



Content analysis of curriculum development studies for immigrants

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the current structure of curriculum development studies for immigrants and to compile and present academic studies based on determined criteria. In this survey-model-based study, the content analysis method, which is listed among the qualitative research methods, was used for the classification of academic studies. The population of the study consists of academic studies searched with the keyword "Curriculum Development for Immigrants" in Web of Science, Scopus, and TR index databases. The research was limited to the studies conducted between 2000 and 2022. Analysis results revealed that the curriculum studies for immigrants emerged in 2001 with most studies conducted in 2016 on a yearly basis and the USA ranked first in terms of the number of academic studies on this subject. As observed from the curriculum research on immigrants, studies were mainly conducted in form of articles, the most preferred methods and data collection tools were qualitative methods and interviews, respectively; the sample group including teachers, students and parents were mainly preferred, and high schools were mainly preferred for the school type. Although a great number of countries host immigrants, the number of curriculum studies curricula for immigrants is observed to be limited. Thus, this study denotes a need for curriculum development studies for immigrants.

Keywords: Content analysis, curriculum development, immigrants, academic studies

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1. Introduction

International travel has increased rapidly due to globalization, advances in technology, and improved transportation opportunities. People find the opportunity to get to know the living standards of other countries through social media and television. Every single individual pursues better living standards and more comfortable living conditions. Thus, they prefer to immigrate to places to achieve such goals. While immigration is sometimes voluntary, it can also be forced due to reasons such as natural disasters and political pressures (Deniz, 2009). Among the reasons for forced immigration are wars, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, job opportunities, high wages for the same job in another

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country, malnutrition, health problems, educational needs, marriage with foreign nationals, etc. According to an international migration report, the number of people that immigrated was 173 million in 2000, 222 million in 2010, and 281 million people in 2022 (UNIMR, 2022). The migration report indicates a rapid increase in the number of immigrants. Countries around the world may face economic crises at any time, and families who are victims of wars that have erupted in recent years aim to increase their chances of survival by immigrating to almost every country in the world.

Immigration is also defined as one's confrontation with various adaptation problems due to the changes between new and previous residence (Kılıçkaya, 1988). Immigration and settlement are long-term phenomena that completely encompass the life of the immigrant and influence the next generations (Castles and Miller, 2008). A person who takes refuge in another country due to an unfavourable situation in his/her own country is called an asylum seeker, in other words, a refugee. As the number of refugees living in countries increases, the cost of nutrition, shelter, education, and health services also increases for the host country. In addition to the increasing costs, the adaptation of refugees to their new country of residence is often a major problem. The integration of refugees and their children into society is now among the most important agenda items for all countries of the world (Danış and Dikmen, 2022). Education and employment of immigrants in the production or service sector are crucial to ensure the acceleration of their integration into society. Therefore, the quality of education provided to immigrants is also essential. The preparation of the curricula in schools based on the needs of immigrants is a factor that helps accelerate their social, cognitive, and emotional development, as well as facilitates their adaptation to society. Developing national-scale curricula is essential to better prepare schools and teachers to cater to refugee students. Bobbitt (1924) defined the curriculum as planned and unplanned practices necessary for the development and perfection of individuals or to determine individual abilities. The immigration system and the situations and problems of immigrants, which concern all nations in the world, have been the subject of many scientific studies. These studies (Ünsal, 2019; Tamer, 2020; Dost, 2021) generally focus on the types, causes, and consequences of immigration, as well as the social, political, and economic problems experienced by immigrants. Regardless of the reason for immigration, people who are forced to immigrate or voluntary immigrants should be provided with opportunities for education, demonstrating their skills, and most importantly establishing a new life in their new country. Education allows immigrants to reduce the impact of exclusion that may occur on them through inclusion in the social and cultural system of the host country and to have a more sustainable adaptation process. Curricula based on the educational philosophy of the countries should not only be applied equally to the whole population but also should include forced/voluntary immigrants along with the opportunity for self-actualization, which is likely to make a huge and positive contribution. Immigrants are likely to encounter a great number of negative educational

situations. The educational problems or barriers that immigrants experience can be listed as follows: Access to education, teachers, participation in education, language, curriculum, teaching materials, physical infrastructure, and financing education (Seta and Theirwold, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2015; Gencer, 2017). Since the beginning of the 2000s, education policies specific to immigrants have been discussed and concrete steps have been taken in the world (Coşkun and Emin 2018). Many different aspects of curriculum development for immigrants are discussed in the literature data (Antony, 2020; Ntuli et al. 2014; Souza et al. 2009; Usarrelde and Jesús, et al. 2016; Crossman and Pinchbeck, 2012).

What kind of curriculum should be structured for immigrants? Understanding the relevant question and other related ones as well as permanent solutions for related problems requires that the curriculum be handled together with psychology, pedagogy, and language learning. In this context, the main purpose of this research is to contribute to the conceptual understanding of curriculum development for immigrants. Drawing attention to the fact that there are few curriculum studies on immigrants in the world and in Turkey is among the primary reasons for this study. It is also expected to be a source for the educational sciences literature and guide research on the subject. In parallel with these purposes, curriculum development studies for immigrants between 2000 and 2020 were investigated in the literature. The data will be evaluated based on the focal points and history of curriculum developments along with examples and recommendations.

In line with the purposes of the research, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by country?
2. What is the distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by years?
3. What is the distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by types of studies?
4. What is the distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by methods?
5. What is the distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by data collection tools?
6. What is the distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by the sample group?
7. What is the distribution of the curriculum development studies for immigrants by school type?
8. What is the distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by subject areas?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model and the Scope of the Study

The population of this descriptive study based on the survey model is comprised of curriculum studies on immigrants between 2000 and 2022. The content analysis method was used in this study. Content analysis is defined as the process of collecting, summarizing, analyzing, and reporting written texts (Cohen, 2007). Document/text analysis refers to the detailed review of written documents containing information related to the facts or events examined in the research and the creation of new integrity from this information (Creswell, 2002). Document analysis, which includes the literature review about research, provides the systematization of the observation and interview records of the researcher and other documents. This analysis method not only saves time and other resources for the researcher but also facilitates the order of importance of the examined facts and events, the classification of data sources, and the creation of new data sets (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Crabtree and Miller, 1999; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The data obtained in the data collection stage should be verified from different sources in the literature. If an original and new problem that is not included in the literature is studied, it may be necessary to get support from different studies that could be the source of the problem. The use of various data collection methods together in the data collection process is important for increasing the validity and reliability of the findings, as well as making the best use of the process. In addition, the systematic data obtained provide a significant convenience to the researcher during the analysis phase and save time (Malterud, 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2016).

2.2. Data collection and analysis

In the present study, the researchers attempted to reach examples that would allow the best explanation of curriculum development for immigrants and make the best contribution to the solution of research problems. According to the findings of the large literature review, since curriculum development studies for immigrants were extremely limited, more details were accessed on the sample group to improve data quality. In curriculum development for immigrants, whose literature is very limited, researchers would rather elaborate on the data rather than diversify data. In this case, data diversity was provided by adding new questions to the research questions, and different meanings were produced from the collected data by delving into the depth of the existing studies in the literature (Silverman, 2016). Elaboration of the limited resources ensured that the sample was well-known and the theoretical framework of the research was better understood. For this reason, the present study with limited data represented the population (curriculum studies on immigrants between 2000 and 2022) as much as possible without considering the generalization concerns. For the study, Web of Science, Scopus, and TR index databases were examined for the analysis of literature data. Terms including curriculum development, school-based curriculum development, and

immigrants were browsed in the Web of Science and Scopus search tool. As a result of the determined classifications, the obtained data were converted into frequency and percentage tables and interpreted.

3. Results

In this part of the study, curriculum development studies for immigrants were categorized. Studies conducted for this purpose were categorized and analyzed according to the country of publication, publication year, type of research, research topic, research method, data collection tools, sample group, and school types. Then, the research findings were converted into tables and interpreted.

3.1. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Countries

Table 1: Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by countries

Country	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
The U.S.	8	33,33
England	4	16,66
Canada	3	12,50
Iceland	2	8,33
Spain	2	8,33
Germany	2	8,33
Netherlands	1	4,16
Malta	1	4,16
Turkey	1	4,16
Total	24	100

Table 1 shows 9 countries where publications were made. And the country with the highest number of publications on curriculum development studies for immigrants is the United States of America (f=8), followed by England (f=4), Canada (f=3), Iceland (f=2), Spain (f=2), Germany (f=2), Netherlands (f=1), Malta (f=1), and Turkey (f=1).

3.2. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Years

Table 2: Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by years

Years	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
2001	1	4,16
2008	1	4,16
2009	1	4,16
2010	1	4,16
2012	2	8,33
2013	1	4,16
2014	3	12,50
2015	2	8,33
2016	4	16,66
2017	3	12,50
2018	2	8,33
2020	2	8,33

2021	1	4,16
Total	24	100

Table 2 reveals that research on curriculum development for immigrants started in 2001 and publications were mainly made in 2016 (f=4). In addition, no publications were made between 2001 and 2008 and in 2011, 2019, and 2022.

3.3. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Types of Research

Table 3. Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by types of research

Type of Research	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Research Article	19	79,16
Review Article	1	4,16
Project	1	4,16
Proceedings	1	4,16
Book Chapter	2	8,33
Total	24	100

Table 3 reveals that as part of research on curriculum development studies on immigrants, the highest number of publications are in form of articles (19), followed by review articles (1), projects (1), proceedings (1), and book chapters (2), respectively.

3.4. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Methods

Table 4: Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by methods

Method	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Qualitative	14	58,33
Quantitative	8	33,33
Mixed	2	8,33
Total	24	100

Table 4 reveals that the methods mainly preferred in curriculum development studies for immigrants were qualitative methods (14), followed by quantitative methods (8), and mixed methods (2).

3.5. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Data Collection Tools

Table 5. Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by data collection tools

Data Collection Tools	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Interview	13	54,16
Document Analysis	5	20,83
Survey	3	12,50
Interview + Survey	3	12,50

Total	24	100
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Table 5 reveals that the most frequently used data collection tools in curriculum development studies for immigrants are mostly interviews (13), followed by document analyses (5), surveys (3), and interviews plus surveys (3).

3.6. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Sample Group

Table 6. Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by sample group

Sample Group	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
More than one (Teachers+Students+Parents)	10	41,66
Students	8	33,33
Teachers	3	12,50
Parents	2	8,33
Academics	1	4,16
Total	24	100

Table 6 reveals that sample groups preferred in curriculum development studies for immigrants are mostly comprised of teachers + students + parents (10), followed by students (8), teachers (3), parents (2), and academics (1), respectively.

3.7. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Type of School

Table 7. Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by type of school

Type of School	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
High School	9	37,50
Primary School	6	24
University	5	20,83
Preschool	4	16,66
Total	24	100

Table 7 reveals that the types of schools preferred for curriculum development studies for immigrants are mostly high schools (9), followed by primary schools (6), universities (5), and preschools (4), respectively.

3.8. Distribution of Curriculum Development Studies for Immigrants by Subject Areas

Table 8. Distribution of curriculum development studies for immigrants by subject areas

Subjects	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Education	9	37,50
Cultural Sharing	8	33,33
Language Learning	3	12,50
Science Teaching	3	12,50
Use of Technology	1	4,16

Total	24	100
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Table 8 reveals that subject areas mostly preferred for curriculum development studies for immigrants are education (9), followed by cultural sharing (8), language learning (3), science teaching (3), and use of technology, respectively.

4. Discussion

The study aimed to describe curriculum approaches in the literature to articulate and demonstrate curriculum development for immigrant students. For this purpose, diversity was viewed and used as a learning opportunity considering the years between 2000 and 2020. All over the world, special education policies for immigrants were not available and discussed until the early 2000s (Gershberg et al. 2004). The migration wave, which particularly encompasses immigrants of war and school-age children and youth, led to the search for an education policy for immigrants. The most correct link to be established between immigrants and education is the fact that no one can be deprived of the right to education and everyone has the right to receive education (UDHR, 1948). The literature review reveals that there are very few studies on the academic achievement of immigrant children (Kucera 2008; Levels and Dronkers 2008; Rothon et al. 2009; Seah 2014: as cited in Demir and Çelen, 2020). Due to its geographical location and development compared to neighbouring countries, Turkey is a transit country and a destination country for international migration and illegal migration (Deniz, 2014). The fact that only one study has been carried out in Turkey, which is on one of the major migration routes and receives thousands of immigrants every year, is very important in terms of revealing a significant deficiency when considering the number of field experts in educational sciences in Turkey. According to the data of the immigration authority, 1 million 549 thousand 680 Syrian immigrants were provided with personal development and integrated training in Turkey within the scope of Social Cohesion and Life Education (SUYE) while 1 million 605 thousand 190 immigrants were provided with such training within the scope of the harmonization and communication activities carried out with opinion leaders, mukhtars, students, academics, and non-governmental organizations. In addition, 1 million 948 thousand 224 immigrants were provided with training within the scope of educational activities such as general, vocational, Turkish, literacy, and Quran courses (GİB, 2022). It is appropriate and expected that training is provided to such large masses within the scope of a determined immigrant curriculum.

Considering the population of the study (2000-2022), it is difficult to mention that 24 studies on immigrant education in many countries of the world over 22 years are

sufficient in terms of creating or contributing to the literature in the field of educational sciences. In terms of curriculum developments evaluated within the scope of this study study for immigrants was carried out in the Netherlands in 2001 with 122 Turkish and 83 Moroccan immigrant families. A new curriculum that deals with cognitive development such as basic concepts, semantic-taxonomic categories, and problem-solving skills was designed. The results were positive for Turkish immigrant families and negative for Moroccan immigrant families (Van Tuijl, 2001).

In the study, the fact that mostly qualitative studies are preferred as research methods are found as a positive situation as such methods offer an in-depth examination. For, quantitative methods and tools fail to adequately explain educational facts and events and guide (Yıldırım, 1999). The use of mixed methods is also insufficient in number when compared with the literature (Akpınar et al. 2018). The rate of use of the mixed model has been increasing in recent years due to its practicability to examine the research problem in depth (Çeliköz and Erişen, 2017).

Among the subjects of education studies for immigrants are language problems, integration problems, lack of appropriate learning environment, guidance and counselling education, lack of family support, economic problems, exclusion by peers, resource/financial problems, attendance of non-experts in classes, cultural difficulties, lack of motivation, and preschool studies (Bourgonje, 2010; Cerna, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Matthews, 2008; Kovinthan, 2016; Obiakor, 2007; Chuang 2011; Nusche, 2009; Parke, et al. 2005). With the increase in education and immigration, it is inevitable to bring up curriculum development studies for immigrants. The data in the literature reveal that different aspects of curriculum development for immigrants are discussed (Newman, 2020; Ntuli et al. 2014; Souza et al. 2009; Usarrelde et al. 2016; Crossman, and Pinchbeck, 2012).

This study is highly important as it expands and accelerates curriculum development studies and draws attention to the gaps in the literature. According to the contemporary curriculum development approach, the curriculum should involve individuals' unique identities around the common values adopted by stakeholders apart from accepting and recognizing abilities that meet life-long expectations (Demeuse and Strauven 2016).

Demeuse and Strauven (2016) report that cultural values are of great importance when forming the basis of curriculum development. It is of great importance for children from other countries to learn the spoken language and culture of the target country as soon as possible to overcome the problems. Utaş (2019) studied forty Syrian secondary school students living in Turkey, concluding that the students are satisfied with the education they receive and that the support should continue for progression. At this stage, the inclusion of migrant/refugee/asylum-seeking children in the education system and guidance services plays a decisive role (Yüksek Telsaç and Telsaç, 2022).

The curriculum naturally has a continuous and dynamic structure. Thus, it must be constantly updated and changed (Dicle Erdamar, 2019). In order for curriculum development in education to fulfill the functions and duties specified in the relevant literature, its periodic review, arrangement, and updating should be a guide for many scientists working in this field. Today, there is a plethora of independent studies on almost every subject in the field of curriculum development. Since the present study is

unique or what it offers in the literature, it is expected to provide convenience and contributions for researchers working in this field from now on. It is believed that survey studies also contribute to the field as a guide (Tsai and Wen, 2005; Henson 2001). Besides, it is also essential to classify such studies based on trends as well as to evaluate their results. As far as we know, this research is the first one in that it is conducted via content analysis on curriculum development for immigrants.

5. Conclusions

Considering the findings of the studies regarding the distribution of the studies by countries and according to the official figures of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), curriculum studies are carried out in only nine countries with the US ranked first with more research, and Germany is one of the countries that receive the most immigrants in Europe while Turkey hosts 3,7 million refugees. Despite hosting such a high number of immigrants, it is surprising to see Turkey publishing a small number of articles about curriculum development for immigrants. The studies conducted between 2001 and 2021 reveal that there has not been an excessive increase in the course of time and an even distribution by year. One may notice that research on curriculum development started in 2001 and publications were mainly made in 2016 and that no publications were made between 2001 and 2008 and in 2011, 2019, and 2022.

Considering the curriculum development studies in terms of the type of research, it is observed that research articles are ranked first, which is a finding that overlaps with the literature. Considering the distribution of the studies by data collection tools, interviews and document analysis were mainly preferred and qualitative research is mostly used. The rate of responding to survey questions becomes high in interviews as the respondent rejects filling out the survey in written forms (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). It can be implied that researchers aim to unearth the existing problems and offer solutions. The most preferred sample groups are those including the group of teachers, students and parents. Bearing in mind that the implementation process of the curriculum is carried out by the teachers and students are the main actors, it is very important to take their opinions while developing the curriculum and to construct it accordingly. The findings also revealed that most of the curriculum studies are carried out in high schools and primary schools, and studies are mainly conducted in the fields of basic education, followed by the fields of cultural sharing and language learning.

The literature review suggests that although immigration is an important problem in the world, limited research has been done on how they should or will receive an education. In the wake of an increase in the number of immigrants all over the world (UNIMR, 2022) every year, an increase is also expected in the number of publications. It has been understood that supervision, support, and training should be provided more. These results show that curriculum development studies for immigrants should be increased. In addition, this research aims to provide researchers with a new perspective and to provide easy access to background information on the curriculum.

Limitations

This study is limited to curriculum development studies for immigrants under the Web of Science, Scopus, and TR index databases.

Recommendations

Immigrants' education rights should be legally secured, and curricula should be created to provide training in their mother tongue apart from ensuring that they quickly learn the language of the country they live in. It is possible to carry out studies including school counselors and school administrators, who work in schools hosting immigrants.

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