meaningful to students, taking into account their cultural and environmental contexts. In an inclusive learning community, cooperation and cultural exchange among students are encouraged, encouraging deeper understanding. In addition, fundamental human values, such as equality, are promoted (Gay 2018). Realizing these potential opportunities requires a strong commitment from all parties, including government, educational institutions, teachers and school staff, and society as a whole. Culturally responsive education is a journey and a challenge, but it is also a path full of potential for creating a more inclusive and harmonious future for all students.

CONCLUSION

Pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers utilize various strategies to promote cultural diversity, such as organizing field trips, exploring different forms of media, attending local performances, and engaging in storytelling. Although the majority of participants utilize interactive methods, some of them encounter restrictions as a result of limited resources or a curriculum that emphasizes other aspects. Evaluations emphasize the necessity for enhanced assistance in understanding cultural diversity, despite the positive reactions from the majority of the participants. However, the assessment of specialized evaluations continues to be difficult in certain contexts, impeding a thorough evaluation of multicultural teaching. Strategies aim to address negative attitudes by fostering inclusive discussions and promoting collaborative learning, with a focus on encouraging active participation rather than resorting to punitive actions. Although a minority of participants do not participate, the majority prioritize the establishment of an inclusive educational setting that promotes the appreciation of various cultures. Engaging parents through dialogues, festivities, and inclusive settings enhances the educational encounter, albeit certain parental involvement may be restricted.

Methods to bolster intercultural comprehension in children encompass engaging in collective activities, engaging in dialogues, sharing narratives, and fostering cultural exchanges, all of which foster respect and collaboration among individuals from diverse backgrounds. Promoting cultural narratives, facilitating peer introductions, engaging in discussions, and addressing social issues related to diversity promotes comprehension among young learners, although a minority may not actively participate in such dialogues. Engaging children in cultural festivals through events, art, and local visits enhances their comprehension and admiration. However, a

small portion of these celebrations may not involve children. In general, the efforts are focused on promoting an inclusive, diverse, and respectful learning environment. However, there are certain areas that need more emphasis in order to achieve a comprehensive cultural education.

The findings of this research provide thorough implications for promoting multicultural education in early childhood environments. The identified pedagogical strategies serve as valuable instruments for designing teacher training programs, enhancing curricula with a range of perspectives, and cultivating a more inclusive and hands-on learning environment. The significance of parental involvement highlights the need for schools and families to work together, fostering a comprehensive approach to educating about cultural diversity. The call for continuous assessment and professional growth emphasizes the ever-changing character of multicultural instruction, urging educators to consistently enhance their approaches for maximum effectiveness.

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