



“The Benefits and Challenges of Education at Culturally Diverse Universities”

Master’s Thesis

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Abstract

As the title implies the central idea of this thesis is to investigate the benefits and the challenges of education at universities with culturally diverse student population. Initially, the project elaborates the definition context concerning cultural diversity in higher education. In this way, it will try to diagnose the numerous valuable benefits that multiculturalism brings such as diverse skills, exposure to and of different ideas or creativity, challenging stereotypes, tolerance, awareness and making students global citizens of the future. Then the project focuses on exploring the challenges and contradictions that cultural diversity at a university level can bring and the underlying factors that cause the presence of those contradictions. As we analyze and review different theories that revolve around the concept of cultural diversity in education, this research will aim at making a precise composition of benefits and challenges that cultural diversity in education can bring.

Another important part of this thesis is the analysis of different studies and surveys with the goal of showing whether some students face more challenges than the others. In addition, while exploring different types of challenges the research expresses the methods that different universities provide in order to overcome these challenges. Furthermore, the research is conducted at three different universities that have different body structure and are located in different parts of the European continent thus it is going to compare and contrast the benefits and challenges in the general context.

Keywords: benefits, multiculturalism, multicultural education, diversity, challenges.

1.1 Introduction

Our world is built up on a mosaic of cultures. From its early beginnings till nowadays the world has become the home of many societies that manifest different cultures. Nowadays, the phenomenon of cultural diversity is certainly raising but at the same time is presenting opportunities as well as challenges at different levels. Dealing with challenges of diversity is not an issue that occupies some few states but in contrast it encompasses all countries which nowadays are considered to have culturally diverse population. According to Euro stat data in the European continent 22 million people are foreign born thus these data show a huge diversity within Europe. In addition, European countries gave citizenship to over 1 million non-EU citizens in 2016. (Eurostat, 2018)

At a great extent the growing phenomenon of cultural diversity is encompassing all levels of education too. Many schools, colleges and universities try to implement programs that favor multiculturalism and equally respect differences of their students. The attempts for internationalized education that favor diversity and multiculturalism are guided even by the Bologna Process. A process signed by 48 European countries with the aim of promoting exchange and cultural diversity among European countries. (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018) In these terms it is necessary to make a brief clarification and distinction between the concept of diversity and multiculturalism. Although these two terms seem to be generally used as identical yet there is an acute distinction between these two notions. While diversity focuses on people's differences, multiculturalism focuses on the process of respecting and comprehending those differences. In general both these two terms are correlated and play an important role in today's globalized world.

Cultural diversity encompasses a collection of various cultures that are present in an institution, in a country or in a society. However, the quest for a perfect culturally diverse

institution is insecure and usually is harder in practice than in theory. Universities that are highly ranked attract more international students but at the same time these universities should be equipped with courses and programs that offer adequate approaches to students with various cultural backgrounds. Moreover, universities that are not so popular should manifest methods that respect the cultural diversity of their students even if the number of international students is low. In general, all educational institutions should manifest policies that support cultural diversity and intercultural learning (Bridgestock, 2012).

1.2 Study Aims and Objectives

Indeed European countries have long history in having a population that is culturally diverse but the expanding nature of this circumstance is recent and instant. Some of the reasons for this rapid change in the European states are the comfort of mobility, the rapid flux of immigration and the advent of globalization. The phenomenon of cultural diversity has reached every domain but the greatest inclusion is extended in educational institutions. In this context the basic goals of this project are as follows:

- To analyze the literature and thus, provide information about the definition context of cultural diversity
- To analyze the literature and thus, provide information about the previous researches done on the investigations of cultural diversity
- To analyze the literature and thus, provide information about the definition of the context of multicultural education
- To analyze and review different theories revolving around the beneficial aspects of studying at universities with culturally diverse student population.
- Explore the challenges and contradictions that diversity at a university level can bring and the underlying factors that cause the presence of those contradictions.
- To analyze different studies and surveys the aim is to show whether some students face more challenges than the others.

- Compare and contrast the challenges of studying at culturally diverse universities.
- Express the methods that universities provide in order to overcome the challenges of diversity.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. Why is it important for universities with mixed cultures to cultivate the understanding of cultural diversity among students?
2. Which are the challenges that international students face and how are they being treated at different universities?

1.4 Importance of this Study

Diversity in education has become one of the greatest debates among many scholars so this thesis tries to clarify the basic benefits and challenges that would give a brighter idea to the role that this raising phenomenon is bringing. Investigating successful practices adapted by different universities this study tries to serve as a valuable opportunity for global teachers and students to comprehend the way cultural diversity is manifested in European higher education.

In fact, this thesis is important for three main reasons.

Firstly, it furthers the idea that multicultural classrooms should function properly in terms of equality and acceptance so we can function properly in a pluralistic democratic society. Moreover it intensifies the idea that multicultural universities develop youth who is imbued with cross-cultural skills and motivated to function in a global society.

Secondly, the study addresses the issue of cultural diversity from different regions and thus explains the way it operates in European countries, in Scandinavia and in the Balkan countries. Through surveys and questionnaires the opinion of international students are elaborated and

thus the study expresses the idea whether cultural diversity is being treated similarly or differently in all universities.

Thirdly, the research intends to give clear suggestions that manifest the benefits of cultural diversity in education and simultaneously to suggest ways in which the possible challenges can be handled. While investigating three diverse universities that manifest multiculturalism and diversity the study clarifies the most common challenges faced by international students and at the same time it provides advices and suggestions that can create educational institutions which promote globalism and democracy.

With the clarification of the three mentioned points this study shows that culture as an unavoidable part of each human being is necessary to be owned and at the same time recognized from different perspectives.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Humans as Cultural Beings

Humans are different from each other based on diverse range of aspects however that does not confine their right from participating equally in this world. In general, people are the originators of the cultural diversity as they acknowledge different ways of existence in the society. So, as society changes so does the definition of “culture”. That means, culture as a concept changes every day fitting itself to the changing time and place.

To properly comprehend the cultural dynamism it is necessary to make a brief explanation on the definition of ‘culture’. According to many critics culture as a term comprises a wide spectrum of definitions however they all express the idea that there are three fundamental attributes: “what people do (cultural behavior), what people know (cultural knowledge), and the things people make and use (cultural artifacts),” (Westby, 1993, pp. 319-341). But, there is one definition that seems to be within the area of multicultural education and that is a statement done by Sonia Nieto. According to her: "culture consists of the values, traditions, worldview, and social and political relationships created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, religion, or other shared identity (Nieto, 2017). Based on her definition we can comprehend a profound insight on the real meaning of culture.

In general, every society has their own statuses, heroes, flags, food, holidays and other cultural characteristics. How these characteristics are shaped differently from others depends on the people themselves. In addition, people themselves are very different in many ways. They have different races, religions, nationalities and lifestyles.

Culture is an unavoidable part for every human being but the student's age is considered to be the period when every student creates his or her own cultural identity. During the time at a university students interact with people of different cultures and thus they increase the perception of the world's existence and at the same time create their stand toward their own cultural values.

However this period can be considered a twofold weapon because while some students create appreciation and awareness toward other cultures others may behave in such manner that can leave the impression that their culture is superior to the others. As a result, when students as the leaders of tomorrow hesitate to create better vision for other cultures that then would interfere in the interethnic cooperation between countries. (T. Vorobyovaa& L. Poleshchuk, 2015).

2.2 Diversity Management

While cultural diversity is considered to be the condition of having a variety of cultures that accept and respect each other's differences the notion diversity management refers to the condition of promoting acceptance respect and acknowledgement in institutions where diversity is present. (Deshvall P.& Choudhary S, 2012) Generally, the concept "diversity management" may be a new discipline, which begun out of a labyrinth of many distinctive authentic concerns and social issues. For instance, in USA the concept of "diversity management" is combined with the concepts of "equality" and "affirmative action". But in European countries the concept of "diversity management" is related with the language management, state dissimilarities and gender equality. (Vermeulen, 2011)

According to Cox and Smolinski the primary and the most important goals of diversity management are:

1. The right management of diversity in institutions can create an atmosphere where each individual is conscious about his accomplishments and about the organizational commitments

2. To take advantage from the benefits that diversity can bring and at the same time eliminate challenges.

3. To create conditions where individuals from diverse cultures and values can cooperate with the greatest commitment. (Cox&Smolinski, 1994, pp. 1-35)

In the process of defining the role of the diversity in higher educational institutions there are three methods that determine its value. Firstly, it emphasizes the management of diversity based on proportional scale. This includes considering the students interaction with students who have different culture from them as a proportional function of the students' diversity.

The other way of explaining the concept of diversity considers that the way students come across the differences of the other peers depends from the curriculum concept designed by the institution itself. So the way the curriculum is structured with the goal of helping students encounter diversity inside or outside of the building. This approach frequently is called as curricular diversity.

The third approach is known as interactional diversity and its scope is to define diversity based on the interactions student made with students whose culture and race is different from theirs. The aim of this approach is to conceptualize the informal interactions done by students. (Shaw, 2005).

2.3 Multiculturalism in Europe and in the Balkans

In order to analyze multiculturalism both in the European and Balkan countries we should tackle this circumstance through a variety of prisms. As mentioned earlier, countries that are part of the European Union consist people having diverse cultural backgrounds but at the same time Balkans have a long past in a heterogeneous constitution.

Even though multiculturalism in the Balkans has a long history of existence its presence has not always been regarded in a positive manner. In terms of politics, Balkan countries have always experienced conflicts and disagreements based on religious and cultural terms. (Canatan, 2014)

The issues of multicultural education have a long time in history. If we want to tackle current approaches to multicultural education it is also essential to investigate the historical perspective. This idea is deeply supported by Banks who declared: "A historical perspective is necessary to provide a context for understanding the contemporary developments and discourse in multicultural education and to restructure schools, colleges, and universities to reflect multicultural issues and concerns." (Banks J. A., 1993, pp. 3-49)

In this way, the first contributions for a multicultural education in Europe were officially adopted in 1970 by the European Council. But the process started taking rise a decade later when Europe became home for many immigrants. In order to maintain a correlated environment the hosting countries had to create educational institutions that promote integration and cultural diversity. However, 'multicultural education' in this period was insufficient and inadequate since it heightened segregation instead of integration. (Puzic, 2017, pp. 390-407) In order to reinforce a more developed process of multiculturalism many policies and programs were adopted. For instance UNESCO and OCSE began taking the issue more seriously and thus they drafted proposals and recommendations oriented toward the enforcement of multicultural education. (Batelaan, 1995) In the terms of promoting cultural diversity there is UNESCO's declaration which says:

"Cultural diversity is a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. In dissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life. (Abiétar, 2014, p. 6)

According to this declaration provided by UNESCO it is comprehended that cultural diversity is vital for having a harmonious society ready for the globalized world.

Different programs were adopted by different European countries counting even Sweden and Belgium all with the aim of providing multicultural pedagogy. However, the situation was not the same for countries in the Eastern and Central Europe. Countries in these areas were part of the communist regime and thus diversity was not respected but mostly contradicted. For instance Roma people were highly prejudiced and differentiated. According to the communist regime cultural diversity should not be acknowledged in any sphere especially not in education. (Batelaan, 1995)

Originally the beginning of the 21st century announced the recovery of the practices for intercultural studies. Many programs and legal papers were implemented expressing the necessity for changes and reforms that would support diversity in education. In 2001 the Education, Youth and Culture Council of the European Union declared “education and training systems have to lead people to accept that racism and intolerance have no place in our society”. (Council of Europe, 2003) Four years later Commission of the European Communities composed “Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for life-long learning” with the goal of promoting ideas that favor diversity and avoid discriminations.

2.4 Opponents to Multicultural Universities

Despite the many benefits that diversity in education brings there are also many opponents that have disfavored the idea of multicultural university. Some opponent claim that multiculturalism influences separations and leads to animosity and hostility. (Bennett, 1999, pp. 11-35)

In a declaration made in 2010 by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel was pointed out that multiculturalism has failed in Germany and in many other European countries. After that, similar statements were given even from the British Prime Minister David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy the ex-president of France. The statements were done based on the situations

that show cases of social segregation where many immigrants are socially alienated and deprived from equality in the European countries. (Mikulec, 2015, pp. 43-44)

Based on the declarations made by some critics of multicultural higher education we can comprehend the idea that their declarations originate from the assumptions that Europe has allowed a high level of immigrant to be settled inside the European countries and so the national identities are being endangered.

According to the political scientist Samuel Huntington culture is one of the most significant aspects in the human history. Huntington points out that culture is the most furious power that surpasses the force of economy or ideology since its power unites people and countries. It is culture that makes countries join their forces based on their cultural similarities. As a result Huntington disfavors the idea of an integrated world where freedom and impartiality are equally manifested. (Mikulec, 2015, pp. 47-48)

When it comes to education there are many other claims that in order for multicultural universities to function properly it requires a distinctive approach since the mother tongue is not the same for all of the students. For instance the writer Mitchell said: "When there is a diverse population of students within a classroom, language barriers may become an issue and "students with imperfect English may not admit that they don't understand". (Mitchell, 2011)

2.5 International Students

Cultural diversity as a notion involves in itself the bio-geographical diversification of people based on culture. Today's modern society is becoming more and more "culturally diversified" and it is raising many discussions on the real value of this phenomenon. When we evaluate the beneficial side of cultural diversity we can consider that it is a precious and a unique source in every society. The respect toward cultural diversity through dialogue and interaction significantly contributes to the peace and stability in the society. Besides, cultural diversity in education gives students the opportunity to experience new and different things and when

there is a youth that is open minded toward other cultures then there must be prosperity (Tenas, 2012).

Nevertheless, today's ultimate scope of nearly each educational institution is to create a climate that attracts more diversity. In an attempt to create a perfectly diverse institution many universities all over the world have created programs that focus on multicultural studies. Moreover, the European Council in the attempt of creating encouragement for educational institutions to practice inclusion has developed many programs. One such program can be considered ERASMUS, the program which supports student exchange in different universities at different countries. Based on those kinds of programs it is attempted to promote youth who is able to expand new horizons and at the same time become globally aware for other cultures.

The advantages of having international students and exchange programs have been expanded broadly in recent years. Education in a culturally diverse environment has been perceived as instrumentally capable in cultivating shared social and cultural understanding among students.

In the path of following the rapid pace of the globalization universities and colleges all over the world attempt to attract as many international students as possible. Universities and colleges which enroll higher number of international students are more likely to have their academic goals fulfilled. But, despite the constant attempt of universities attracting diverse students there are some other challenges that students face in those institutions. However some universities don't account this issue as their foremost responsibility. (Lee, 2015)

There are some studies that have been done on the challenges of international students yet they have been failing to express the concrete indicators as they simply address the students' inability to adapt in the new environment. In this way these studies tend to remove the burden of the educational institution in the face of creating efforts for a favorable climate for those students. (Lee, 2015, pp. 3-5)

In order to create a favorable climate for international students educational institutions are required to have an international staff or educators and lecturers who are equipped with diverse information about different cultures.

One of the greatest objectives of the universities, besides giving the expected administrative support, is to create and carry out practices that contribute to the creation of a “home” or “climate” in terms of communication and social interaction for both instructors and students.

In 2001 the Council of Education, Youth and Culture signed with the Council of Europe claimed that equality and solidarity should be manifested by educational institutions so that the agreement’s goals would be accomplished. ‘Education and training systems have to lead people to accept that racism and intolerance have no place in our society; that discrimination...is unacceptable’. (Council of the European Union, 2001) Since then various policies and regulations have been implemented in order to strengthen the role of equal education in European society. Despite the intention of promoting equality and personal values for each student these policies assist in the formation of democratic societies. (Council of the European Union, 2001)

The issue of cultural equality in European countries is mostly shaking when it comes to Roma people located in different parts of Europe. As a result, in 2005 the European Parliament evaluated that Roma rights in education are being neglected as they suffer discrimination among their peers. Nevertheless the right of immigrant students who do not possess full residential permit is still questionable. In this way the policies guaranteeing complete equality for all seem to be incompatible with the fact that immigrant students are required to have the contract of residential permit. (Council of Europe, 2005)

In particular, in 2001 the European Commission announced the statement called “Concrete future objectives of education systems” which declared that most of the European countries are acquainted with the important role that education has on social unity. With this statement the commission clarified the idea that social unity is the most significant prerequisite that can destroy racial and cultural segregations and at the same time help the youth to fully participate in the economic and social life. (Council of the European Union, 2001)

The head of the Commission for Racial Equality Trevor Philips distinguished five points for racial integrity:

1. Equal rights and equal possibilities
2. Embracing ones culture while discovering the others
3. An environment with no racism
4. Community with equal values and responsibilities
5. Individuals with mutual goals and solidarity (Philips, 2005)

According to Philips five principles of racial integrity we can comprehend that the heading principle for cultural cohesion in a society is the necessity of having equality. Even the other four principles are added to equality as the main perquisite for a multicultural world (Hermans, 2005).

In order to maintain equality educational institutions need to change from mono to multicultural and thus, embrace balance and stability. So, besides the student's burden to adapt in a multicultural setting, educational institutions are obliged to shift their ideology too. For instance the researcher Herman said:

'It is not only the newcomers who need to adapt and learn...When diversity ceases to be something exotic...and becomes part of daily life...it cannot be ignored...the university...has to adapt and learn...on institutional level, the classroom level...and at the level of the student community...' (Hermans, 2005)

In this way, with the goal of respecting the equality regulation of European Council and in order to attract greater student population universities establish principles that favor inclusion and provide equal opportunities for all students. As a result when there is equal treatment students feel that there is a balance and that their cultural background is not at risk of being bullied or prejudiced.

CHAPTER III

CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION AT CULTURALLY DIVERSE UNIVERSITIES

3.1 Language

Language and culture as two systems are correspondingly related. Language as the crucial mean of communication expresses the norms and attributes of a nation's culture. When we learn a language of a particular nation we learn the cultural values of that nation. On the other side, culture is a system of traditions, beliefs and attitudes created by people from a particular society. And, all these characteristics that shape culture can be achieved through communication in order to be completed. As a result, we can understand that language and culture are intertwined since their existence is correlated and depended on each other's existence.

According to the linguistic Edward Sapir "the real world is, to a large extent, unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever so similar that they represent the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct, not merely the same with a different label attached". (Chandler, p. 69) So this means that each society has its own language and culture and when communicating they profess a culture and to claim a culture means claiming a language. And culture is part of language and language likewise is an unavoidable part of culture.

The language of a society is what it identifies its values and customs hence if a society faces extinction of linguistic the chances of losing its culture are inevitable. There are many historical events that show how many cultures have been destroyed as their language initially has faced the pressure of distinction from the majority. (Hale, 1999)

According to Domville-Roach students' communication and survival in an international campus are extensively impacted by the use of language. (Domville-Roach, 2007) English as the global lingua franca is the language that students who are enrolled in a multicultural university must profess it. The level of the academic success is most likely to be influenced by the English skills the student shows. Some studies point out that students who are not familiar with English

language they are more likely to struggle in the process of integrating with other students. (Kuo, 2011).

In addition, many studies express the idea that students prefer to communicate with peers who speak the same language as them. So, students are more likely to create friendship and social connection with those who use the similar language even if their cultures may be different. Thus, sometimes language becomes the real barrier of cultural diversity. People, in general find those who speak the same language as them to be more familiar and thus they are not comfortable in communicating in a language that it is not their native language. (Almurideef, 2016)

Despite being challenged the linguistic system or language is highly influenced from the cultural values and thus its ultimate role is survival and to distribute cultural principles of different societies (Kahiga, 2015). Based on the study of the researches Tracey Derwing and Erin Waugh it was considered the fact how culture indicates a huge impact in the process of language learning. They took Japan and Japanese as a language which could be easily adopted from Asians while other people who come from western countries would find it harder because of their enormous cultural differences. As a result, they claimed that one cannot fully profess a new language if it is not ready to meet the differences that the new culture has in contrast with its own (Weiler, 2012).

3.2 Discrimination and Intolerance

When there is a culturally diverse environment the chances of intolerance tend to be high and when there is intolerance there must be inequality and discrimination. Discrimination and intolerance tend to be reinforced from the idea that people who have different culture, religion, race or ethnicity are inferior to the majority. In fact discrimination is considered to be the situation in which a person or a group of people are undervalued and often disregarded. In higher education discrimination and intolerance are quite commonly appointed to migrants or students who come from a cultural background that is minority in that environment. As a result

students who are discriminated tend to be prohibited from getting the same benefits as the majority tends to get. The intolerance that these students face is derived from a poor judgment as well as a poor reasoning. (Giddens, 2009)

Despite the fact that European countries consist people who respect differences and adhere social cohesion there are some others who do not seem to agree with this issue. According to Eurobarometer's survey in 2014 50% of European population considers immigration as a negative situation. (European Commission, 2017, p. 21). So, there are some people who consider minorities as outsiders and when their children enter universities they have created attitudes that show immediate reaction of hostility and discrimination.

In general people have created the preconception that tolerance is one of the most persevering values of European liberalism and few would transparently dismiss it. However, despite the common conception that European countries are the best example for cultural tolerance still there are few shapes of narrow mindedness and intolerance that recently are growing with the rise of ethnic, cultural and religious conflicts in many European countries. Nowadays in some European nations there is a claim that in the former years there has been excessive tolerance and principles based on shared values. Many argue that tolerance should have its limits on minority group and they base their disagreement on the justifications of terrorist accidents as well as on social disorders. (Dobbernack& Modood, 2011)

Lately in many Europe states there are expanding pressures between some national majorities and religious minorities, especially Muslim believers. Pressures and conflicts have been diverse: the conflicts caused between British and Asian Muslims in 2001; the publications of Danish cartoons expressing the prophet Muhammad, the prohibition of "hijab" in many European countries and many other crises based on cultural and religious backgrounds in European countries. In this setting, the issue of immigrant minorities comes as an extra situation of cultural differences and difficulties. Thus, the cultural distinction with the minorities is considered as less appropriate and that does not fit into the European culture. (Dobbernack& Modood, 2011)

The issue of cultural tolerance in European societies is simultaneously transmitted in educational institutions too. Advancing common understanding in a university where students are from various cultural backgrounds is a challenging concern to bargain with. In those circumstances where there are students of diverse cultures there is not a simple way that can make them tolerate each other and recognize the values of the others. The quest of creating a tolerant society is and should have an essential role in educational institutions. (Serin, 2017, p. 174)

3.3 Prejudices and Stereotypes

Prejudices and stereotypes in higher education tend to be the two attitudes that create the grand separation between majority and minority students. Many researches claim that students who are prejudiced feel isolation and that causes them vulnerability and impotence. Before giving any assumptions and statements on the role that prejudices and stereotypes have on higher education it is necessary to make a slight distinction between them. In general, prejudices are perceived as approaches toward the others either consciously or non-consciously whereas stereotypes are perceived as certain beliefs or opinions toward the others (Vescio&Weaver, 2017).

Many scholars express the idea that both prejudices and stereotypes are created in a younger age. According to Bergen, society and parents are the one who shape children's mind towards other cultures. "The child can become prejudiced by adopting the biases and attitudes of the family and by living in an environment that fosters prejudice". (Bergen Jr., 2001, p. 154). In 2015 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development "OECD" indicated that in many European countries pupils who come from an ethnic minority background feel that they are stereotyped and that they do not completely belong to that educational institution. For instance the research showed that in Belgium 40% of the surveyed pupils whose parents are the first generation immigrants feel that they do not belong at that school. (ESU, 2016) However, many theorists state that although parents highly influence children's mind yet that doesn't limit them from understanding other cultures and thus reducing prejudices. One of

them is considered to be the childhood development theorist Piaget who confirms the statement that as children get older they undress from their childhood prejudices and thus start creating their own informed opinions about other cultures. (Piaget, 1932)

In order to comprehend prejudices it is important to examine its three part construction: the cognitive part, the affective part and the behavioral part.

The first way of understanding prejudices” the cognitive part” involves the mental process of the individual expressing the way we think about the others. Secondly, “the affective way” has to do with the emotional way toward the others. In fact, the affective way reflects the mood or the attitudes that people demonstrate when they encounter people whose culture, race, religion is not similar as theirs. Lastly, “the behavioral part” indicates the way the individual acts and behaves toward the others.

Prejudice seems to be a problem in many areas but its fragile role is on educational institutions. For instance, the survey “Group Focused Enmity in Europe” performed on 8,000 Europeans in 2009 revealed that around 40 % of the respondents stated that they do not want to have their children study in schools where most of the students are newcomers or immigrants. (Hughes, 2017)

3.4 Alienation

Alienation as a process is derived from the situation in which the individual is isolated or deprived from the right of having social integration. The alienation process is highly experienced situation by students who are minority or whose culture is being prejudiced in the class. As a result those students who feel alienation at the same time are deprived from expressing their full potential. In many universities students who speak the same language or have the same cultural background distance themselves from students who tend to have different culture or speak another language and thus they estrange them.

Alienation is a circumstance that is present in all levels of education. Many researchers have pointed out that alienation results in many devastating factors in individual's personal and social life. Alienation causes isolation and in many times even cancelation from the responsibilities. Besides, students who are put at a distance from their peers are more likely to fall in boredom and depression. (Seaton, 2009)

According to the publisher Rosalind Mau there are many variations that comprise the alienation concept: (Mau, 1992, pp. 731–741)

- Mau points out that alienation can be expressed as “powerlessness”. With the statement of powerlessness it is referred to the inability to change uncomfortable situations. This includes the cases when students are stereotyped or prejudiced unfairly but they are unable to contradict the injustice.
- Secondly, alienation refers to “nonsensicality or meaningless”. The concept meaningless alludes to the circumstances when there is no adjustment to student's interest and benefit. This has to do with cases when the school curriculum suppresses the values of minority cultures and empowers the values of the majority culture.
- The third notion that describes alienation is “unconventionality” or the opposition of the norms. Mau points out that the term alienation frequently is associated with avoidance from the rules and conventions. In cases when educational institutions establish conventions and standards based on a normative culture culturally diverse students may oppose that in different forms of resistance.
- Lastly, Mau defines the alienation concept with social alienation or social estrangement. This notion is derived from both the emotional and physical conditions. In these terms the author intensifies the emotional and physical withdrawal from the educational institutions. This statement describes those students who isolate themselves from the University and the others because of the racial discriminations they have experienced and different prejudices they have endured (Henderson, 2017).

CHAPTER IV

BENEFITS OF EDUCATION AT CULTURALLY DIVERSE UNIVERSITIES

4.1 Cultural Awareness and Appreciation

Among many numerous advantages that diversity in education brings there is one benefit which seems to be unavoidable and that is the avail of becoming aware of other cultures and simultaneously creating a sense of appreciation. Being aware of your own cultural background is understandable and quite easy since you are surrounded by its values but when one becomes globally aware of other cultures means that they begin to understand that there is no “the right” or “the wrong culture” and thus they begin to appreciate other cultures as well. (Banks J. , 1993).

According to Tomlinson and Masuhara “cultural awareness involves a gradually developing inner sense of the equality of cultures, an increased understanding of your own and other people’s cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ” (Tomlinson B.& Musuhara H., 2004, pp. 1-7). So, this statement means that when students get familiar with the values of other cultures they become more open minded individuals who percept other cultures with the sense of empathy and appreciation. In fact, one great advantage that cultural awareness brings is the reality of emotional change. Students begin creating attitudes of comprehending other cultures and thus they are able to suppress their previous misunderstandings as well as prejudices.

In addition, when the teaching curriculum is oriented in providing culturally diverse material and when university favors inclusion of diverse cultures, students start realizing that those who were previously known as ‘others’ are in fact just like them. (Banks J. , 1993)

Studying in a diverse environment emphasizes the idea that every student’s culture is distinctive and special. In this way students are not only involved in a diverse environment but they have also created appreciation for other cultures. For instance, in a multicultural classroom students share with their classmates their own traditions and thus that can trigger

their interest to know even more. Holidays and food can be really attractive topics for foreigners. One of the most effective ways that can help students present their own background can be the topics about holidays and food as students consider these as the best ways of entertainment and pleasure. (Banks J. , 1993)

Being accompanied with students of other cultures makes students get a view on the practices and traditions of their peers and thus avoid the previously created unjust prejudices.

In order to make students become aware for the value of other cultures lecturers should play an important role. The lecturer should be equipped with a lot of information sources. In fact they should prepare themselves for being just and express the all different cultures in a righteous way. A prejudiced teacher would take sides and that is not how a culturally diverse university works. (Banks J. , 1993)

One significant factor that raises student's awareness for other cultures depends on the level of workshops and on extracurricular activities they have participated. As stated by Milem in his article the researches Pascarella, Whitt, Nora, Edison, Hagedorn, and Terenzini have noted that there is a strong bond between workshops and cultural awareness. They noticed that who participated in different activities, seminars and workshops are more likely to express positive stand toward other races and cultures. Based on their research it was noticed that after the first year in college students who participated in workshops that promote diversity were more likely to create openness toward other cultures and began to believe that the university is a nondiscriminatory institution (Milem, 2002, pp. 5-12).

4.2 Prejudice Reduction

Another important advantage that comes in universities where diversity is manifested it is the fact that it reduces stereotypes and prejudices (Zaldana, 2010). If there is no diversity, students will start to feel more important and feel that their culture is more prominent. But this is not true since it is limited only to one perspective. Moreover when the educational institution doesn't approve diversity it will confine students within a limited knowledge. They will not be

able to grasp different information or even know about important figures and heroes of other cultures and thus, their knowledge will be limited to only one perspective. It is of crucial importance for a university and for education in general to reduce prejudices. In fact, the ultimate role of education is to create individuals who have open minds toward changes. Thus, educational institutions are expected to make students who avoid judgments and are able to understand the others. Prejudice reduction is one of five dimensions of Banks. The attempt to reduce prejudices dates from earlier times. For instance, in his hypothesis Allport said:

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional support (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups. (Allport, 1954, p. 281)

So, according to Allport's contact hypothesis prejudice reduction can be achieved when people have greater contact with the others. Thus, they will be able to better know each other and reduce the unknown biases. Stereotypes and prejudices make an obvious challenge for people to communicate therefore it is necessary to face them in the in the teaching as well as in the educational process. When making prejudices we are influenced by our attitudes or specifically the emotional components of the attitude. Hence, stereotypes and prejudices are often said to be very rigid, often unrealistic, attitudes.

Many studies suggest that prejudices and the attitudes toward other cultures are created from an early stage of people's life therefore multicultural education should be incorporated from elementary and primary school (Abdullah, 2009, pp. 159-175). Nevertheless, when it comes to prejudices it is suggested that they can also be changed and reduced in higher education too.

With the help of the institutional regulations on equality and inclusion students are able to destroy the previously established stereotypes.

4.3 Global Students

Besides the practical avails that educational institutions receive from their positive stands on diversity simultaneously students themselves win from their experience in a multicultural university. Indeed the primary objective of universities that manifest cultural diversity is to produce a youth who is ready for the world's growing diversification and at the same time encouraging them to be informed citizens of the future (Banks J. , 1993).

It is generally acknowledged that when multiculturalism is correctly presented in an educational setting, students are able to grasp each other's cultures with empathy and as a result their chances for success are equally distributed (Sharma, 2011, pp. 53-64). As stated by the scholar Parekh an educational institution that supports diversity and multiculturalism brings various benefits for its students: it increases their spirit of inquiry, it increases their ability to be self critics and it increases their ability to give authentic opinions. Moreover, students who have the chance to study with peers of diverse cultural backgrounds are more likely to become citizens who respect and value others opinion and in doing so they break up from the previously held conventions of racism and prejudices. As mentioned formerly respecting other cultures is of crucial importance that derives from individuals who have created awareness and appreciation arising from a multicultural setting (Kaya&Aydın, 2014).

In general, many researches show that people who engage with people of different cultures are more creative and authentic. When there are people of different cultures the chances of greater ideas and opinions are higher and so creativity will bloom. (Nneka, 2018)In addition, when studying at a university where there is cultural diversity the benefits are numerous. For instance, students who graduate from a culturally diverse institution are expected to do better professionally and humanely. When there is equal education for all cultures there is no barrier in the job market as well. Furthermore, those individuals who study in a classroom with peers of different ethnicities become more successful in creating collaborations and doing team work in their future careers. (Nneka, 2018)

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Methodology of the Study

This study uses a methodology that it is consisted from a combination of information taken from analyzing different studies as well as from surveys taken in “Lund University” Sweden, “EPHEC University” Belgium and “International Balkan University” Macedonia.

The qualitative method is used in analyzing the benefits and challenges of multiculturalism in an educational setting. The theoretical evaluation and theoretical comparison of researches done on this issue are an unavoidable part of the used methodology.

Another important method of the research is based on collecting and processing data obtained from the surveys that are conducted through questionnaires addressed to students at three different universities.

The data have a primary and a secondary approach. The primary data result from the direct student surveys through questionnaires where students were asked to give their own perceptions on the issues of diversity and multiculturalism at their universities. Data analysis is mainly considered as qualitative analysis based on a model with descriptive and exploratory character. Therefore, by analyzing the data, we have intend to confirm the findings set out in the theoretical part or to dismiss them by challenging and giving new ideas that leave room for continuous discussion.

We find it worth pointing out once again that this is a more qualitative study, which reflects the personal opinions of the participating participants in the survey, but it cannot, in any case, generalize the opinion of all the other students in these countries. The data and the information acquired in the thesis are accompanied by relevant references in accordance with

the academic writing rules. To ensure the authenticity of the work and the avoidance of plagiarism all data sources are cited.

Finally, open ended questions are submitted to gather sincere, impartial and unprejudiced information.

5.2 Research Field

The research thesis is focused on the observation of students' cultural diversity in three different universities located at three different countries. Through this research we have interacted and analyzed opinions of international students who have a culture different from the respective countries. The research is conducted in the locations of Lund University, EPHEC University and International Balkan University. Student participants were asked to complete the survey in a classroom or other quiet setting during break time. The survey process took no longer than 5 minutes. The survey results are pooled for the thesis project and individual results of this study remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. No costs are incurred by either the universities or the individual participants.

The research is based on a triangular fieldwork, as it involves surveys, literature analysis and review of university online websites. The process of doing the surveys and gathering information has taken approximately three months with some slight interruptions during the travels to Sweden and Belgium.

The research is consisted of a survey with a set of question that require from the students to answer about the experienced diversity in the universities they go. The idea is to comprise a broader investigation and research that is going to focus on universities located in different parts of Europe and thus clarifying the way diversity is treated at a university level. In addition, the project make an in depth research of the previous theories regarding this issue in order to reinforce the research study.

Studying in a multicultural environment can be fulfilling yet it can be a challenging experience as well. Therefore, the goal of this research is to comprehend the benefits and the challenging aspects of diversity, and thus come up with a possible list of the best approaches that can be adopted from universities that lack adequate diversity approaches.

5.3 Lund University and Diversity Management

As one of the three universities analyzed in this thesis Lund University is recognized for being one of the most internationalized Universities in the South of Sweden. Lund University has estimated the number of 40000 student population out of which more than 20% are international. The high number of 40000 students is composed of a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. In Scandinavia and especially in Sweden, making education international is one of the most significant goals even in the political agenda its significance dates since 1970s. In 1990s Sweden became part of European Union's regulations and many other programs promoting international education and international universities. Based on these regulations Lund University has always tried to create a favorable climate that attracts diverse student population. (Tojo & Kiss, 2017)

In her book "Diversity in Education" the Head of Student Affairs Naoko Tojo claimed that the administrative staff at Lund University manages cultural diversity in a way that encourages them to create cross-cultural communication skill and simultaneously help students accommodate themselves within the institution. (Tojo & Kiss, 2017)

In its strategic plan Lund University has created policies and approaches that support internationalization with the aim of creating better opportunities for international students and simultaneously attracting more students from abroad.

However, since all programs are provided in English the enrollment of Swedish citizens is scarce therefore there aren't many interactions among Swedish students and students from other ethnicities. (Tojo & Kiss, 2017)

5.4 Data presentation and Discussions for Lund University

The main participants of this survey are 51 students attending graduate and postgraduate studies at Lund University in Sweden. The average age of the students attending this survey tends to be divided in two groups: 31 students claimed to be around the age 18 to 24, and 20 claimed the group from 25 to 34.

Age	
Answer Choices	Responses
18 to 24	89 %
25 to 34	11 %

Table 1.

Below are presented the data in a chart showing the gender percentage of the participants.

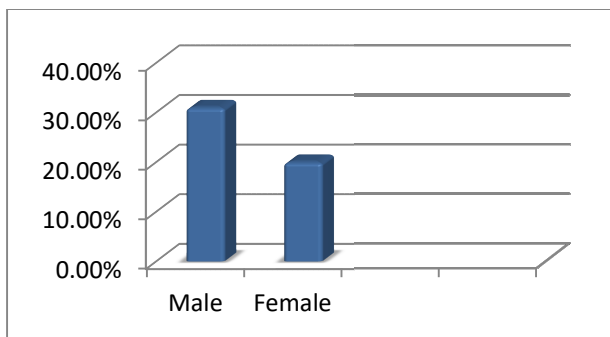


Figure 1 Gender of the students at Lund University

Figure 1 indicates that there were 27(52.9%) male students and 24(48%) female students. The data point out that the number of male respondents is higher than the female's. Nevertheless, based on the nature and the character of the study, gender is not the concern since all the surveyed participants were university students following their studies in the same language.

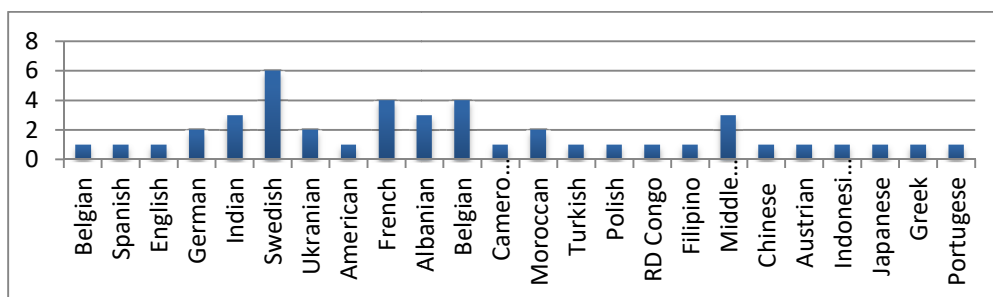


Figure 2 Ethnicity of the students at Lund University

Chart 2 shows that respondents come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Based on their responses we can comprehend that the majority of the respondents 6(12%) are from the Swedish cultural background.

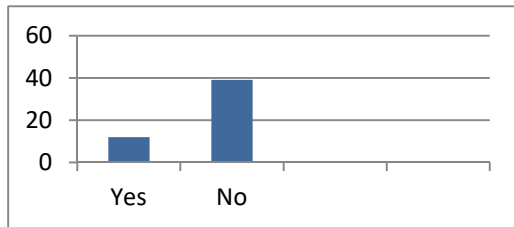


Figure 3.

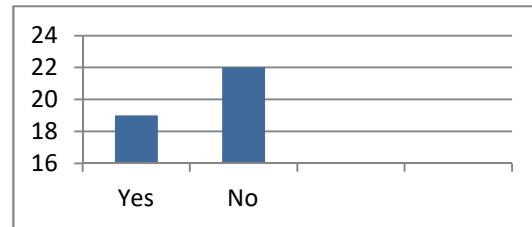


Figure 4.

The figure 4 shows participants responses regarding the question whether their cultural background has been prejudiced or not. The majority of the respondents 34(67%) have answered with denial while 17 (33%) have answered with assertion.

While in question number 4 students were asked if they have experienced prejudices by themselves, in question number 5 they were asked to show whether they have been witnesses when their peers were victims of cultural prejudices. In question number 5 the difference between those who have witnessed cultural prejudices and those who have not is scarce, thereby 26(52.5) of the participants claimed that they have not witnessed prejudices at Lund University while 25(47.5) of them stated that they have observed any cultural bias done to their peers.

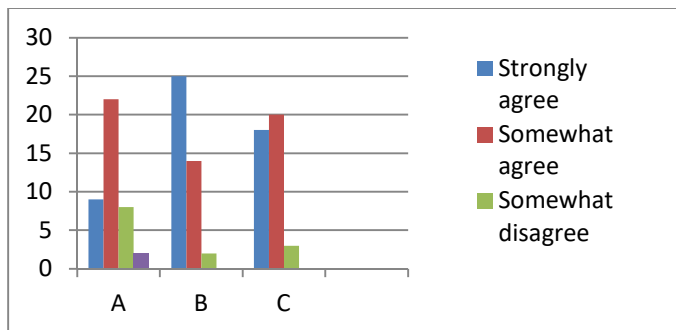


Figure 5.

In this figure it is presented students' opinion on three different spheres with four possible answer options of 'strongly agree', 'somewhat agree', 'strongly disagree' and 'somewhat

disagree'. Initially students were asked to express their opinion on the statement "The **University offers opportunities to learn about diversity**". Based on the figure we can find that the majority of the respondents 22(43.4%) have chosen the option 'somewhat agree' while there is a small group of respondents 2 (4%) who strongly disagree with this statement. Next, was the statement "**Being able to interact with individuals of diverse cultures will help me after the studies**" with the intention of revealing students' opinion on the future results of studying in a culturally diverse setting. At this point majority of the students 25 (49%) chose 'strongly agree' and 14(27.45%) with 'somewhat agree' expressed positive perspectives for the future benefits of diversity. Thirdly, it was the option "**The University is equally supportive of students with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds**" which it gathered nearly equal points for the options 'strongly agree'18(35.3%) and somewhat agree' 20(39.21%), while the remaining percentage of 3(5.8%) was given to the option 'somewhat disagree'.

In the last question of this survey students were asked if they can you mention any challenge from studying in a culturally diverse University. Based on this question there were given various responses and the answers were not confined to yes or no options.

According to the majority of the surveyed students the greatest challenge from studying at a culturally diverse classroom is language. One of the students said:

"It is about the language. Speaking different languages causes misunderstandings to not be uncommon. However, it is not the only problem. I believe it is due to the way of adaptation as a student whose English is the third language".

With the responses that consider 'language' as the greatest students' barrier we can reinforce the previously ranked challenge of 'language' in culturally diverse classroom. In this way, many students at Lund University believe that they can better socialize with those peers who speak the same language as they do despite the fact that they all attend classes in English language.

Another evaluation of the challenge of cultural diversity at Lund University comes from some respondents who believe that there is a negligence of non Swedes that creates unequal job opportunities out of the college. For instance some of the students said:

“Disintegration of non-Swedes (friends circle e.g.) and nepotism with student jobs”

“The greatest challenges of studying in a culturally diverse classroom are cultural differences and social interaction with Asian and Middle Eastern people”

According to some of the students the minority students often are confined in their own circle and have troubles in making Swedish friends. Moreover, during the summer or on the weekends their access to jobs or other paid activities is not as easy as that of the Swedish students.

Some other students seem to express the challenge of studying in a multicultural classroom in a prejudiced manner. They claim that they have difficulties in creating interactions with students whose culture is completely diverse from theirs. On this case they mention the social differences with Asian and Middle Eastern students.

From the above findings, it can be stated that:

- Lund University applies European Union’s regulations on multicultural universities
- Lund University has created policies and approaches that support internationalization
- Since programs are provided in English the enrollment of Swedish citizens is scarce therefore there aren’t many interactions among Swedish students and students from other ethnicities.
- There is general belief among respondents that cultural diversity in education is beneficial in numerous ways
- Many students at Lund University believe that they can better socialize with those peers who speak the same language as they do

5.5 EPHEC University and Diversity Management

Known as the Capital of Europe and as the founding countries of the European Union, Belgium and Brussels are composed of a great number of people who have different cultural backgrounds because Belgium borders are surrounded by both the Germanic and the Latin countries. Union EPHEC (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études Commerciales) numbers around 4000 students and offers educational practices in business and commercial programs. EPHEC shows a regular practice of the educational programs that European Commission has created. Since 1989 EPHEC has actively supported exchange programs and now has created collaboration with over 100 countries around the globe. (EPHEC, 2013)

In the attempt of creating better conditions for students to get to know each other's differences EPHEC has created students associations where students use their right to freely associate in the quest for a common goal. Besides, EPHEC staff organizes orientation week at the beginning of each academic year through which students adapt with the building, with the staff and with their peers.

In addition the University coordinates different events, workshops and teambuilding activities with the aim of helping students socialize and at the same time introducing them to the Belgian rich culture. For instance in the beginning of the academic year 2017 students visited a local brewery with the intention of gathering students together and simultaneously presenting them the Belgian beer culture. (EPHEC, 2013)

After the period where students are acquainted with the Belgian culture it follows the period when students are asked to present the values of their own cultural backgrounds. They express their culture in various forms for instance, cooking traditional foods, introducing their heroic figures or telling about their traditional holidays.

In a short interview the EPHEC's head of international office Françoise De Waele gave some short but explicit explanations regarding EPHEC's approach to cultural diversity and international students.

Below are presented the questions directed to Miss De Waele and her answers as well.

What is the beneficial side of having multicultural students at EPHEC University?

"It helps all students to become familiar with diversity in this global world".

What's challenging about it?

"It is difficult to get everyone on board and to make sure there is a culture of conviviality (activities, training, reflective thought about all the diversity issues at all levels: students, staff and management)".

How do you attract international students to come study at Ephec?

"We do not try to attract international students, except within the Erasmus program or bilateral agreements in order to make it possible for our students to do a semester abroad".

How do you support students coming from other countries?

"We organize activities for our Erasmus IN coming students".

Does Ephec University offers activities or programs where students can eliminate cultural discrimination and appreciate differences?

"In some degree programs yes, but basically it is within the values of the Institution as international competence is one of the skills aimed at in all degrees (distilled in all aspects of teaching and life within the organization)".

5.6 Data presentation and Discussions for EPHEC University

In table 1 it is presented the age average of EPHEC's students' as main participants in the survey. As it is shown in the table the majority of the participants are aged between 18 to 24 years old. This age result is quite common if having in consideration the average age of students during bachelor studies.

Age	
Answer Choices	Responses
18 to 24	92 %
25 to 34	8 %

Table 2.

Figure 6 represents the gender scale of the participants. In contrast to the gender scale at Lund University where majority of the participants are male students whereas at EPHEC University the majority of the participants are female students. If presented in percentage the figure shows that 69.23% of the survey participants are female while 30.77% male.

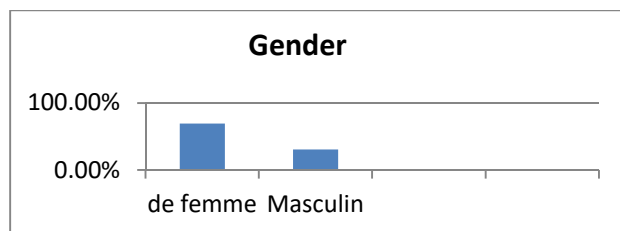


Figure 6.

In question number three students were asked to tell their ethnicity in this way it is expressed the diversity rate of the students at Ephec University. So, figure 3 shows that respondents come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Based on their responses we can comprehend that the majority of the respondents 10(20%) have Belgian ethnicity.

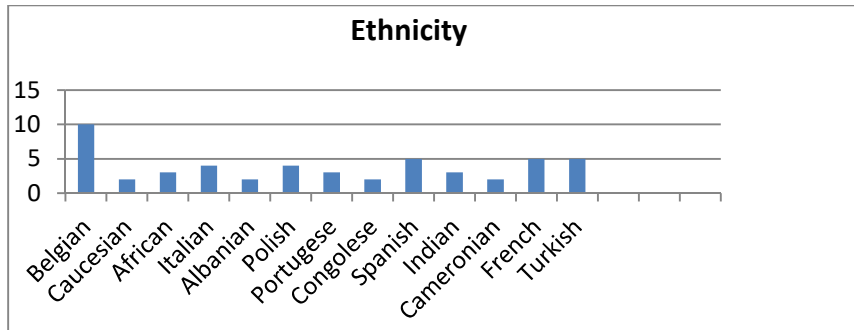


Figure 7.

In figures 8 and 9 are presented questions with yes or no answers. The figure 8 shows participants responses regarding the question: Have you ever been prejudiced based on your cultural background? The majority of the respondents 11(22%) have answered with assertion while 39 (78%) have denied the question.

While in question number 4 students were asked if they have experienced prejudices by themselves, in question number 5 they were asked to show whether they have been witnesses when their peers were victims of cultural prejudices. In question number 5 the difference between those who have witnessed cultural prejudices and those who have not is quite similar with the previous question where the difference is tight. In this way, 26(52%) students have never witnessed cultural prejudices and 24(48%) claimed the opposite.

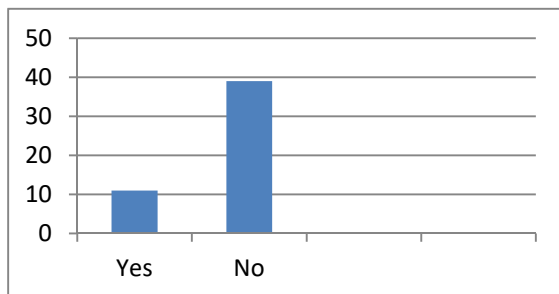


Figure 8.

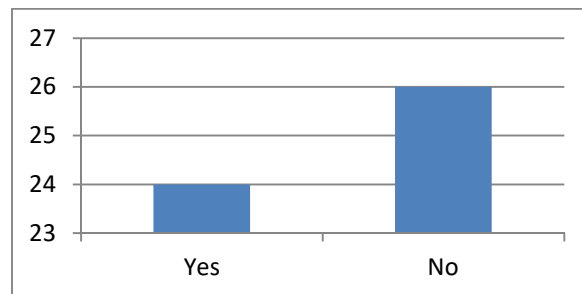


Figure 9.

Similarly as in figure 5 the figure 9 presents students' opinion on three different spheres with four possible answer options of 'strongly agree', 'somewhat agree', 'strongly disagree' and 'somewhat disagree'. In contrast with figure number 5 which expressed Lund University students figure number 9 shows the stand of EPHEC' students on some major issues of education at culturally diverse EPHEC University.

When EPHEC students were asked to select one of the four options based on the statement **"The University offers opportunities to learn about cultural diversity"** majority of the respondents (30.77%) chose the option 'somewhat agree' while there is a small group of respondents (23.08%) who chose 'somewhat disagree' for the given statement.

Secondly, the survey included the statement **"Being able to interact with individuals of diverse cultures will help me after the studies"** with the intention of revealing students' opinion on the future outcomes from studying in a culturally diverse institution. At this point majority of the students (30.77%) chose 'strongly agree' and (46.15%) selected 'somewhat agree'. And, the remaining 7.69% chose 'strongly disagree'.

Thirdly, it was the option **"The University is equally supportive of students with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds"** with which most of the students showed positive agreement. In this way a small number of students chose 'strongly agree' (15.38%) and a greater number (69.23%) selected 'somewhat agree', thus the remaining percentage of (15.38%) was given to the option 'somewhat disagree'.

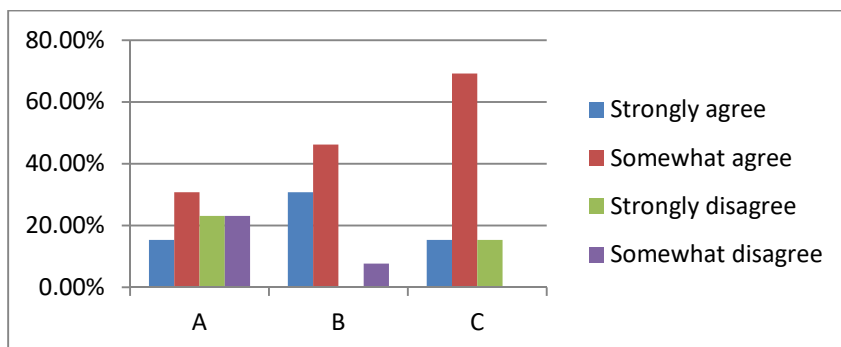


Figure 10.

In the last question of the survey EPHEC students were asked to mention the challenges from studying in a culturally diverse University. The answer options were open without definite choices. Some of the students responded:

“Insults, racist jokes and sometimes indirect discrimination by teachers for people of other ethnicities”

Based on the first answer we can get the idea that some students at EPHEC University think that there are lecturers who make cultural prejudices either consciously or unconsciously. When there is indirect discrimination the minority group of students are marginalized and isolated.

“I saw girls wearing hijab being harassed by someone working at my university”

Religion as an important part of culture shapes how people create social interactions with the others, therefore some students at EPHEC University pointed out the religious challenge when they were asked to mention any challenge of cultural diversity. Many students revealed that Muslim students are often discriminated because of their religious views.

From the above findings, it can be stated that:

- In the beginning of each academic year EPHEC University offers activities through which students can melt the previously created cultural prejudices
- The respondents were EPHEC students coming from diverse cultural backgrounds
- There is general belief among respondents that cultural diversity in education is beneficial in numerous ways.
- Most of the prejudices are done on religious aspect.

International Balkan University and Diversity Management

Located in North Macedonia, Southeast Europe, International Balkan University is a university that bases its scope on creating a cultural bridge between the Balkans and Turkey. Nearly, 13 years after its establishment IBU counts 1800 students coming from North Macedonia, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and so on. (Erdem, 2018)

On its online website IBU promotes its objective of considering cultural diversity as the greatest achievements that help them create connections between Balkans and thus encourage development and security for the whole society. For those students who are not able to provide enough knowledge of English language International Balkan University offers preparatory courses with around 1000 hours of teaching and practice. (Erdem, 2018)

International Balkan University has created its own cultural affair office with the aim of initiating communications among students through activities and cultural events.

Through the social and cultural affairs office students of International Balkan University will have the opportunity to overcome cultural prejudices and recognize each other's differences. In this way, International Balkan University helps students express their values and qualities with the projects and activities they establish altogether.

5.7 Data presentation and Discussions for International Balkan University

In this section are presented the data taken from 50 students studying at "International Balkan University". Similarly as the previous surveys done on two other universities the purpose of this survey done on IBU was to identify students standing to the benefit and challenges of studying in a culturally diverse university. Participants in the survey were not only students who follow regular teaching programs but also students who attend preparatory program for English language learning.

The first question of the survey is expressed with table 3 which depicts the respondents' ages

Age	
Answer	Responses

Choices	
18 to 24	84 %
25 to 34	16%

Table 3.

The students' ages are ranged from 18 to 34 with the majority being around the age 18 to 24 (84%). Whereas a low number of students chose the second group of the age range 25 to 34 (16%).

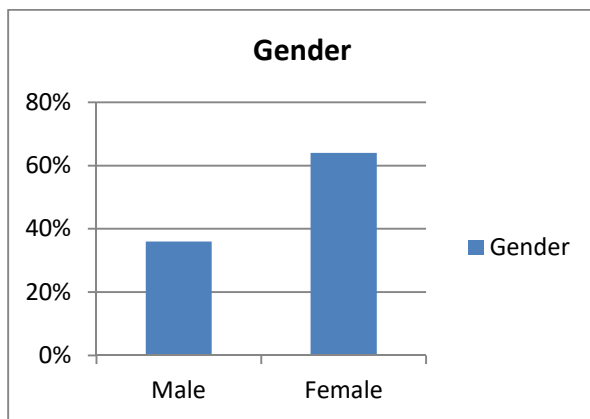


Figure 11.

The figure 11 represents participants' gender. According to the data taken from the survey 36% of the respondents were male students while 64% were female students.

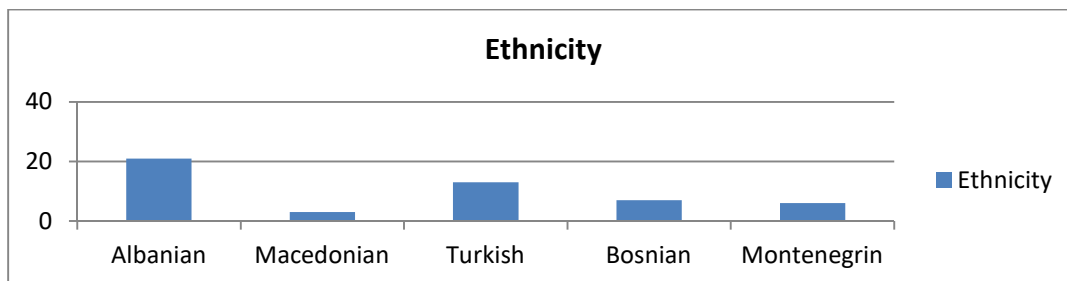


Figure 12.

Of the 50 respondents, 21 claimed Albanian ethnicity, 3 Macedonian, 13 Turkish, 7 Bosnian and 6 Montenegrin. These statistics support the IBU's primary goal of creating a multiethnic institution that incorporates Balkan countries and Turkey.

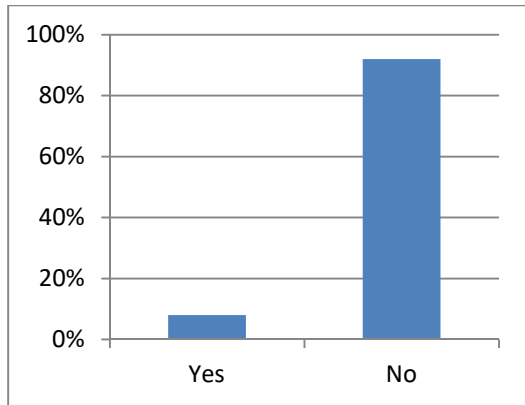


Figure 13.

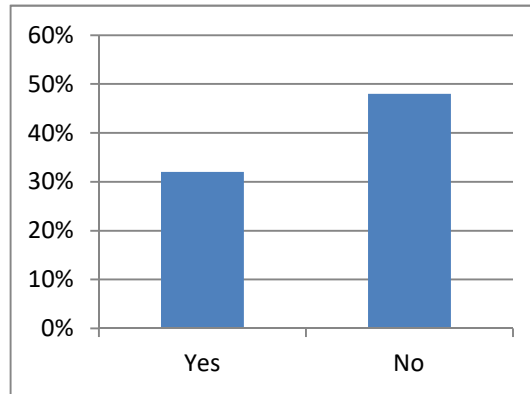


Figure 14.

The figure 13 shows the data taken from the question: Have you ever been prejudiced based on your cultural background? The majority of the surveyed students at International Balkan University gave a negative response. The statistical number of these data is 92%. Thus, only 8% of the respondents claimed that they have been victims of cultural prejudices at International Balkan University.

Students of IBU answered with denial even in the next question which required from them to show whether they have witnessed cultural prejudices done on other students. But the difference between those students who stated that they have never witnessed such cases and those who claimed the opposite is scarce. Around 48% of the participant answered with “No” and 32% chose “Yes”. The statistics of this question are represented in figure 14.

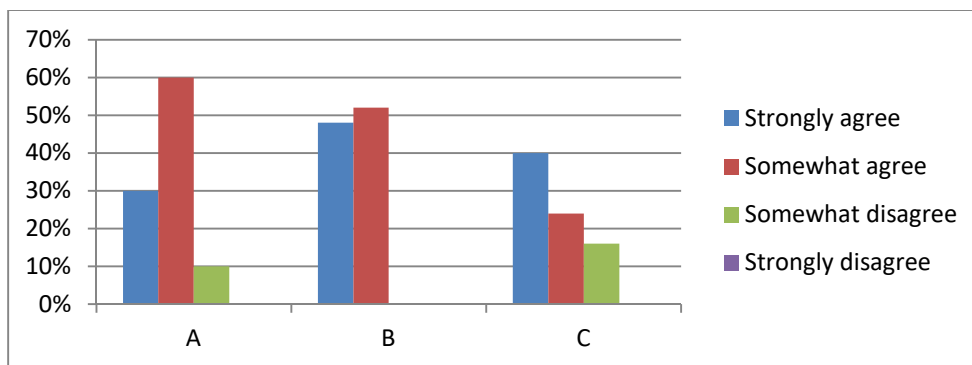


Figure 15.

The A column in figure 15 includes the statement: **The university offers opportunities to learn about cultural diversity**” with four possible answer options. Based on the data 60% of the respondents selected “somewhat agree” option, 30% selected “strongly agree” and only 10 % somewhat disagree that IBU offers opportunities to learn about cultural diversity.

The B column in figure 15 includes the statement: **“Being able to interact with individuals of diverse cultures will help me after the studies”**. All students agreed that studying in a culturally diverse institution will give them better future prospects. In this way 48% “strongly agreed” on this statement and 52% chose “somewhat agree” as their ultimate answer.

The C column in figure 15 includes the statement: **“The University is equally supportive of students with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds”**. As in the two previous statements the majority of the students expressed positive attitude on the given statement. Around 40% chose “strongly agree” and 24% chose “somewhat agree” as their final answer. And, the remaining 16% of the respondents somehow disagreed that International Balkan University indifferently supports all students.

The last part of the survey was dedicated to gather students’ opinion on what they consider the biggest challenge of studying a culturally diverse classroom. Based on the data taken from this question we can comprehend that the surveyed students at International Balkan University were reluctant to give their free opinions. Without defining the reasons behind this denial most of the answer spaces were left empty. Some of the respondents gave some short and indistinct answers:

“I have never seen any kind of it”

“Never happened”

However there were some students who expressed different opinions on this matter. One of them wrote:

“International Balkan University gives 100% scholarship to students coming from Balkan regions but it does not give to Turkish students”

Based on this answer we can understand that some students think that International Balkan University takes partiality when it comes to scholarship grants. Respondents of this kind believe that there is a sort of discrimination done on student coming from Turkey whereas students coming from Balkan regions are treated in a more unbiased way.

From the above findings, it can be stated that:

- The respondents were IBU students coming from Balkans and Turkey
- IBU has its own Social and Cultural Affairs office that operates for the welfare of its students through the development of activities and programs that help them melt prejudices.
- There is general belief among respondents that cultural diversity in education is beneficial in numerous ways.
- Some students believe that Turkish students are being discriminated when it comes to scholarship grants.

5.8 Similarities and Differences among “Lund University”, “EPHEC University” and “International Balkan University”

When considering the similarities among “Lund University” “EPHEC University” and “International Balkan University” it can be stated that the greatest similarity is the fact that these universities function as culturally diverse institutions. These universities accept students coming from diverse cultures and diverse ethnicities. In addition these universities have adopted rules and programs with the intention of creating a harmonious environment where multi-ethnicity is manifested. All three universities claim that it is within the values of their Institution as having equality and fairness their greatest objective and intention.

Another similarity among these universities can be considered the survey responses of the students on the questions whether they have experienced or witnessed cultural discriminations in their universities where majority of the students responded with positive perspective. Moreover, the majority of the students in all three institutions believe that cultural diversity in education is beneficial in numerous ways. Their affirmative stand on this approach can be seen on the positive attitudes expressed in the survey results.

Beside similarities “Lund University”, “EPHEC University” and “International Balkan University” have many differences that make them distinct and unique. When considering the differences it should be considered the location where these three institutions are placed. All three universities are located in the European continent however they represent three different countries like Sweden situated in Northern Europe, Belgium in Western part and North Macedonia located in south-eastern Europe.

Another difference among these three universities is the number of the students registered. While Lund University numbers 40000 students, EPHEC University 4000, International Balkan University numbers 1800 students. Although the number of the students enrolled at the university should not interfere in its quest for a perfect culturally diverse institution however it does impact the level of students’ cultural diversity planning to enroll at a university.

As a result another important distinction among these three universities is the diversity of the students. At Lund and EPHEC University the diversity of the students is greater covering a wide variety of cultures and ethnicities whereas at International Balkan University the diversity is nearly confined to Balkan countries and Turkey. The reasons for these limitations do not express IBU's intention of attracting even more diversity however the "blame" can be found on the fact that North Macedonia or Balkan countries are not places where there is high level of diversity or places that attract immigration. Considered as one of the poorest country in the Balkans or even in the world, North Macedonia is not a proper place that can attract immigrants and thus the inconvenient conditions result in emigration or minorities moving abroad in a burst. Generally, geopolitics and other obstacles cause major limitations in Balkan countries that leave huge traces even in educational institutions.

6. Conclusion

In the overview of the whole thesis we can conclude that culture and education are intertwined and correlated. Culture remains one of the most important components that expresses the ways students communicate, behave and the way they grasp the studying process. This thesis intensifies the idea that the level to which students perceive inclusiveness in the new surrounding is conditional to the harmony between their culture and the dominant culture of the university they pursue their studies.

Furthermore, universities that have culturally diverse students face both benefits and challenges. After investigating the literature on this subject it can be comprehended that the most explicit and the most valuable benefits of culturally diverse universities are: cultural awareness and appreciation that make students conscious about other cultures and thus, instill appreciation and acknowledgments for those differences; prejudice reduction that helps students demolish biases and stereotypes; and the benefit of creating globally prepared individuals. Despite the benefits the literature in the thesis suggests that culturally diverse universities face many challenges too. As the most common challenges the study considered: language that makes students struggle in the process of integrating with other students; discrimination and intolerance that derives from students disregarding cultural differences; prejudices that influence biases and stereotypes; and alienation that leads prejudiced students to isolation and deprivation.

Furthermore, with the analysis of surveys different students expressed some clarifications on how cultural diversity is treated at Lund University, EPHEC University and International Balkan University. In this way, these clarifications emphasized the best practices and methods that these universities use in order to manifest cultural diversity in its best possible way. In general there was a general belief among respondents that cultural diversity in education is beneficial in numerous ways. However, results from the surveys indicated that students at these universities despite benefits face some challenges too like language, religious views and other cultural discriminations.

Benefits and challenges of cultural diversity in education taken from literature review and other previous studies are explicitly reinforced and potentiated with the surveys and investigations done at Lund University, Epehec University and International Balkan University. Even though in different regions students face same challenges and exploit same benefits from studying in a culturally diverse universities, however the first two universities are more diversified in student number and in their staff. Nevertheless, at International Balkan University the cultural diversity is confined to 5 different cultures but the blame is at the other external factors of the country that indirectly influence the educational system.

From the above stated arguments and descriptions it can be freely concluded that this thesis intensifies the idea that multicultural universities should function properly in terms of equality and acceptance so we can function properly in a pluralistic democratic society. Moreover it intensifies the idea that universities which correctly treat cultural diversity are more likely to develop youth who is imbued with cross-cultural skills and motivated to function in the 21st century global society.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

Please fill out this survey entitled “The Benefits and Challenges of Education at Culturally Diverse Universities”

This survey should only take you 3 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous.

1. What is your age?

18-22	
23-30	
Other:	

2. Gender?

Male	
Female	

3. What is your ethnicity?

4. Have you ever been prejudiced based on your cultural background at your university?

Never:	Sometimes:	Often :
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5. Have you ever witnessed prejudice at your university?

Never:	Sometimes:	Often :
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6. Rate your comfort level about the following topics. ✓

Use :

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The University offers opportunities to learn about cultural diversity-related issues.				
Being able to interact with individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds will help me after college.				
The University is supportive of people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.				

7. Can you mention any case of discrimination or ethnicity-based challenge that has been done at your university?

8. Can you mention some benefits that you gain from studying at a culturally diverse university?