

Article history:

Received 02 October 2023

Revised 15 November 2023

Accepted 02 December 2023

Published online 08 July 2024

Analysis of Drivers for Enhancing Cultural Adaptation in Addressing Migrant Students through Education

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Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Arab Shiraz, Gh., Soleimani, N., Shafizadeh, H. (2024). Analysis of Drivers for Enhancing Cultural Adaptation in Addressing Migrant Students through Education. *Iranian Journal of Educational Sociology*, 7(3), 88-96.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijes.7.3.11>



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: One of the critical issues in addressing migrant students is the improvement of cultural adaptation. Therefore, the objective of this study was to analyze the drivers for enhancing cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education.

Methodology: This study was applied in terms of its objective and utilized a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) in terms of execution. The study population in both sections consisted of managers and teachers familiar with the research field, from which 18 individuals were selected as samples based on the principle of theoretical saturation using purposive sampling. The research instruments included literature review, semi-structured interviews, and a researcher-made questionnaire. Initially, experts were interviewed, and then 15 of those who expressed willingness evaluated the importance of the extracted drivers. In this study, the coding method was used to identify the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education, the importance and uncertainty method to identify key drivers, and the structural analysis method using MICMAC software to understand the influence of the drivers.

Findings: The findings indicated that the most important drivers for enhancing cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education were, in order, training managers on how to interact with migrant students, short-term training for teachers, training all students on how to interact with migrant students, training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures, training teachers by school managers, short-term training for school managers, training managers on how to deal with errant teachers, training migrant students on how to handle other students' behaviors, in-service training for teachers, training teachers through brochures, and training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills. Additionally, the drivers' impact levels were ranked, with the training of parents on communication principles with different cultures, training managers on interacting with migrant students, training managers on dealing with errant teachers, training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills, training all students on interacting with migrant students, short-term training for teachers, in-service training for teachers, training teachers by school managers, short-term training for school managers, training teachers through brochures, and training migrant students on handling other students' behaviors being the most influential.

Conclusion: Cultural specialists and planners in the country can utilize the identified drivers from the present study, considering their importance and impact, to improve cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education.

Keywords: Cultural adaptation, migrant students, education, social and communication skills.

1. Introduction

Population growth worldwide has led to the formation of various cultures and groups with differences in behavior, beliefs, attitudes, and norms. The significance of this issue has progressed to the extent that cultural diversity is now seriously emphasized as an important matter (Thomassen & Munthe, 2020). Schools, as social environments, have not overlooked this issue. Schools, as the main pillars of education, play a significant role in improving learning at the societal level (Ghaderi Sheykhi Abadi et al., 2023; Gooran Savadkoshi et al., 2023; Nazari Ardabili et al., 2024; Safikhani, 2022; Şahin et al., 2024; Shariati et al., 2024; Sheikhabadi et al., 2024). The functions of schools are not limited to academic matters; they also hold a crucial position in advancing social and cultural goals of societies (Juang & Schachner, 2020). Enhancing the performance of schools in social and cultural domains can create significant capacities within society, leading to the growth and expansion of cultural and social dimensions of communities (Dogra et al., 2010). Focusing on the cultural functions of schools can facilitate the transfer of created capacities to other areas (Glock et al., 2019).

One of the key issues in cultural studies is cultural diversity. Due to ethnic and cultural differences, Iranian society requires extensive educational measures to foster good and healthy cultural communications and to provide a form of social interaction accompanied by peace and social comfort. Lack of tolerance and cultural acceptance towards different ethnicities can pave the way for conflicts, division, and discrimination, negatively affecting both the majority society and ethnic and religious minorities (Alaei et al., 2024). The importance of cultural diversity has made it a significant capacity for the growth and development of societies. Cultural diversity, as a key issue for unity, plays an important role in the cooperation of all groups in various fields. Effective management of cultural diversity and cultural adaptation can provide a suitable platform for utilizing individual and group capacities (Alas & Mousa, 2016). Managed cultural diversity can be identified as a potential asset, whereas unmanaged diversity can be considered a serious harm (Maussen & Bader, 2015). This highlights the necessity of research in cultural diversity to establish a standardized framework for managing this issue. Cultural diversity has always existed in educational matters. The presence of groups and individuals with different races and characteristics has led schools, as important educational centers, to always embrace various cultures (Banks, 2015).

Cultural diversity is an inherent issue in education and is recognized as a significant matter (Thomassen & Munthe, 2020).

Cultural diversity and adaptation in educational contexts can create favorable capacities for group convergence in schools (Glock et al., 2019). Cultural diversity in schools is an ongoing issue, and the art of schools lies in managing this diversity to effectively utilize it. Attention to cultural diversity in schools can foster unity and group synergy (Konan et al., 2010). The challenges arising from cultural adaptation in some schools have led to cultural and social crises, with conflict and discord being primary indicators of poor cultural adaptation management (De Clercq et al., 2021). Neglecting cultural adaptation in educational environments has led to interpersonal and group tensions, impacting students' academic performance (Gay, 2013). Problems related to cultural adaptation result in decreased academic performance (Omeri et al., 2003). Ignoring cultural adaptation can lead to physical, verbal, and psychological conflicts among students, removing educational environments from their standards (Juang & Schachner, 2020). Poor management of cultural adaptation in educational systems can lead to tensions and conflicts that cause crises in academic domains (Thomassen & Munthe, 2020). The emergence of multicultural and multi-ethnic societies at the national level brings challenges related to educating citizens for active and effective living in culturally diverse environments. Experts believe that the best opportunity to foster a multicultural and multi-ethnic perspective and acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity, and to strive for cultural adaptation, lies in pre-school years, as children's attitudes towards their own race and other racial groups begin in preschool, with racial and ethnic preferences appearing at ages 3 or 4 (Hanachi et al., 2023; Ofem, 2023; Sun et al., 2024).

Reviewing research on cultural diversity shows that it has always been a focus in educational settings, attracting many researchers (Araghiyeh & Fathi Vajargah, 2012; Schwarzenhal et al., 2020); However, a lack of studies on cultural diversity in some environments, including schools, has been noted by researchers (Sadeghi, 2010; Schachner, 2019; Schwarzenhal et al., 2020). Furthermore, migrants face challenges such as humiliation, insults, and threats of expulsion, making them more prone to misconduct (Hanachi et al., 2023). The lack of comprehensive studies on cultural diversity in educational environments has resulted in the absence of executive strategies in this regard, creating a noticeable research gap in developing cultural diversity

management and improving cultural adaptation in schools, especially in Iran and the city of Qarchak. The evident harm underscores the necessity of addressing cultural diversity in schools. Additionally, building cultural capacities in schools has made them important cultural centers. Neglecting cultural issues in schools can lead to cultural crises, affecting not only the school environment but also the broader society. Addressing cultural diversity in schools as a significant issue can provide evidence for enhancing school performance in cultural and social domains. Given the focus of the present study on Qarchak, it is important to note that due to the city's migrant population and presence of various groups, cultural diversity has become a critical issue. Neglecting cultural diversity has caused serious harm to some groups in Qarchak schools. Observations indicate that the presence of diverse cultural groups from different ethnicities has created a culturally diverse community in Qarchak schools, leading to problems with cultural adaptation. Humiliation of certain cultures and domination of some individuals over others have created an inappropriate environment in Qarchak schools. Initial evidence shows frequent conflicts due to neglecting cultural adaptation, negatively impacting student performance. Additionally, the lack of attention to all cultures among teachers and administrators has resulted in misconduct towards students with specific cultural backgrounds. Neglecting cultural adaptation in Qarchak schools can certainly cause some students to distance themselves from appropriate conditions, hindering their active participation in educational environments. This study aims to analyze the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education. Therefore, the research question is: What are the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education, and what is their importance and impact?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study was applied in terms of its objective and utilized a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) in terms of execution. The study population in both sections consisted of managers and teachers familiar with the research field, from which 18 individuals were selected as samples based on the principle of theoretical saturation using purposive sampling. According to the principle of theoretical saturation, sampling continues until new samples do not add any new findings to the previous ones, and when new samples reiterate the same findings as

previous ones, the research is considered saturated. Moreover, in purposive sampling, samples are selected based on specific criteria, which in this study included a minimum education level of a master's degree and at least 10 years of work experience.

2.2. Data Collection

The research instruments included literature review, semi-structured interviews, and a researcher-made questionnaire. Initially, experts were interviewed, and then 15 of those who expressed willingness evaluated the importance of the extracted drivers. In other words, data collection methods in this study included literature review and environmental scanning. The purpose of the literature review and environmental scanning was to identify the system under study, i.e., improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education and its influencing factors. This review was conducted by referring to books, articles, reports, interviews, and news available in general and specialized global databases. After searching for main keywords and reviewing and refining a collection of relevant sources and documents, a significant number of trends, actions, policies, and programs affecting the current state and potential futures of cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education were identified. Subsequently, a group of experts and scholars was selected for interviews and Delphi survey using purposive sampling. As a result, the research sample was qualitatively and selectively composed of 18 individuals. Then, key drivers were identified based on their importance and uncertainty using a 10-point Likert scale (1 meaning very low and 10 meaning very high), and this phase was conducted by 15 participants from the previous group who expressed willingness. After feedback on the first round results, the same 15 participants were asked to explain the structural relationships or the impact levels among the variables. In this study, validity was confirmed through credibility by verifying the research process with seven experts, transferability by opinions of three non-participating specialists, and confirmability by recording and documenting the interviews. Additionally, reliability was calculated through inter-coder agreement using analysis of three interviews by the researcher and a research colleague, resulting in 87.8%, which was considered acceptable as it was above 60%.

2.3. Data Analysis

In this study, the coding method was used to identify the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education, the importance and uncertainty method to identify key drivers, and the structural analysis method using MICMAC software to understand the influence of the drivers.

3. Findings and Results

The sample of this study consisted of 18 participants (10 managers and 8 teachers). Most of the interviewees were male (11 individuals, equivalent to 61.11%) and held a master's degree (12 individuals, equivalent to 66.67%). The results of the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of Drivers for Improving Cultural Adaptation in Addressing Migrant Students through Education

Row	Driver
1	Training all students on how to interact with migrant students
2	Training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students
3	Training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures
4	Training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills
5	Short-term training for teachers
6	In-service training for teachers
7	Training teachers through brochures
8	Training teachers by school managers
9	Short-term training for school managers
10	Training managers on how to interact with migrant students
11	Training managers on how to deal with errant teachers

According to the findings in Table 1, the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education include training all students on how to interact with migrant students, training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students, training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures, training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills, short-term training for

teachers, in-service training for teachers, training teachers through brochures, training teachers by school managers, short-term training for school managers, training managers on how to interact with migrant students, and training managers on how to deal with errant teachers. The results of the key drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Results of Key Drivers for Improving Cultural Adaptation in Addressing Migrant Students through Education

Row	Driver	Importance (Uncertainty) 1=Very Low to 10=Very High	Total Score
1	Training all students on how to interact with migrant students	9 (6)	15
2	Training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students	8 (6)	14
3	Training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures	9 (6)	15

4	Training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills	7 (6)	13
5	Short-term training for teachers	8 (8)	16
6	In-service training for teachers	8 (6)	14
7	Training teachers through brochures	8 (6)	14
8	Training teachers by school managers	9 (6)	15
9	Short-term training for school managers	8 (7)	15
10	Training managers on how to interact with migrant students	10 (8)	18
11	Training managers on how to deal with errant teachers	9 (6)	15

According to the findings in Table 2, the most important drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education include training managers on how to interact with migrant students, short-term training for teachers, training all students on how to interact with migrant students, training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures, training teachers by school managers, short-term training for

school managers, training managers on how to deal with errant teachers, training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students, in-service training for teachers, training teachers through brochures, and training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills. The results of the impact of the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education are presented in below diagrams and Table 3.

Figure 1

Results of the Direct Impact of Drivers for Improving Cultural Adaptation in Addressing Migrant Students through Education

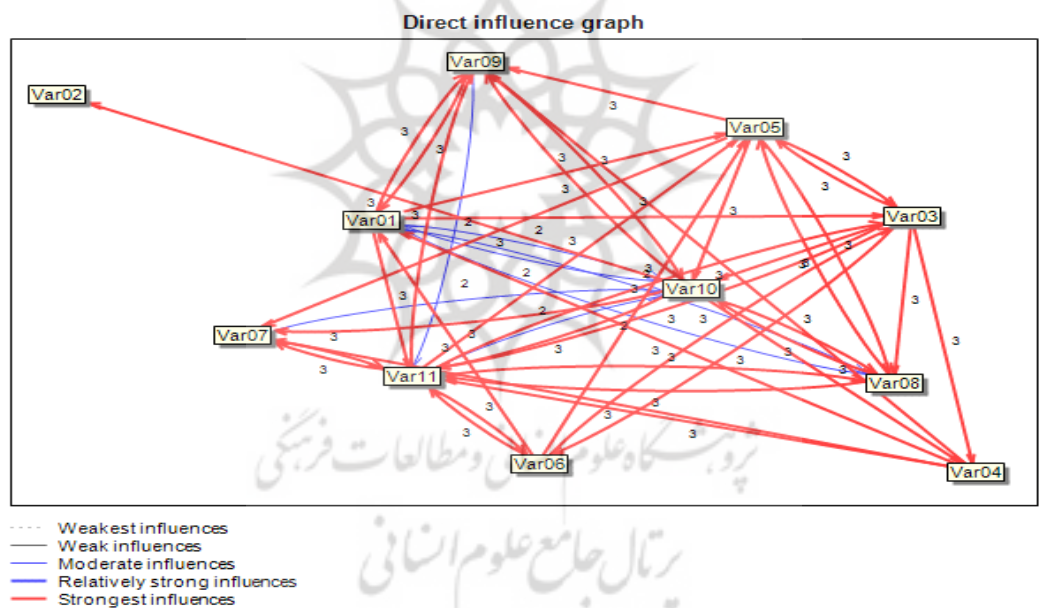


Figure 2

Results of the Indirect Impact of Drivers for Improving Cultural Adaptation in Addressing Migrant Students through Education

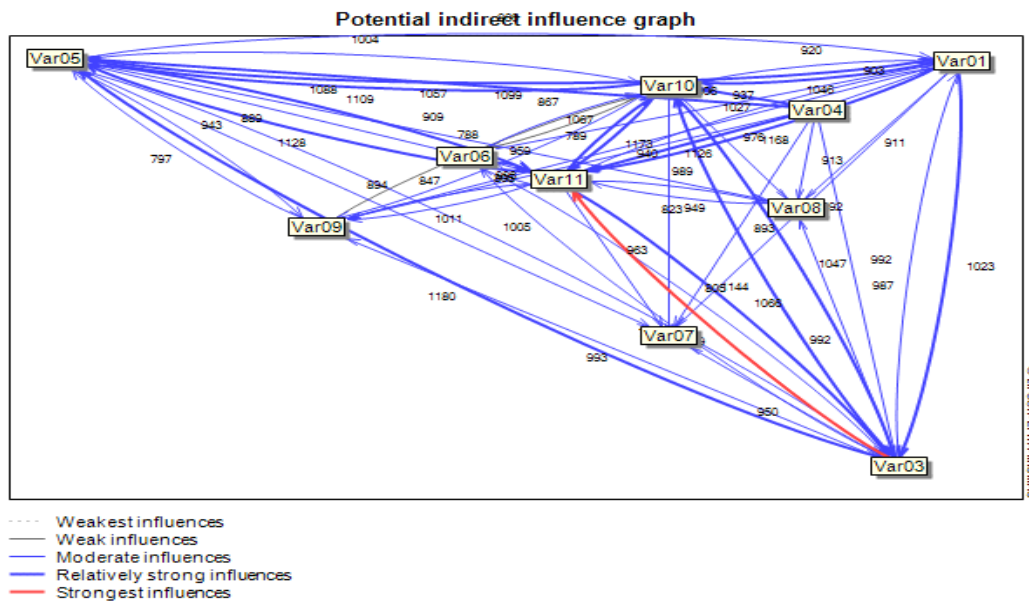


Table 3

Results of the Impact of Drivers for Improving Cultural Adaptation in Addressing Migrant Students through Education

Row	Driver	Impact Level
1	Training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures	26
2	Training managers on how to interact with migrant students	26
3	Training managers on how to deal with errant teachers	26
4	Training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills	24
5	Training all students on how to interact with migrant students	24
6	Short-term training for teachers	24
7	In-service training for teachers	17
8	Training teachers by school managers	15
9	Short-term training for school managers	14
10	Training teachers through brochures	13
11	Training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students	12

According to the findings in above diagrams and Table 3, the impact levels of the drivers, in order, are training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures, training managers on how to interact with migrant students, training managers on how to deal with errant teachers, training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills, training all students on how to interact with migrant students, short-term training for teachers, in-service training for teachers, training teachers by school

managers, short-term training for school managers, training teachers through brochures, and training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to identify and analyze the drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education. The findings indicated

that the most important drivers for improving cultural adaptation in addressing migrant students through education are training managers on how to interact with migrant students, short-term training for teachers, training all students on how to interact with migrant students, training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures, training teachers by school managers, short-term training for school managers, training managers on how to deal with errant teachers, training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students, in-service training for teachers, training teachers through brochures, and training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills. Additionally, the impact levels of the drivers, in order, were training parents on how to teach communication principles with different cultures, training managers on how to interact with migrant students, training managers on how to deal with errant teachers, training migrant parents to enhance their children's communication skills, training all students on how to interact with migrant students, short-term training for teachers, in-service training for teachers, training teachers by school managers, short-term training for school managers, training teachers through brochures, and training migrant students on how to handle the behaviors of other students.

In this regard, Sadeghi (2010) in his research aimed at examining the national curriculum document of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on a multicultural education approach, found that the document pays attention to multicultural education components. The section on "assessment methods for academic progress" appropriately addresses multicultural education components, whereas the section on "teaching-learning strategies" neglects them. Additionally, the sections on "philosophical and scientific foundations," "principles governing educational programs," and "detailed objectives of educational periods" somewhat reflect multicultural education components (Sadeghi, 2010). Rengi and Polat (2019) in their study aimed at methods of dealing with cultural diversity in schools and students' opinions, found that creating joint and participatory activities is one of the important strategies for managing and controlling cultural diversity in schools (Rengi & Polat, 2019). Dutta et al. (2021) also indicated that teachers play a crucial role in controlling cultural diversity in schools (Dutta et al., 2021). Furthermore, Schwarzenhal et al. (2020) indicated that a culturally diverse environment in various classes strengthens communication, collaboration, and multiculturalism (Schwarzenhal et al., 2020). However, despite the improvement of cultural diversity in educational

environments, cultural adaptation faces limitations and challenges. Rowan et al. (2021) in their study aimed at the challenges of preparing teachers for managing students' cultural diversity, found that training teachers for future generations and preparing them to understand students' cultural, individual, and social diversity and manage it to meet their needs is crucial. They emphasized that educational courses for understanding the existing diversity among students are essential and key. Another important issue in the field of cultural adaptation is multicultural education (Rowan et al., 2020).

The implementation of the policy of assimilation based on Gordon's (1964) classical theory of similarity has generally not been peaceful due to the resistance of minorities and the guest group to maintain their rights and culture, and it has not been conducted democratically; thus, it has resulted in ethnic cleansing or genocide. The newer theory, Giddens' (1979) theory of adaptation, refers to three models of cultural adaptation. In one model, he mentions assimilation, where migrants abandon their initial habits and customs and shape their behaviors according to the values and norms of the majority group. In the second model, he refers to integration, where migrants' traditions are absorbed into the dominant values of the existing population, creating a new cultural pattern. Some consider this the most desirable outcome of ethnic-linguistic diversity. In the third model, called cultural pluralism, he sees this approach as the most suitable path for developing a multi-ethnic society, recognizing the equal value and validity of multiple and diverse subcultures. In this model, all different cultures and identities coexist equally under the law, enjoying the equal right to use their culture in various communities (including ethnic and national culture) and promote the specific culture of each ethnicity. These theories suggest that diverse and complex models of social adaptation for migrants exist in the host society. Such diversity, complexity, and multidimensional adaptation require various analytical approaches to study and measure cultural (social) adaptation. According to many, perhaps the most important consequence of migration is its cultural impact. According to various evidence, ethnic issues are among the most complex and influential social and political issues in the contemporary world. In metropolises with diverse ethnicities, adaptation issues significantly change the individual and social behaviors of migrants, often imposing significant hardship (Hanachi et al., 2023). For example, adjusting schedules in big cities is exhausting for migrants. Daily life is divided into specific segments with designated

times for eating and recreation. People are always rushing from one place to another. Migrants, after a period of confusion that causes them to retreat inward, reach a point where they try to understand these behavioral patterns and compare them with their own, undergoing changes that affect significant aspects of their personal and cultural identity. Although migrants adapt to some standards of the host society, they still feel suspended between their deep, subconscious ties to their native culture, which they do not want to abandon, and the new attitudes they feel they need to realize their plans. However, migrant children are part of the active student population in the country's schools and face challenges in educational centers due to cultural differences, which may alter their academic and social lives and present them with problems. This study analyzed teachers' violence and found that education is an undeniable factor in improving the educational environment for migrants, especially migrant children. Therefore, teachers' training in cultural diversity and adaptation by responsible institutions, especially in areas with a higher concentration of migrants, should be emphasized to improve the educational environment for all learners.

Authors' Contributions

The first author was responsible for conducting the interview and collecting data, and the other authors were responsible for analyzing the data and writing the article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We hereby thank all participants for agreeing to record the interview and participate in the research.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethics Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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