

## The Relationship Between Intercultural Sensitivity and Cultural Intelligence of Teachers: The Mediator Role of Multicultural Education Attitude, Empathic Tendency and Burnout<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the mediating role of teachers' multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout in explaining the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence. Data were collected from 603 teachers using validated measurement tools, and structural equation modeling was employed for the analysis. The results indicated significant positive relationships between cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity, empathic tendency, and attitudes toward multicultural education, while a significant negative relationship was found between cultural intelligence and burnout. Intercultural sensitivity was positively associated with attitudes toward multicultural education, which, in turn, was positively related to empathic tendency. Empathic tendency was negatively associated with burnout. Furthermore, attitudes toward multicultural education, empathic tendency, and burnout were found to partially mediate the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence.

**Keywords:** Intercultural Sensitivity, Cultural Intelligence, Multicultural Education Attitude, Empathic Tendency, Burnout.

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## Introduction

Factors such as technological, political, socio-economic and educational developments bring people from different cultures together, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes compulsorily. When Turkey's social structure is examined, especially in terms of its geographical and historical process, Anatolia is a center where different social and ethnic groups have lived together for centuries. Therefore, cultural diversity in Turkey is quite high and this diversity is still increasing due to immigration. According to the data of the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), as of October 19, 2023, the total number of school-aged children (5–18 years old) living in Turkey under temporary protection status is 1,117,851 (DGMM, 2023). Finally, when the data of the Ministry of National Education on foreign students in Turkey were examined in Turkey Migration Report, which was as to the year 2016, a total of 232,714 foreign students were studying in Turkey in the 2016-2017 academic year (DGMM, 2017).

In a society with cultural diversity, it has become important for individuals to live in harmony with other cultures, to recognize different cultures and to respect their values. With the reflection of the social developments and the increase in cultural diversity on education, the concepts of multiculturalism, multicultural education, multicultural school and multicultural teacher appears more in the literature. It is thought that the cultural intelligence levels of teachers and teacher candidates are also important in multicultural education environments where there is richness based on cultural differences (İnan, 2017, p.22). Cultural intelligence is a crucial competency that enables individuals to understand their own cultures, communicate effectively, and appropriately manage differences when interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Demir, 2015, p.46). It is stated that an individual with cultural intelligence can easily adapt to a multicultural environment, make better decisions with cultural evaluations, and be more successful by coping with potential problems (Livermore, 2010, pp.335-371). A teacher with a developed cultural intelligence ensures that different cultures are analyzed from different perspectives and brought into the educational environment, thus creating diversity and equality of opportunity in the classroom environment (Gezer & Şahin, 2017, p.176). In an educational environment with cultural diversity in question, managing this diversity and achieving educational goals will be directly proportional to teachers' cultural intelligence abilities.

In addition to the normalization of students with different cultural values in today's education environment, the teachers are also expected to have high cultural communication skills, as well as having high cultural communication skills (İnan, 2017, p.22). Having the ability to create positive emotions in order to approve and encourage the most appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication, to understand and tolerate cultural diversity is expressed as intercultural sensitivity (Chen, 1997, p.4-9). "National Accreditation Commission for Teacher Education (National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education) also mentions the importance of educating teacher candidates as culturally sensitive (NCATE, 2008, p.34). In multicultural societies, intercultural sensitivity plays an important role in improving human relations in schools (Coffey, Kamhawi, Fishwick, & Henderson, 2013, p.605).

The fact that education systems take the multicultural structure of the society into account and actively contribute to the peaceful coexistence and positive interaction of different cultural groups will also strengthen the democratic structure of the society (UNESCO, 2006, p.18). The concept of multicultural education stands out as an approach that embraces cultural diversity and advocates the inclusion of this diversity in education (Gezer & Şahin, 2017, p.175). Multicultural education is an effort that combines educational components such as education reform, which aims to ensure that all students have academic equal conditions and to change the structure of educational institutions, philosophy that emphasizes the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity, values reflecting cultural pluralism, rules, curriculum, teaching materials, and organizational structure (Gay, 1994, p.2). The National Accreditation Commission for Teacher Education defined multiculturalism as the diversity due to elements such as religion, language, gender, ethnic origin, race, social, economic, academic, political, historical and geographical factors, and they stated the importance of educating teachers to be sensitive to multiculturalism (NCATE, 2008, p.87). Considering that the school environment is the most important place in the way of achieving the goals of multicultural education programs, teachers have the most important role.

If we define empathy in a simple way as putting oneself in the other's place, empathy will first be possible by recognizing the other. In today's reality, intercultural interaction is inevitable and the way

to get rid of the helplessness, fear and anxiety that can be experienced in this interaction process will be through empathy (Yağbasan & Demirbağ, 2017, pp.626-627). When individuals with different cultural characteristics carry out educational activities in the same classroom in a multicultural classroom environment, the sense of understanding becomes very important in their communication with their peers and teachers. Considering that there is empathy where there is an interpersonal communication environment and that this communication should be healthy (Pişkin, 1989, p.775), how healthy the intercultural communication environment is will determine the quality of empathy. Since it is predicted that empathy will increase tolerance, the necessity of empathy can be considered in environments with cultural diversity. Considering that empathic tendency positively affects psychosocial adjustment (Kaya & Siyez, 2010, p.114), teachers with high intercultural sensitivity and empathic tendency will facilitate the multicultural education process due to interpersonal communication competence.

Burnout, which is physical, emotional and cognitive fatigue resulting from prolonged exposure to emotionally challenging situations, can be seen in every administration and service (Pines & Aronson, 1988, pp.9-10). However, it is expected that the consequences of burnout, which can be seen in the employees of institutions that provide assistance services such as health and education, will be serious (Hock, 1988, p.168). Professional burnout in teachers directly affects the mental and physical health of teachers, the quality of service provided to students and the entire education process (Aslan, 2009, p.31). In burnout seen in teachers, besides the perceived emotional exhaustion, negative cynical attitudes and feelings towards students occur (Anderson & Ivanicki, 1984, p.110). It is also expected that a teacher with a high level of burnout will perform poorly in a multicultural education environment and show negative attitudes and behaviors towards students with cultural differences. In this sense, it is expected that teachers' cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity levels positively affect their attitudes in a multicultural education environment and thus their job satisfaction; while negative attitudes and high burnout levels negatively affect their performance and therefore their relations with students with different cultural values.

When examining the literature related to the variables discussed in this study, several studies (Tutuş, 2020; Abaslı & Polat, 2019; Özdemir, 2019; Mercan, 2016) were found that address cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity together. Evaluation of the study's results revealed a significant positive relationship between these two variables, with intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence serving as significant predictors of each other. Moreover, positive and significant relationships exist between multicultural education and intercultural sensitivity (Onur Sezer & Bağçeli Kahraman, 2017), as well as between multicultural education and cultural intelligence, the latter predicting multicultural education attitude (Özer Koçak, 2020; Çapri and Uğur, 2018; Gezer and Şahin, 2017; Koçak & Özdemir, 2015; Yaşar Ekici, 2017). Empathy is positively related to intercultural sensitivity and significantly predicts it (Bölükbaşı, 2020; Yiğit, 2020; Aydın & Şahin, 2017; Egeliöğlu Çetişli et al., 2016; Menardo, 2017). On the other hand, a significant negative relationship was found between cultural intelligence and burnout (Demir, 2015; Tay, Westman, & Chia, 2008).

Cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity are concepts studied not only in organizational fields but also in education. Therefore, examining the relationship between these two variables within a teacher sample through a multifaceted approach is expected to contribute to the literature. In this study, a mediation model was developed to explain the relationships among intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency, and burnout, which are interrelated variables. Considering the positive relationship found between cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity, and the potential mediating roles of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency, and burnout, the structural equation model will be tested to analyze and evaluate the variables and their interrelations as a whole.

In the light of all these explanations, it was determined as the main purpose of this research to examine whether multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout scores play a mediating role in the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence scores. The following hypotheses were included in the study around this general purpose.

1. There is a significant relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity scores and cultural intelligence, multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout scores.

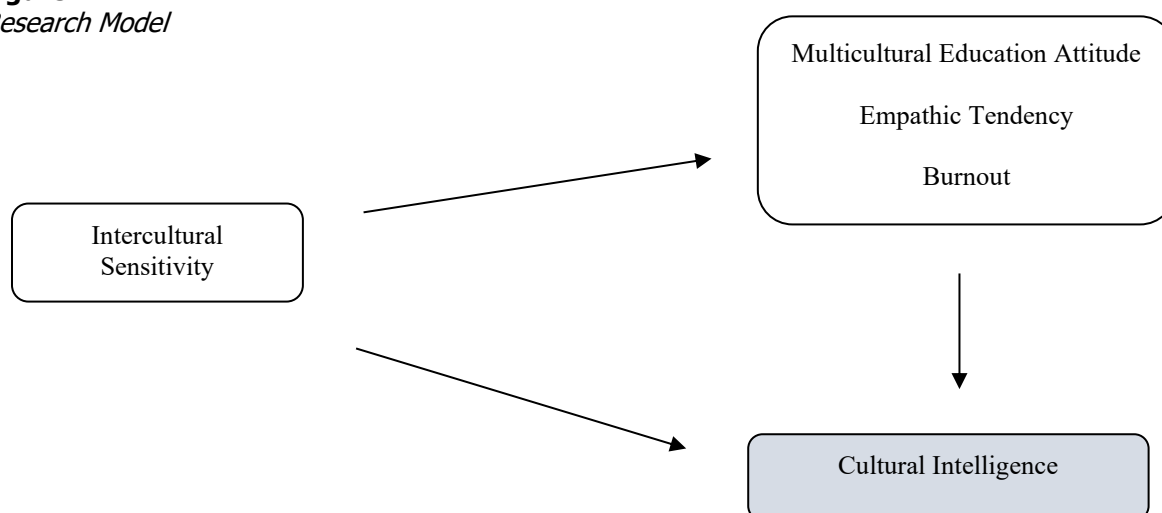
2. Multicultural education attitude has a mediating role in the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity scores and cultural intelligence scores.
3. Empathic tendency has a mediating role in the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity scores and cultural intelligence scores.
4. Burnout has a mediating role in the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity scores and cultural intelligence scores.

## Method

### Research Model

This research is a descriptive research in the relational survey model, which aims to examine the mediating role of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout in the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence scores. For this purpose, path analysis studies were carried out with the structural equation model (SEM) in order to analyze the relations between the variables. SEM is the general name of multivariate statistics, which is used to test models that include observed and latent variables and confirms a model with different relationships as a whole (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). The mediation model is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
*Research Model*



### Population and Sample

The research population consists of 10752 teachers working at different levels (preschool, primary school, secondary school, high school) in the central districts of Mersin (Akdeniz, Mezitli, Toroslar, Yenışehir) in the 2018-2019 academic year. While determining the sample, the appropriate ratio was made to the strata (district, education level) and the sample size was determined as 384 with a 95% probability  $p < .5$  error margin. Convenience sampling technique was used as a sampling technique. The convenience sampling technique is a kind of sampling made with people who are easy to reach and volunteer to participate in the research (Erkuş, 2013). Within the scope of the research, the model was tested with 603 participants in order to increase the power of representation by staying true to the average. The age range of the participants, which consisted of 350 (58%) female teachers and 253 (42%) male teachers, ranged from 24-65. Thirty-five (6%) of the teachers work at the preschool level, 220 (36.5%) at the primary school level, 206 (34%) at the secondary school level, and 142 (23.5%) at the high school level. 220 (37%) of the teachers work in Akdeniz district, 135 (22%) in Yenışehir district, 104 (17%) in Mezitli district, 144 (24%) in Toroslar district.

### Data Collection Tools

**Cultural Intelligence Scale:** "Cultural Intelligence Scale" developed by Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templar, Tay and Chandrasekar (2007) was adapted to the Turkish culture by İlhan and Çetin (2014). The 20-item and 5-point Likert-type scale consists of four dimensions: metacognition, cognition, motivation and behavior. In the scale, scores can be obtained for each sub-dimension, as well as total scores for cultural intelligence. In this study, cultural intelligence was evaluated by the total score. In the adaptation of the scale to Turkish culture, the cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the whole was .85; the reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions were calculated as .77, .79, .75 and .71, respectively (İlhan & Çetin, 2014). Within the scope of this research, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .88. Confirmatory Factor Analysis goodness of fit index proved that the model had good and acceptable fit ( $\chi^2/sd=3.95$ , RMSEA= .07, SRMR= .05, CFI=.97, NFI=.96, NNFI (TLI)=.97).

**Intercultural Sensitivity Scale:** Intercultural Sensitivity Scale developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) was adapted to Turkish culture by Rengi (2014). The 24-item and 5-point Likert-type scale consists of five dimensions: participation in intercultural interaction, respect for cultural differences, self-confidence intercultural interaction, enjoying intercultural interaction and paying attention in intercultural sensitivity. In the scale, scores can be obtained for each sub-dimension, as well as a total score for intercultural sensitivity. In this study, an evaluation was made on the total score of intercultural sensitivity. In the adaptation of the scale to Turkish culture, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the whole was .87, while the reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions were calculated as .86, .81, .75, .65, .73, respectively (Rengi, 2014). Within the scope of this research, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .74. Confirmatory Factor Analysis goodness of fit index showed that the model had an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2/sd=4.43$ , RMSEA= .08, CFI=.94, SRMR= .07, NFI=.92, NNFI (TLI)=.91).

**Teachers' Multicultural Education Attitude Scale:** "Teachers' Multicultural Attitude Scale" developed by Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig and Rivera (1998) was adapted to Turkish culture by Yazıcı, Başol and Toprak (2009). The 20-item, 5-point Likert-type scale consists of one dimension and was evaluated over the total score. The Turkish version of the scale was reduced to 18 items by removing the 3rd and 16th items, which did not work correctly because it is a new concept in our country and is not well known. In this study, 18 items were used within the information received from the authors. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was determined as .75 in adapting the scale to Turkish culture (Yazıcı et al., 2009). Within the scope of this research, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .73. Confirmatory Factor Analysis goodness of fit index revealed that the model had a weak but an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2/sd=6.19$ , RMSEA=.09, CFI=.85, SRMR= .09, NFI=.86, NNFI (TLI)=.83).

**Empathic Tendency Scale:** The "Empathic Tendency Scale", developed by Dökmen (1988), is a 20-item, a 5-point Likert-type scale which consists of one dimension and is evaluated over a total score. Using the Empathic Tendency Scale and the Understanding Emotions section of the Edwards Personal Preference Inventory, a validity study with the participation of university students was conducted, and the scores of the students were evaluated, and the correlation between the two scales was found to be .68. Within the scope of reliability studies, the scale was applied to the same group twice with three weeks intervals, and the correlation between the scores of the two measurements and the repetition reliability coefficient of the test were found to be .82. In addition, the correlation between the scores obtained from the odd and even items of the scale was calculated as .86 (Dökmen, 1988). Within the scope of this research, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .71. Confirmatory Factor Analysis goodness of fit index showed that the model had a weak but acceptable fit ( $\chi^2/sd=6.08$ , RMSEA= .09, CFI=.84, SRMR= .08, NFI=.80, NNFI (TLI)=.81).

**Burnout Scale – Short Form (BS-SF):** The 21-item "Burnout Scale" developed by Pines and Aronson (1988) measures the burnout levels of individuals. The Burnout Scale – Short Form was adapted by Pines (2005) in order to create an easy-to-use measurement tool consisting of fewer items, and its validity and reliability study for Turkish culture was carried out by Çapri (2013). The 10-item, 7-point Likert-type TO-SF is answered based on the statements of the participants. It was observed that the internal consistency coefficients of the scale, which was calculated with the data obtained from different ethnic origins, professions and student groups, varied between .85 and .92. In the Turkish adaptation study conducted by Çapri (2013), the test-retest reliability coefficient, which was carried out with 4-



week intervals, was reported as .88 and the internal consistency reliability coefficient as .91. Within the scope of this research, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .88. Confirmatory Factor Analysis goodness of fit index were calculated as  $\chi^2/df=6.00$ , RMSEA= .09, CFI=.98, SRMR= .04, NFI=.97, NNFI (TLI)=.97, showing the model had a good and acceptable fit.

**Personal Information Form:** This form, which includes demographic information about the gender, age, education level and district they work in, was created by the researchers.

### Procedures

First of all, official correspondence was made with Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education in order to determine the number of participants. In line with these correspondences, the number of teachers and foreign students working at different levels (preschool, primary school, secondary school, high school) in the central districts of Mersin province (Akdeniz, Mezitli, Toroslar, Yenisehir) in the 2018-2019 academic year were obtained. Afterwards, official permissions were obtained from Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education for the applicability of the application form, which includes data collection tools. After all the official procedures, data collection tools were applied to volunteer teachers working in schools at different levels in the central districts of Mersin province. During the implementation, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the principles of volunteering, and the basic instructions in answering the data collection tools were explained in a standard way.

### Data Analysis

SEM was used to analyze whether multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout scores have a mediating role in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence scores. SEM consists of a combination of factor and regression analyzes and is the general name of multivariate statistics used to test models with observed and latent variables. It is difficult to test a particular model in classical analyzes that test the relationships between the structures, but the complete verification of a model with different relationships with SEM can be tested with the produced goodness-of-fit indices. Before starting the SEM analysis, problems such as extreme values, kurtosis and skewness of the total score obtained from the scales, and missing data should be resolved. In the SEM study, it is important that the data are distributed close to normal and abnormal when calculation methods that require the assumption of normality will be used (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018, p.339-340). For this reason, in the research data, missing values were determined, and an approximate value was assigned for measurements with less than 5% data loss. For extreme value analysis, one-way boxplots were examined, and 18 extreme values were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the mahalanobis distance was calculated. Mahalanobis distance calculations are used to find extreme values far from the center, especially in an array with more than one variable (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018, p.216). In addition, the mahalanobis distance was determined for multidirectional extreme values. Based on the chi-square distribution for the Mahalanobis distance,  $\chi^2= 28.944$  was calculated and no data was found above this value. In normal and near-normal distributions, the kurtosis and skewness values of the data are generally distributed between  $\pm 1$ . Another common view is that the values obtained by dividing the kurtosis and skewness values by their own standard errors are taken into account, and if this value is below  $\pm 3.29$  (in samples less than 200; below  $\pm 2.58$ ), it means that the data are normally distributed (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018, p. 214). The distribution was found to be normal since the kurtosis and skewness coefficients obtained for all the variables of the study were between  $\pm 3.29$ .

Another assumption of multivariate statistical analysis is the assessment of multicollinearity. For this purpose, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values were examined. According to the commonly accepted thresholds ( $VIF < 10$ ; tolerance  $> 0.2$ ), the absence of multicollinearity is assumed (Alpar, 2014; Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2014). In line with this, the current study found that the tolerance values ranged from .79 to .98, and the VIF values were between 1.014 and 1.254, indicating no multicollinearity problem among the variables.

In line with the main purpose of the research, the correlation coefficient was calculated with the Pearson product of moments to determine whether there is a significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout scores. Structural equation modeling and path analysis were used to examine the mediating role of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity

and cultural intelligence. In the analysis, goodness of fit indices were taken into account in order to test the model. Good ( $\chi^2/df \leq 3$ ; RMSEA  $\leq .05$ ; CFI  $\geq .95$ ; NFI  $\geq .95$ ; NNFI (TLI)  $\geq .95$ ; SRMR  $\leq .05$ ) and acceptable ( $\chi^2/df \leq 5$ ) for the mentioned goodness-of-fit indices ; RMSEA  $\leq .10$ ; CFI  $\geq .90$ ; NFI  $\geq .90$ ; NNFI (TLI)  $\geq .90$ ; SRMR  $\leq .10$ ) were accepted as criteria (Çelik and Yılmaz, 2014, p.39; Dursun and Kocagöz, 2010 , p.15; Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p.345; Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008, pp.58-59; Kline, 2011; Schermellegh-Engel, Moosbrugger & Müller, 2003, p.52). IBM SPSS Statistics 20 and Lisrel 8.71 were used in the analysis of the data and the margin of error was accepted as 0.01.

### Ethical Statement

Authors declare that the research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

### Results

In this section, the findings of the analyzes carried out to examine the mediating role of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout in the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence scores are included. First, before the path analysis with the structural equation model, the correlations between the variables and then the path analysis models created were included.

### Analysis Results Regarding the First Hypothesis of the Study

Before performing path analysis, correlation between variables was calculated to answer the first hypothesis of the research. Correlation results of CIS, IS, MEA, ETS, BS-SF are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Correlation Analysis Results Between Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. CI					
2. IS	.293**				
3. MEA	.381**	.114**			
4. ET	.272**	.060	.347**		
5. B	-.154**	-.016	-.067	-.309**	

\*\* $p < .01$  (CI: Cultural Intelligence, IS: Intercultural Sensitivity, MEA: Multicultural Education Attitude, ET: Empathic Tendency, B: Burnout)

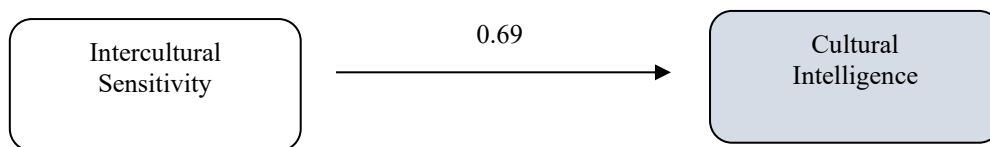
Examination of Table 1 reveals a weak but significant positive relationship between cultural intelligence and both intercultural sensitivity ( $r = .293$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and empathic tendency ( $r = .272$ ,  $p < .01$ ). A moderately significant positive association is observed between cultural intelligence and multicultural education attitude ( $r = .381$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while cultural intelligence and burnout are weakly but significantly negatively correlated ( $r = -.154$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, intercultural sensitivity shows a weak positive relationship with multicultural education attitude ( $r = .114$ ,  $p < .01$ ), multicultural education attitude is moderately associated with empathic tendency ( $r = .347$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and empathic tendency demonstrates a moderate negative relationship with burnout ( $r = -.309$ ,  $p < .01$ ). As a result, the significant relationships among the variables demonstrate that the proposed mediation model has a strong structure.

### Findings on the Prediction of Intercultural Sensitivity to Cultural Intelligence

In order to be able to analyze the other hypotheses of the research, firstly, a model was created for the predictor of intercultural sensitivity to cultural intelligence. In Figure 2, the model for the predictor of cultural intelligence of intercultural sensitivity is given.

**Figure 2**

*Test Results of Intercultural Sensitivity as a Prediction of Cultural Intelligence (Model 1)*



When the fit indices of the model created in Figure 2 are examined, the results indicate that the model is acceptable (CFI = .90; RMSEA = .10). Moreover, some indices appear to be very close to the acceptable fit thresholds (NFI = .88; NNFI (TLI) = .89; SRMR = .094). In addition to the fit indices for the verification of the structural model, t values were also examined as criteria. The t values and standardized  $\beta$  and standard error values for Figure 2 are given in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Path Coefficients*

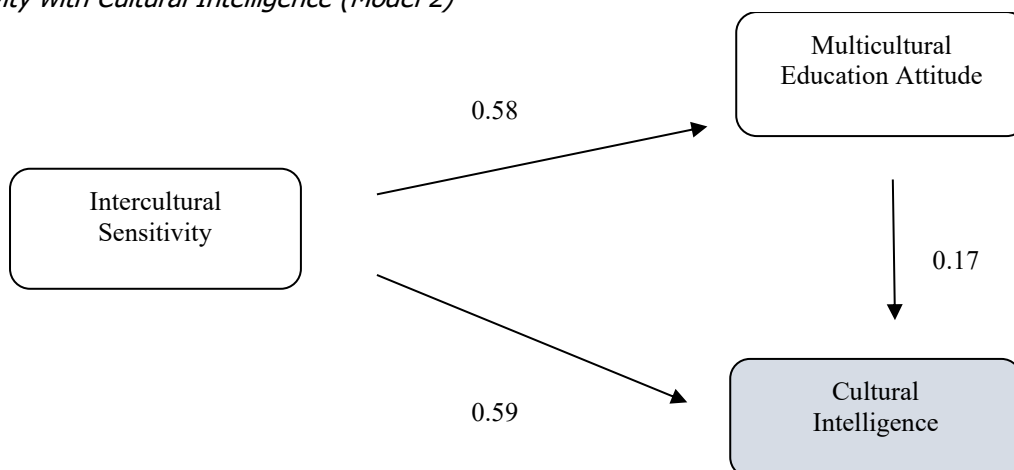
Path	Standardized $\beta$	SE	t
Intercultural Sensitivity → Cultural Intelligence	0.69	0.53	12.34

Examination of Table 2 reveals that intercultural sensitivity positively predicts cultural intelligence ( $\beta = .69$ ,  $t = 12.34$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### Analysis Results Regarding the Second Hypothesis of the Study

A new model was created in order to analyze the second hypothesis of the study. The mediating role of multicultural education attitude in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence was tested by path analysis, and the model based on this is given in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**  
*Test Results on the Mediator Role of Multicultural Education Attitude in the Relationship of Intercultural Sensitivity with Cultural Intelligence (Model 2)*



When the fit indices of the model created in Figure 3 are examined, the model is acceptable (CFI = .90; NNFI (TLI) = .90; SRMR = .08). Although the RMSEA value is slightly weak in the range of 0.08–0.10, it remains acceptable, with an RMSEA of .093. Additionally, the NFI (.87) fit index is very close to the acceptable fit criteria. The t values and standardized  $\beta$  and standard error values for Figure 3 are given in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Path Coefficients*

Path	Standardized $\beta$	Sh	t
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Intercultural Sensitivity → Multicultural Educational Attitude	0.58	0.67	10.88
Intercultural Sensitivity → Cultural Intelligence	0.59	0.51	9.77
Multicultural Educational Attitude → Cultural Intelligence	0.17	0.51	3.63

\* $p < .01$

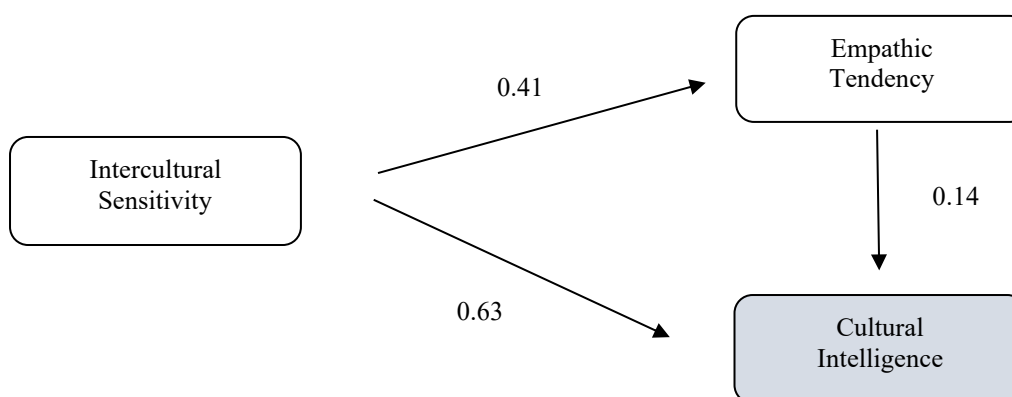
Examination of Table 3 reveals that intercultural sensitivity positively predicts multicultural education attitude ( $\beta = .58$ ,  $t = 10.88$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It also positively predicts cultural intelligence ( $\beta = .59$ ,  $t = 9.77$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with a .10-point decrease in this relationship after the inclusion of the mediator variable. This decrease indicates a potential mediating effect. To have a mediating effect, when the mediating variable is included in the relationship between the independent and dependent variable, the relationship must either become insignificant (full mediation) or decrease (partial mediation) (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p. 359). Accordingly, multicultural education attitude has a partial mediating role in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence. Moreover, multicultural education attitude positively predicts cultural intelligence ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $t = 0.51$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

#### Analysis Results Regarding the Third Hypothesis of the Study

A new model was created to analyze the third hypothesis of the study. The mediating role of empathic tendency in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence was tested by path analysis, and the model based on this is given in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Test Results on the Mediating Role of Empathic tendency in the Relationship of Intercultural Sensitivity to Cultural Intelligence (Model 3)*



When the fit indices of the model created in Figure 4 are examined, the model is acceptable (NNFI (TLI) = .90; SRMR = .08). Although the RMSEA value is slightly weak within the range of 0.08–0.10, the RMSEA (.089) fit index is acceptable. Additionally, some fit indices are very close to the acceptable fit criteria (CFI = .89; NFI = .86). The  $t$  values and standardized  $\beta$  and standard error values for Figure 4 are given in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Path coefficients for Figure 4*

Path	Standardized $\beta$	Sh	t
Intercultural Sensitivity → Empathic Tendency	0.41	0.83	7.32
Intercultural Sensitivity → Cultural Intelligence	0.63	0.51	10.80
Empathic Tendency → Cultural Intelligence	0.14	0.51	3.29

\* $p < .01$

Examination of Table 4 reveals that intercultural sensitivity positively predicts empathic tendency ( $\beta = .41$ ,  $t = 7.32$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It also positively predicts cultural intelligence ( $\beta = .63$ ,  $t = 10.80$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with a .06-point decrease in this relationship after the inclusion of the mediator variable. This decrease

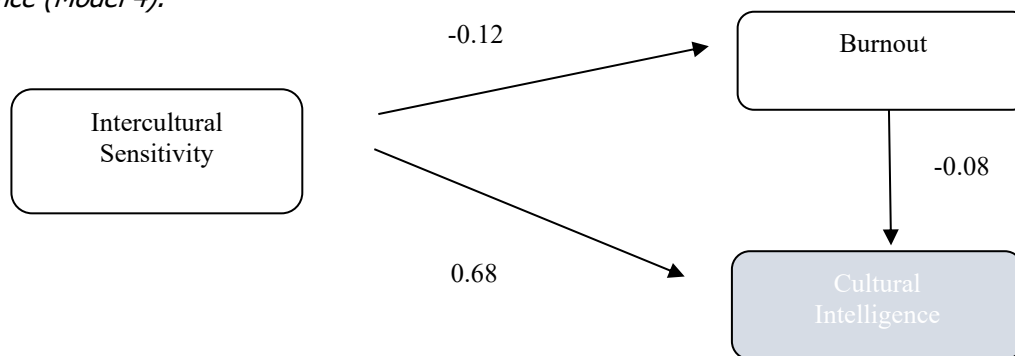
indicates a potential mediating effect. To have a mediating effect, when the mediating variable is included in the relationship between the independent and dependent variable, the relationship must either become insignificant (full mediation) or decrease (partial mediation) (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p. 359). Accordingly, empathic tendency has a partial mediating role in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence. Moreover, empathic tendency positively predicts cultural intelligence ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $t = 0.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

#### Analysis Results Regarding the Fourth Hypothesis of the Study

A new model was created in order to analyze the fourth hypothesis of the study. The mediating role of burnout in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence was tested by path analysis, and the model based on this is given in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Test Results on the Mediator Role of Burnout in the Relationship of Intercultural Sensitivity to Cultural Intelligence (Model 4).*



**Table 5**

*Path coefficients for Figure 5*

Path	Standardized $\beta$	Sh	t
Intercultural Sensitivity $\rightarrow$ Burnout	-0.12	0.98	-2.77
Intercultural Sensitivity $\rightarrow$ Cultural Intelligence	0.68	0.52	11.57
Burnout $\rightarrow$ Cultural Intelligence	-0.08	0.52	-2.18

\*  $p < .01$

Examination of Table 5 reveals that intercultural sensitivity negatively predicts burnout ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $t = -2.77$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It also positively predicts cultural intelligence ( $\beta = .68$ ,  $t = 11.57$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with a .01-point decrease in this relationship after the inclusion of the mediator variable. This decrease indicates a potential mediating effect. To have a mediating effect, when the mediating variable is included in the relationship between the independent and dependent variable, the relationship must either become insignificant (full mediation) or decrease (partial mediation) (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p. 359). Accordingly, burnout has a partial mediating role in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence. Moreover, burnout negatively predicts cultural intelligence ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $t = -2.18$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

#### Discussion And Conclusion Recommendations

Research findings reveal that there is a positive relationship between teachers' cultural intelligence scores and their intercultural sensitivity, empathic tendency, multicultural education attitude scores, and a negative relationship between burnout scores. These findings are consistent with previous research reported in the literature. Consistent with prior studies (Tutuş, 2020; Abaslı & Polat, 2019, Özdemir, 2019; Mercan, 2016; Yüksel Kaçan, 2018), cultural intelligence significantly contributes to the development of intercultural sensitivity by enabling individuals to regulate their behavior with respect and awareness toward different cultures (Thomas & Inkson, 2005). In this regard, cultural intelligence—which combines intercultural communication studies and the concept of intelligence (Aksoy, 2013, p.59; Aksoy, 2015, p.74) and encompasses the ability to adapt to diverse cultural contexts—plays a crucial role in fostering intercultural sensitivity. The significant positive

relationship between cultural intelligence and multicultural education attitude is consistent with previous studies in the literature (Özer Koçak, 2020; Çapri & Uğur, 2018; Gezer & Şahin, 2017; Koçak & Özdemir, 2015; Yaşar Ekici, 2017). Given that individuals with high cultural intelligence are expected to perform effectively in multicultural environments (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008, p. 10; Livermore, 2010, pp. 133–134), their positive attitudes towards multicultural education can be regarded as an expected outcome.

On the other hand, empathy is a central component of intercultural sensitivity (Chen, 1997, p.7). Given the positive relationship between cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity, a positive and significant relationship between cultural intelligence and empathic tendency is expected. Although previous studies have reported a significant link between intercultural sensitivity and empathy (Bölükbaşı, 2020; Yiğit, 2020; Abaslı, 2018; Aydın & Şahin, 2017; Egelioglu Çetışli et al., 2016; Mernardo, 2017), this study did not find a significant relationship between these variables, contrasting with prior findings. Conversely, the observed negative significant relationship between cultural intelligence and burnout aligns with similar results in the literature (Demir, 2015; Dolatshah & Hosseini, 2015; Stokes, 2013; Tay et al., 2008). Considering that high burnout levels among teachers may negatively affect their work and social relationships, difficulties in adapting to cultural differences are expected.

Another finding of the study revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity scores and multicultural education attitude scores, a positive significant relationship between multicultural education attitude scores and empathic tendency scores, and a negative significant relationship between empathic tendency scores and burnout scores. The positive significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity and multicultural education attitude supports the research of Onur Sezer and Bağçeli Kahraman (2017). Considering that there should be a personality trait capable of establishing cultural empathy for multicultural education (Polat, 2009, p. 162), the findings related to the influence of these two concepts on each other are meaningful. When considering both the similarity between the findings of this study and the other studies revealing a negative significant relationship between empathic tendency and burnout (Ağapınar, 2011; Köksal, 2009; Yalçın, 2011), and the perceived emotional exhaustion of teachers as well as their negative cynical attitudes and feelings towards students (Anderson and Ivanicki, 1984, p.110), it is expected that teachers' potential to empathize with students will be low when burnout is high. The fact that teachers are compatible with students from different cultures, are satisfied with the current situation, have a positive attitude, are empathetic and have a lower level of burnout will affect the classroom culture positively. The positive effect in the classroom will strengthen the sense of belonging of the students and it will be reflected in a constructive way to the society in general. Therefore, it is inevitable that the teacher's intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout levels will also affect their behavior towards students from different cultures in the classroom environment. Research findings suggest that the increasingly important concepts of cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity will play a significant role and be integrated into the field of education.

The main purpose of the study is to examine the mediating roles of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency, and burnout in the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence. The analyses revealed that these three variables have a partial mediating effect in the aforementioned relationship. In other words, the impact of intercultural sensitivity on cultural intelligence is partially shaped by teachers' levels of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency, and burnout. The mediator variable is the variable that strengthens the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986, p.1175). The mediating role of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout can be expressed as that intercultural sensitivity strengthens the predictor of cultural intelligence. Considering the research findings indicating that teachers' multicultural education attitudes are positively and significantly related to both cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity, the mediating role of multicultural education attitudes is supported. The study also shows that both cultural intelligence and multicultural education attitudes are associated with empathic tendency, whereas no significant relationship was found between intercultural sensitivity and empathic tendency. However, empathy is one of the components of intercultural sensitivity, and in studies in which intercultural sensitivity and empathy are discussed together (Bölükbaşı, 2020; Yiğit, 2020; Abaslı, 2018; Aydın & Şahin, 2017; Egelioglu Çetışli et al., 2016; Mernardo, 2017), empathy predicts intercultural sensitivity. and it was seen that there was a positive significant relationship between the two variables. Considering that teachers' empathic tendencies have a positive and significant relationship with both cultural intelligence and multicultural education attitude, the

mediation of empathic tendency is significant. In the study, it was seen that cultural intelligence had a significant negative relationship with burnout, but no significant relationship was found between intercultural sensitivity and burnout. Considering that people with high burnout levels are affected negatively emotionally and become insensitive to the people they serve and their problems (Gürbüz & Karapınar, 2016, p.150), it is expected that there will be a negative relationship between burnout and intercultural sensitivity. Considering that teachers' burnout has a negative and significant relationship with cultural intelligence and it is thought that it will have a negative effect on intercultural sensitivity, the mediation of burnout is significant.

In the study, revealing the relationships between intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout, testing mediator variables reveal the strengths of this study. On the other hand, the fact that no other study modeling the role of multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout variables in the relationship between cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity has been found in the literature, the results obtained from this study regarding the partial mediation role for each of the three different models established by testing are expected to provide significant contributions to the literature. The research has strengths as well as limitations. The research data is limited to the teachers working at different levels in the central districts of Mersin province in the 2018-2019 academic year and their responses to the data collection tools. For this reason, the research can be repeated with teachers working in different provinces and districts, working with different professional groups and comparing the effectiveness of the models.

### Recommendations

Some suggestions have been made in terms of being a source for new research on research and application areas. Studies can be conducted on individuals in the field of education such as teachers, students and administrators, in which the variable of cultural intelligence is examined in the light of different psychological and socio-demographic variables. When the literature is examined, it has been seen that researches in the field of education regarding the intercultural sensitivity variable have increased. Further researches examining the intercultural sensitivity variable can be conducted on teachers, students and administrators with different study groups. Different research models can also be developed focusing on intercultural development processes, and educational or psycho-educational programs can be designed and implemented to improve intercultural sensitivity.

In addition, considering that multicultural education attitude, empathic tendency and burnout play a partial mediating role in the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence, these variables can be examined on different and larger sample groups. Nevertheless, creating new research designs that include variables such as teachers' multicultural education competencies, multicultural personality traits, ethnocentrism besides multicultural education attitude; variables such as empathic skill and cultural empathy besides empathic tendency and variables such as job satisfaction, job integration, subjective and psychological well-being besides burnout can be considered.

Furthermore, in light of the findings, several implications for educational practitioners and policymakers can be suggested. Educational institutions can benefit from designing professional development programs and in-service training modules that aim to enhance teachers' cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity. These programs may include culturally responsive teaching strategies, empathy-building activities, and stress-reduction techniques tailored to prevent teacher burnout. School administrators are encouraged to create inclusive school climates that support intercultural dialogue and value diversity.

In the context of Türkiye, where classrooms are increasingly diverse due to internal migration and the growing presence of refugee and immigrant students, it becomes even more critical to foster cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity among educators. The Ministry of National Education can develop and integrate compulsory modules on multicultural education and intercultural communication into both pre-service teacher training curricula and continuous professional development programs. Local education directorates can initiate regional projects and workshops that encourage teachers to share best practices in managing culturally diverse classrooms. Additionally, school counselors and psychological counselors can be involved in developing psycho-educational interventions aimed at enhancing empathy and reducing burnout among teachers working in high-stress, multicultural settings.

Finally, national educational policies should prioritize inclusive education frameworks that actively address cultural diversity and allocate resources to ensure the sustainability of such initiatives. Collaboration with universities and research centers can help monitor and evaluate these interventions and guide evidence-based policy reforms.

### Disclosure Statements

#### Contribution rate statement of the researchers:

Both authors contributed equally to this study.

#### Conflict of interest statement:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

### CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

**Merve Kübra Aksoy, Burhan Çapri:** Conceptualization, methodology, literature review, analysis, writing – review & editing.

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