Culture Shocks and Adaptation Processes Experienced by Turkish Novice Teachers

Yahya Han Erbaş[i]
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Abstract

This study aims to examine the culture shock of teachers who have just started teaching in rural areas and their solutions for their adaptation to the new cultural environment. Case study, one of the qualitative methods, was used as part of this research. The participants are 17 classroom teachers who recently started teaching in the villages in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions of Türkiye in the 2021-2022 academic year. Criterion sampling was used in the selection of the participants. A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher was used as the data collection tool. The stages of thematic analysis were used in the research. The themes obtained as a result of the analysis of the data collected during the interviews with newly appointed teachers were grouped under four headings: Initial Culture Shock, Factors that Facilitate Cultural Adaptation, Factors that Make Cultural Adaptation Difficult, and Support to Novice/Prospective Teachers. According to the data collected from the teachers participating in the study, it is the language differences that cause culture shock the most. While the climate of the region they live in, lifestyles, differences in the communication channels used, and economic problems make cultural adaptation difficult, colleague support, acceptance, learning cultural elements, family support and certain personal characteristics facilitate the cultural adaptation process. In addition, teachers think that supporting new pre-professional teachers by communicating with experienced teachers, giving courses on cultural diversity in undergraduate education and holding orientation meetings will accelerate cultural adaptation.

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[i] **Yahya Han Erbaş**, Assistant Prof. Dr., Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0802-4536

Email: yahyahan@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

There seems to be a general consensus on the idea that individuals should receive proper education to be able to make a positive contribution to their communities. No society in the world can claim that education is unnecessary and that without education, quality living conditions can be provided. Consequently, many societies allocate substantial budgets to ensure that their citizens receive the best education possible.

The teacher is the most crucial element of quality education. According to Sağ (2007), teachers can contribute to solving many of the problems society faces. While teacher employment policies differ among states, Türkiye has developed a unique structure for employing teachers. The teachers in their first year of teaching, who are required to have a teacher education degree or licensing and to pass the central examination, are known as novice teachers (Ministry of National Education, 2015).

During their novice teaching period, novice teachers with a lot of theoretical knowledge step into the field for hands-on practice. According to Özdemir and Yalın (2000), the first years of the profession involve many challenges for novice teachers and revealing them will definitely contribute to the improvement of the teaching profession. Various studies have been carried out to identify the problems and produce possible solutions for novice teaching (Analı & Şahin, 2020; Anras; 2020; Çelik & Kahraman, 2021; Delican & Sönmez, 2011; Duran et al., 2011; Gülay & Altun, 2017; Kara & Demir, 2021; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018; Sarı & Altun, 2015; Yanık et al. 2016; Yıldırım et al., 2017). For example, Delican and Sönmez (2011) found that novice teachers view themselves as inexperienced and inadequate regarding professional knowledge and competence. In another study, Kozikoğlu and Senemoğlu (2018) examined the problems that novice teachers faced in the first years of the profession and found that they had problems in "teaching planning and implementation, classroom management, relations with society and adaptation to the physical environment, relations with colleagues, administrators, parents, and mentor teachers, and the lack of physical infrastructure of the school" (p.241). Similarly, Yıldırım et al. (2017) determined that new teachers have problems in not having sufficient experience in official and administrative affairs, classroom discipline, creating a democratic classroom environment and assessment and evaluation.

The problems experienced by novice teachers have been investigated in both the national and international research literature (Barrett et al., 2002; Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Gholam, 2018; Senom et al., 2013; Whalen et al., 2019). For example, Whalen et al (2019) concluded that novice teachers can overcome a wide variety of problems, from school management issues to those related to the learning environment, with mentoring practices. Similarly, Gholam (2018) reported that mentor support contributes to the professional development of new teachers and facilitates overcoming the difficulties they experience. In another study, Fantilli et al (2009) concluded that novice teachers have difficulties in communicating with school administration, families and colleagues in the early days of their profession, and they have difficulties in many areas including classroom management and literacy education.

In addition, studies on the problems experienced by teachers working in rural areas are also available (Bulut & Coşkun, 2018; Karataş & Kınalıoğlu, 2018; Palavan & Donuk, 2016; Sidat & Bayar, 2018; Özpınar & Sarpkaya, 2010; Öztürk 2016; Sidekli et al., 2015; Taşkaya et al., 2015). For example, Öztürk (2016) examined the problems of teachers who started working in rural areas for the first time and found that teachers complained about following official procedures, classroom management, and not getting enough moral and motivational support. Similarly, Karataş and Kınalıoğlu (2018) interviewed 15 classroom teachers working in different cities in Türkiye and identified the problems experienced by the teachers. According to the findings they gathered under five main headings (teacher-based, administrator-based, parent-based, infrastructure-based, and student-based), problems such as the inadequacy of the training they received, accommodation and transportation are some of the most prominent problems of new teachers. In addition, Analı and Şahin (2020), in their research with newly recruited teachers in rural areas, grouped the problems of teachers

under the headings of difficulty in obtaining the necessary materials, difficulty in physical conditions, poor parent relations, and inability to socialize sufficiently.

The problems of teachers who have just started teaching have been frequently studied. Yet, there are no studies in the literature examining the culture shocks experienced by novice teachers and their adaptation processes to these cultural differences.

Driven by this research gap, the aim of this study is to examine the culture shocks of elementary school teachers who have just started working in rural areas and their adaptation processes related to cultural differences. For this purpose, the answers to the following research questions are sought:

- What are the culture shocks experienced by novice teachers?

- What are the factors that make it difficult for novice teachers to adapt to a new culture?

- In what ways do novice teachers adapt to the new cultural environment?

- What support should be given to novice teachers to overcome possible culture shocks?

Cultural Shock and Cultural Adaptation

According to Winkelman (1994), cultural shock is "a multifaced experience resulting from numerous stressors in contact with a different culture" (p.121). Many people and professionals may experience culture shock, and teachers are among the occupational groups that may experience such culture shocks. Culture shock may have many causes, and the most common are "stress reactions, cognitive fatigue, role shock and personal shock" (Winkelman, 1994, pp. 122-123). Role shock is when an individual forgets one of her/his old identity roles in the new environment. According to Winkelman (1994), "in the new cultural setting, the prior roles are largely eliminated and replaced with unfamiliar roles and expectations. This leads to role shock resulting from an ambiguity about one's social position, the loss of normal social relations and roles, and new roles inconsistent with previous self-concept" (p.123). As can be understood from the definition, it is possible for new teachers to experience role shock and other culture shocks. The key steps to be taken to adapt to cultural shocks are as follows (Oberg, 1960/2006):

- Learning to adapt to the physical environment,

- Knowing the people in the new culture,

- Try to learn the new language that used in the culture,

- Learning the values and interests of the people,

- Joining the activities (pp.145-146)

As can be seen from the list, the measures recommended to be taken against possible culture shocks are of a nature that will contribute to accelerating cultural adaptation.

METHOD

Research Design

Case study, which is one of the qualitative methods, was adopted as the method. According to Robson (2002), a case study is "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (as cited in Ashley, 2012, p.102). The current study is a case study since it examines culture shocks and adaptation processes to new cultures experienced by novice teachers who have just started practicing their profession.

Data Sources and Data Collection Tools

The participants are elementary school teachers who had just started working in the countryside in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions of Türkiye in the 2021-2022 academic year. Criterion sampling was used to select the participants (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p.122). According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018), criterion sampling is "the study of situations that meet a predetermined set of criteria" (p.122). The researcher first reached out to some of the students who had just started teaching and had taken courses at the university in previous years, and tried to find teachers who could be participants according to the criteria of the study. Then, with the help of these students, he found the teachers who fit the criteria and gave information about the study. He decided on a suitable meeting day with the teachers who wanted to participate in the study and held the interviews via an online application. A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher was used as the data collection tool.

The criterion was determined as being novice teachers working in their first year of the profession in the rural areas of the Southeastern and Eastern Anatolian Regions of Türkiye. The reason for the selection of these geographical regions is that the majority of the first teachers are assigned to the cities located in these regions. Information about the participants is shown in Table 1. Instead of the real names of the participants, pseudonyms such as NT1 (Novice Teacher 1), NT2,……NT17 are used (table 1).

Table 1. Participants

Names (Pseudonyms)	Gender	The Region Where They Work	The City Where They Work
NT1	Male	Southeastern Anatolia	Şanlıurfa
NT2	Female	Eastern Anatolia	Hakkari
NT3	Female	Eastern Anatolia	Hakkari
NT4	Male	Southeastern Anatolia	Siirt
NT5	Female	Eastern Anatolia	Muş
NT6	Female	Eastern Anatolia	Şırnak
NT7	Female	Southeastern Anatolia	Mardin
NT8	Female	Souteastern Anatolia	Şanlıurfa
NT9	Male	Eastern Anatolia	Muş
NT10	Female	Eastern Anatolia	Ağrı
NT11	Female	Southeastern Anatolia	Şırnak
NT12	Male	Eastern Anatolia	Bitlis
NT13	Male	Eastern Anatolia	Ağrı
NT14	Female	Southeastern Anatolia	Siirt
NT15	Female	Eastern Anatolia	Ağrı
NT16	Male	Southeastern Anatolia	Siirt
NT17	Male	Eastern Anatolia	Şırnak

As can be seen from Table 1, 10 (58.8%) of the participants are female and 7 (41.2%) are male. In addition, 7 (41.2%) of the participants are from the Southeastern Anatolia Region, 10 (58.8%) are from the Eastern Anatolia Region. Participants from nine different cities were included in the study.
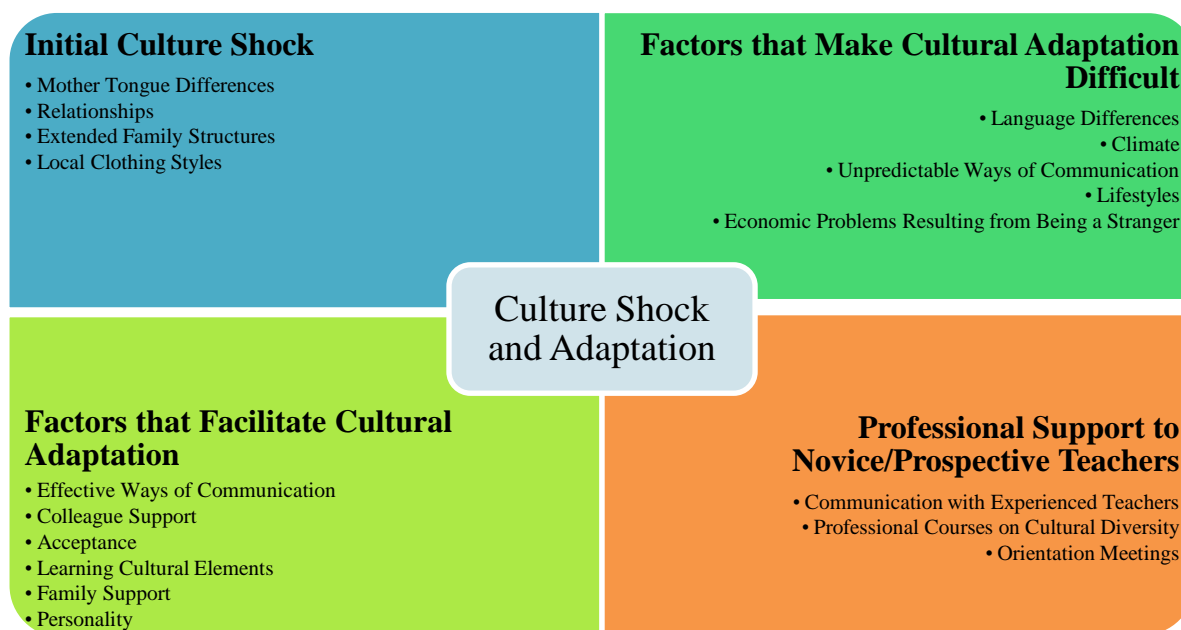
Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, participant confirmation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p.280), one of the methods used for validity and reliability, was used. After organizing the data obtained through the interviews, the researcher performed the first analysis, showed the emerging themes to the participants, and asked them to point out the parts that they thought were missing or erroneous. All the participants confirmed that the emerging themes reflected and summarized their own experiences in a meaningful way. In addition to the participant confirmation, the researcher finalized his themes and codes after consulting an expert academic (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The researcher calculated the reliability with the expert's opinions using the reliability formula (Miles & Huberman, 2016). In this calculation, valid 4 main themes and 18 sub-themes were determined, and the total frequency of these sub-themes is 107. Among these, a difference of opinion emerged in 2 sub-themes (Unpredictable Ways of Communication (4), personality (2)) in 2 themes. Based on Miles and Huberman's (2016) formula [Agreement/ (Agreement + Disagreement) x100], the reliability coefficient (107/(107+6)x100) was found to be 94.69%. Then, in the results section, the opinions of the participants were given directly without any comments, thus ensuring the reliability of the qualitative findings.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2012) stages of thematic analysis were used in the research. The researcher first transcribed all the interviews determined the parts that could be used in the research by taking notes (Phase 1). After the data emerged, sub-themes were determined by creating the correct codes to make sense of these data (Phase 2). Then, the main themes formed by the combination of these sub-themes were determined (Phase 3-4), and the headings that would best express these main themes were identified (Phase 5). Finally, the researcher reported the results of the analyses (Phase 6).

RESULTS

The themes obtained as a result of the analysis of the data collected in the interviews with novice teachers were gathered under the following four headings: (1) Initial Culture Shock, (2) Factors that Make Cultural Adaptation Difficult, (3) Factors that Facilitate Cultural Adaptation, and (4) Professional Support to Novice/Prospective Teachers (Figure 1).

Initial Culture Shock
• Mother Tongue Differences
• Relationships
• Extended Family Structures
• Local Clothing Styles

Factors that Make Cultural Adaptation Difficult
• Language Differences
• Climate
• Unpredictable Ways of Communication
• Lifestyles
• Economic Problems Resulting from Being a Stranger

Culture Shock and Adaptation

Factors that Facilitate Cultural Adaptation
• Effective Ways of Communication
• Colleague Support
• Acceptance
• Learning Cultural Elements
• Family Support
• Personality

Professional Support to Novice/Prospective Teachers
• Communication with Experienced Teachers
• Professional Courses on Cultural Diversity
• Orientation Meetings

Figure 1. Emerged Themes of Cultural Shock and Adaptation Processes Experienced by Novice Teachers

Initial Culture Shock

In the table 2, themes of cultural shocks experienced by novice teachers are shown.

Table 2. Themes of Initial Culture Shock Experienced by Novice Teachers

Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Initial Cultural Shock	Mother Tongue Differences	7	35
	Relationships	6	30
	Extended Family Structures	5	25
	Local Clothing Styles	2	10
	TOTAL	**20**	**100**

As shown in Table 2, four sub-themes emerged in the analysis of the cultural shocks experienced by novice teachers, namely, *mother tongue differences, relationships, extended family structures* and *local clothing styles*. The majority of the teachers interviewed stated that the language differences (7) and the differences in the relations with people (6) were dominant in the first culture shock. Some of the novice teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

Mother Tongue Differences

Novice teachers defined mother tongue differences as one of the main factors leading to culture shock. Some participant opinions are as follows:

"I had the biggest difficulty with the language. Although almost all of the parents spoke Turkish, many of my students could not speak Turkish at all, they did not understand me. I told the parents that the children and I were having a hard time. But I can't say I got a response." (NT3)

"Since today is the age of technology and I know the children in my own village, I expected that the number of children who do not speak Turkish would be very, very few. But when I met my students on the first day of school, I discovered that only 4 of my 36 students could speak Turkish. I was in deep shock. I was really disappointed. I was hoping to teach students from the first grade on. But even the lowest level class I had imagined was not at this level. So, I became deeply concerned and began to think about what to do." (NT17)

As can be seen from the teachers' views, the culture shock experienced due to language differences stems from the problems children experience in learning the official language before starting school and the parents' reluctance to teach Turkish.

Extended Family Structure

Novice teachers explained the culture shock they had about the local family lifestyles as follows:

"One of the things that surprised me the most was that the people in the east had so many children. When I heard that a father had 22 children, I remember thinking 'I hope these are not from just one mother.' The second major thing that surprised me was that so many children were born but most of their basic needs were not met. Even if they were doing well financially, when you looked at the children's situation, you felt like they needed help. In reality, their parents were much, much wealthier than you. In other words, although the child population was very large, no appropriate child care was provided." (NT6)

"Of course, the existence of polygamous families was one of the situations that shocked me the most. This shock was naturally followed by high numbers of children. Families had so many children that I couldn't help but wonder if they confused their children." (NT8)

As can be seen, the fact that the teachers' own family structures are different from the family structures of the locations where they started their profession is another factor that gives them culture shock.

Relationships

Teachers who begin to teach at their new places of work refer to the relations of local people with each other and their attitudes towards themselves as another culture shock. Teachers describe human relations in the places they live as follows:

"People here are very hospitable and very warmhearted here. Whether it's about the parents or my fellow teachers, the hospitality here surprised me. I was both surprised and happy that the parents showed so much interest in the teachers, especially those coming from the west." (NT1)

"I was very surprised that people were so sincere, friendly and helpful. I was very surprised that they always had such good intentions towards strangers." (NT9)

As can be seen, the teachers experienced culture shock in the face of a positive situation as well.

Local Clothing Styles

Novice teachers stated that unlike the previous places where they lived or studied, people's clothing styles differed greatly and they observed some styles they had not seen before. They explain the culture shocks regarding the clothing styles they encountered in their new location as follows:

"When I went through the farmer's market on my way to deliver my appointment documents to the school, I had a great shock when I saw many people in baggy trousers around me. I had involuntarily developed negative feelings towards this local dress and those who wore it, which had a negative image fed by television for years. But later, I observed that because it is a cultural dress, it is a dress used by people from all walks of life." (NT7)

"The geographical region I worked in was already surprising me with everything. If I have to say something specific, people's clothes seemed very different to me. The women had special dresses and were very ornate. The people around me did not feel normal because of these differences, since it was a style of clothing that I was not used to." (NT16)

According to the teachers, seeing people with different clothing styles caused another culture shock.

Challenges of Cultural Adaptation

Novice teachers' views regarding circumstances that make cultural adaptation difficult are divided into five subcategories: (1) language differences, (2) climate, (3) unpredictable ways of communication, (4) lifestyles, and (5) economic problems resulting from being a stranger (Table 3).

Table 3. Factors that Make Cultural Adaptation Difficult

Theme	Sub-Themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Challenges of Cultural Adaptation	Language Differences	5	26,3
	Climate	6	31,5
	Unpredictable Ways of Communication	4	21,1
	Lifestyles	3	15,8
	Economic Problems Resulting from Being a Stranger	1	5,3
	TOTAL	**17**	**100**

As can be seen in Table 3, novice teachers often raise the issue of *Language Differences* (5) and *Climate* (6), when discussing challenges of cultural adaptation.

Language Differences

As in the first culture shock, novice teachers stated that language differences are one of the main factors that make cultural adaptation difficult. In this regard, the teachers reported the following:

"The language problem was the biggest adaptation barrier. Even though we were teachers, they did not see us as one of their own because we were outsiders. We had come from a culturally different place. Whether you lived there for ten years or fifteen would not matter. They saw us differently because we were not part of their family. Not in a bad way, of course. It was just a difficult situation for me." (NT10)

"At first I was terrified that I wouldn't be able to explain myself to them. Because my profession is teaching, and I have to explain myself at the beginning. First, I used very simple sentences like "come, go, don't do this, and be quiet". This is how we really got started. As they got used to my way of speaking and when we held meetings with parents, they also said this along with other teachers. In other words, I tried to overcome the language barrier by saying that you can speak Turkish at home, it really affects the academic success of these children."(NT15)

As can be seen, the fact that the mother tongue of the teachers is different from the mother tongue of the region where they started working and the children who have just started school do not speak the official language of the state, posed one of the hardest challenges for teachers.

Climate

Another problem of novice teachers is the climatic differences between where they originally lived and where they were posted to teach. According to the teachers, this difference makes cultural adaptation difficult. Their views on climate differences are as follows:

"What really challenged me was climate and weather events. I have never experienced such a snowy winter in my life. However, there is little oxygen in the air, and the altitude is high, which was never the kind of weather I was used to. These two factors were the biggest challenge for me." (NT13)

"Early into my teaching, the climate was the same as the nation in general. But when the winter months started, the harsh winter and snowfalls made me worry about how to adapt here. In my opinion, climate and geographical conditions also play a role in adaptation." (NT2)

As can be seen, one of the factors that delays or complicates the adaptation process for teachers is the harsh climatic conditions.

Unpredictable Ways of Communication

Teachers reported that while they were working at the school, the local communication style was a problem. Communication problems pointed out by teachers are as follows:

*"One of the things that made it difficult for me to adapt was that people never admitted to doing wrong. Not working with us in cooperation."(*NT5)

"Even if our parents could speak Turkish, I don't know exactly whether it was due to the region they lived in or another factor, but when the parents were communicating with us, they both wanted to establish friendly relations and spoke in a language that criticized everything we did. This has always seemed strange to me." (NT17)

These statements clearly indicate that teachers have difficulties in deciphering the communication styles used by the parents.

Lifestyles

According to the teachers, the lifestyle of all people, especially parents, in the place where they started teaching is another factor that makes cultural adaptation difficult. They reported these lifestyle differences in the following ways:

"Another thing that made it difficult for me to adapt was the lifestyle. Since this is a conservative city in general, life in the city stops after a certain time. As someone from a metropolitan city, getting home early was not a good fit for me." (NT1)

"When I first contacted the parents, they invited me to their house for dinner. I was very happy because since my arrival, I was only meeting with my colleagues at work, sometimes we were meeting outside. It was my first time meeting and talking to other people. When we sat at the table to eat, I saw that there were only women, and the men in the family did not sit at the dinner table. Since I was not one of the women related to them (by blood), they probably did not eat at the same table with us. However, when guests visited my own family home, we all (women and men) used to have fun together." (NT14)

It is understood from these statements that the different lifestyles of the teachers affect the adaptation process.

Economic Problems Resulting from Being a Stranger

According to the testimony of one of the novice teachers, the presence of people who wanted to turn being strangers into an opportunity made cultural adaptation difficult. According to this teacher

"Since it was obvious that I was a teacher, this reflected on me negatively in terms of prices. As in any small place, there was an opportunistic attitude towards strangers."(NT2)

As can be seen, seeing the teacher as a source of profit delays the cultural adaptation of the teacher to the new life.

Facilitators of Cultural Adaptation

Novice teachers' views regarding circumstances that make cultural adaptation easier fall into six subcategories: (1) Effective Ways of Communication, (2) Learning Cultural Elements, (3) Acceptance, (4) Family Support, (5) Colleague Support, and (6) Personality (table 4).

Table 4. **Factors that Facilitate Cultural Adaptation**

Theme	Sub-Themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Facilitating Cultural Adaptation	Effective Ways of Communication	5	13,5
	Colleague Support	17	46
	Acceptance	8	21,6
	Learning Cultural Elements	3	8,1
	Family Support	2	5,4
	Personality	2	5,4
	TOTAL	**37**	**100**

Table 4 shows that novice teachers often emphasize the importance of *Acceptance* (8) and *Colleague Support* (17) in cultural adaptation.

Effective Ways of Communication

Some of the novice teachers also stated that when the right communication ways are chosen, cultural adaptation becomes easier. Some of the teachers' views on this subject are as follows:

"To be able to communicate effectively with the parents, I invited the mothers on Mother's day and we sat down and chatted. We ate and drank together. The fathers participated in the parent meetings to a great extent. One can hardly see women outside their home in the village. I took permission from most fathers myself so that mothers could attend the Mother's Day event. There were mothers that I met towards the end of the year and there were some that I had never met even after the school year was over. So, this was my method to understand the local people and their culture."(NT12)

"I spent a lot of time with my students. I tried to learn from them about their culture. I asked questions and tried to learn their language. I used the words I learned in sentences with them."(NT11)

"I visited the homes of my students a lot, got in touch with them, and talked to them regularly. I learned their language and adopted their lifestyle. On April 23, I organized a "Music Night" with them. All of these made me get used to that culture and even love it."(NT1)

As can be seen, the use of appropriate communication methods not only by parents but also by teachers is an important factor in increasing cultural harmony.

Acceptance

Accepting the culture, one lives in is another factor that increases cultural harmony by novice teachers. Some of the teachers expressed their thoughts regarding this as follows:

"Even if you do not know the cultural structure of the region you live in, knowing that each region has its own way of life and respecting and accepting different lifestyles will facilitate your adaptation process."(NT15)

"What people do, talk, eat, drink, and many other behavioral traits may differ from yours. I have always tried to see this difference not as something weird but as richness. For this reason, when I went out on the street and saw situations different from my own culture, I grew out of my habit of viewing them as strange. I started to enjoy living and working more."(NT5)

As can be understood from the words of the teachers, acceptance of differences accelerates the adaptation process.

Colleague Support

All the novice teachers in the study reported that there were experienced teachers in the schools they were appointed to teach. Some teachers acknowledging that they had received peer support stated the following:

"The most important factor that makes it easier to get used to the new environment is a supportive friend network. If teachers can achieve a good rapport with the colleagues at school, they become very happy and it becomes very easy to get used to the new culture. I think the most important thing is the presence of friends. Adaptation is easy when you spend time together both at school and outside."(NT9)

"I was in constant communication with the teachers who started working before me and with the teachers who started working with me. When necessary, I consulted their experience. I tried to improve myself by following the teachers working in the village school like me on social platforms such as Instagram, Telegram and Facebook."(NT13)

As can be seen, the presence of experienced teachers and contacting them contribute positively to the cultural adaptation process of new teachers.

Learning Cultural Elements

The teachers, who said that the cultural elements in the new place they live in differ partially from their own, stated that they accelerated the adaptation process by learning these elements. They expressed these cultural learnings as follows:

"At first, I tried to learn a little language, visited parents, tried to learn the customs of the region on special days. When this effort was appreciated by both the children and their parents, their perspectives on me have also evolved into positive, I tried to turn these into opportunities, and I was successful."(NT16)

"Although the local clothes I saw seemed strange at first, I found and bought a scarf or two from the local small shops and wore them outside of school. I'm also not very picky about food, so I tried a lot of their dishes, and now I can even make some." (NT6)

Family Support

Some of the teachers also reported having an easier time with the support they received from their families. They describe this support as follows:

"The biggest reason I was able to get used to where I live is my wife. If she hadn't been by my side in all that I've been through, I would have resigned long ago. I can't say that we're still perfectly used to their culture, but we've gotten used to a lot together." (NT8)

"My father has been with me since the very first day I came here. We spent time together for the first 3 months. I handled many chores with my father, including shopping. In the beginning, I solved many problems more easily when my father was with me, such as what official procedures I needed to complete and where to apply for them. Thus, not being alone in a different place allowed me to adapt here better."(NT7)

As can be understood from the teachers' views, the support of family members helps cultural adaptation.

Personality

Teachers, who think that personality traits contribute positively to the cultural adaptation process, express their views as follows:

"The conditions were better than I expected, which made my adaptation process easier. Yes, I was faced with a different culture, but I was able to continue doing most of the things I do in normal life or create opportunities, so everything became a little easier for me."(NT2)

"I think it's my character that made it easier for me to adapt. If you do not respect different ethnic origins, you will have a hard time. You may think that everyone has such respect for different ethnicities, but you realize that this is not the case only when you are teaching. I have always believed in myself in this regard, and I kept my communication channels open as much as possible." (NT17)

As can be seen, having a personality type that is open to new learning opportunities facilitates cultural adaptation.

Professional Support to Novice/Prospective Teachers

Opinions on the types of potential support that can be given to novice teachers are grouped around three sub-themes: (1) Communication with Experienced Teachers, (2) Professional Courses on Cultural Diversity, and (3) Orientation Meetings (Table 5).

Table 5. Themes of Professional Support for Cultural Adaptation

Theme	Sub-Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Professional Support for Cultural Adaptation	Communication with Experienced Teachers	16	48,5
	Professional Courses on Cultural Diversity	9	27,3
	Orientation Meetings	8	24,2
	TOTAL	**33**	**100**

As it can be seen in Table 5, novice teachers say that communicating with experienced teachers (16) is the most important support to improve their cultural adaptation.

Communication with Experienced Teachers

According to the majority of the novice teachers, it is necessary to contact experienced teachers in various regions of the country and benefit from their experiences before starting the profession. In this regard, the teachers reported the following:

"Since the best learning is learning by experience, the opinions of in service teachers working in various regions can be brought together with preservice teachers. Experienced teachers can introduce the environment in which they live and work to teacher candidates." (NT4)

"In particular, information about the eastern regions should be given from the primary source. And you should make a video call with a teacher living in that area and get information. In this way, at the very least, students can learn about what they will face in the future, good or bad." (NT10)

"It may be helpful to communicate with in-service teachers and ask them for photos and videos and share them with the class. Viewing these will be more effective for them. Video chats with students living in the eastern regions can also be organized with the help of experienced teachers." (NT13)

As can be seen, novice teachers think that experienced teachers can contribute to their cultural adaptation by sharing their experiences in school as well as the characteristics of their neighborhoods and lifestyles.

Professional Courses on Cultural Diversity

Novice teachers see the lack of adequate courses on cultural diversity in education faculties as a problem, and they think that the cultural shock they will experience can be reduced and cultural adaptation can be faster thanks to the courses to be given on this subject. Teachers' views on this subject are as follows:

"A course can be given that introduces all parts of the country and its features very well. Seminars can be organized so that novice teachers do not experience culture shocks. Thus, teacher candidates can recognize the places where they will work while they are still students and can psychologically prepare themselves accordingly." (NT7)

"I think that undergraduate curriculum is unfortunately very insufficient in this regard. I think that adequate information should be provided on this subject while receiving faculty training before starting the profession. It is also essential that our faculty teachers help their students in this regard. In fact, field trips can be arranged to minimize culture shock if feasible." (NT1)

As can be seen, the novice teachers think that the adaptation process will be accelerated by offering undergraduate courses that promote cultural diversity and multiculturalism in education faculties.

Orientation Meetings

Some of the novice teachers think that giving information about the places where possible to work before starting the profession, other than education faculties, by using various introductory materials, will contribute to the cultural harmony. They express their views on this issue as follows:

"There are lots of data, videos, and ads promoting the city, but nothing promoting the villages. There are villages that do not even appear on the map. There are villages so old-fashioned that they look like they were time-capsuled to 40 years ago. If the Ministry of National Education does not carry out projects to develop these villages, the newly appointed teachers will not have any information about these villages, no matter how ready they are, they will get through the culture shock." (NT2)

"I think teachers who graduated from university and were appointed and started teaching can create informative short texts or videos about their current location and send them to the teachers they are in contact with. In this way, students in the faculty of education will see the place they will go to tomorrow through the eyes of a colleague." (NT5)

"In-service teachers can prepare an informative content that introduces the region they live in, and then the content from all over the country can be combined and taught at universities as a course. Such a project can help culturally prepare preservice teachers." (NT8)

As can be seen, novice teachers stated that providing informative content covering various cultures of the country would also contribute to increasing cultural harmony.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Culture Shock

The first part of the study aimed to determine the culture shocks experienced by novice teachers. The majority of the teachers said that the difference in the mother tongue spoken in the place where they started to teach created a culture shock effect. The research findings on the problems experienced by teachers due to language differences support this conclusion (Analı & Şahin, 2020; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018; Özdemir & Erol, 2021). Various in-service trainings to overcome the problems to be experienced regarding language differences or offering undergraduate courses with content on these differences can reduce such culture shocks (Analı & Şahin, 2020). Other culture shocks experienced are grouped under the headings of relations, family structures, and clothing styles. The findings on the fact that novice teachers have problems in interacting with the local people and cannot keep up with their interpersonal relationships are also supported by the literature. (Özdemir & Sarpkaya, 2010). The inability to understand local interpersonal relationships, analyze the local lifestyles or use the proper communication channels to interact with the local people due to inexperience is a problem facing everybody new to the profession. Not being informed about the current new culture and not doing preliminary research on the new place of appointment can be said to be the sources of these culture shocks.

Challenges of Cultural Adaptation

The second part of the study aimed to determine the factors that make the cultural adaptation of novice teachers difficult. The teachers stated that they had problems in adapting to the climate of the region where they started to work. Although the issue of climate is a problem in terms of adaptation to environmental conditions, teachers stated that climate also plays a role in the delay of cultural adaptation. The finding that climatic conditions make adaptation difficult for teachers is also supported by various studies (Güvendir, 2017; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018). Since Türkiye is a country where distinct climatic conditions are experienced in every region, if novice teachers are to work in a region different from the one they live in, they also need to learn the geographical conditions of this new region. In addition, the teachers in the current study reported that language differences, not being familiar with the local communication channels and lifestyles, and the fact that the local people view teachers as an economic resource make cultural adaptation difficult. Various studies have found that novice teachers have problems in communicating with the local people and made some recommendations on what they should do to overcome these problems (Balkar & Şahin, 2015; Gülay & Altun, 2017). According to Darling-Hammond (2003), the most important factors affecting teachers' negative attitudes towards their profession and making it difficult to adapt are teachers' incomes, difficulties in working conditions, insufficient preliminary preparation and not getting enough mentor support. If we add the lack of knowledge of the right ways of communication to these factors, we can predict that teachers will have more difficulty in doing their job properly. For this reason, providing novice teachers with ways of effective communication during their undergraduate education will not only enable them to communicate effectively, but also to learn the lifestyles of the local people where they work.

Facilitating Cultural Adaptation

The third part aimed to determine the factors that facilitate the cultural adaptation of novice teachers. According to the analysis, the novice teachers said that their cultural adaptation accelerated the most with the support of their experienced colleagues. According to Kartal (2009), novice teachers develop positive attitudes towards teaching by socializing with their colleagues at school. In support of these results, some studies have reported that the adaptation processes of teachers who cannot get sufficient support from their colleagues are delayed (Duran et al., 2011). Therefore, the importance of peer support in professional adaptation and adaptation to the school environment, and even to the socio-cultural environment should not be overlooked. Considering that the majority of teachers

working in rural areas are close to each other in age, it does not seem like it will be very difficult to adapt to each other both in the professional environment and in the social environment.

Another important issue that novice teachers emphasize in terms of cultural adaptation is that acceptance accelerates the adaptation process. According to Nieto (2004), the acceptance of cultural differences is one of the first stages of interacting with cultures. Accepting that the new socio-cultural environment has a special structure of its own and that the experiences, thoughts, lifestyles and perspectives of its people are different from their own, accelerates the process of novice teachers' cultural adaptation.

Support for Cultural Adaptation

In the final part of the study, the types of support the novice teachers wanted to be given for cultural adaptation were analyzed. They stated that their cultural adaptation would be supported by receiving pre-service courses on cultural diversity, getting support in how to communicate in different cultures, and attending orientation meetings on the local cultures. According to Erbaş (2019), the trainings to be given to teachers and teacher candidates on cultural diversity positively change their perspectives on differences. Similarly, the current study found that novice teachers support the view that pre-service cultural diversity and multicultural education will contribute positively to their professional development and attitudes towards diversity (Engin & Genç, 2015, Karadağ & Özden, 2020; Ünlü & Örten, 2013). The fact that Türkiye has a growing population and attracts immigrants, brings with it that future teachers will frequently encounter cultural differences and adaptation to them. Therefore, improving teachers' knowledge and attitudes towards cultures will accelerate the process of cultural adaptation.

Enabling teacher candidates and novice teachers to benefit from the experiences of in-service teachers by bringing them together with experienced teachers who have worked with various cultures, and informing them by organizing pre-service orientation meetings about the local cultures is another strategy to accelerate cultural adaptation. With proper mentoring by experienced teachers, novice teachers can develop effective communication approaches to use with their local network, as well as ensure professional development (Whalen et al., 2019). Considering the steps that will expedite the necessary cultural adaptations, providing such support to pre-service teachers is critical.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following steps can be suggested to be taken to reduce the cultural shock that teachers will experience, and to speed up their cultural adaptation:

- Novice teachers should be informed about a wide range of socio-cultural issues, from the climatic characteristics of the places where they will work, to the cultural differences.
- In faculties of education, undergraduate courses on diversity should be given.
- The factors that may complicate or delay their cultural adaptation need to be identified and appropriate remedial steps should be explored.
- Mentoring support should be obtained from experienced teachers and administrators in the first years of the profession.
- Mother tongues are known to be spoken actively other than the official language of the state can be identified and elective courses on them can be offered to teachers to accelerate their cultural adaptation.
- By organizing meetings with novice teachers who are in their first year of teaching at regular intervals, official local education units of the state can find out whether these teachers have any cultural adaptation problems.

Conflict of Interest

I declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Funding Details

No funding or grant was received from any institution or organization for this research.

Credit Author Statement

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

Ethical Statement

Ethics committee approval within the scope of the research is given. It has been taken from the Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University ethics committee of scientific research with the decision numbered 01/30 on 06.01.2022.

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