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Research Paper

Designing a Multicultural Curriculum Model for English Language Teaching in Iranian High Schools

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Abstract

The present study aimed to create a diverse curriculum model for teaching English in high schools in Iran. Utilizing an exploratory mixed-methods design to collect the desired data, the study enlisted the participation of 38 Iranian curriculum designers, with a gender distribution of 26 males and 12 females. To evaluate the model, a questionnaire was developed, and its reliability was gauged using Cronbach's Alpha. The validity of the curriculum model was established through Exploratory Factor Analysis employing principle component analysis (PCA). In qualitative phase, the analysis of the data uncovered several key components of the multicultural curriculum, including multicultural education, cultural diversity, and equity pedagogy, social, gender, and educational equality, prejudice reduction, upholding the intrinsic dignity, equity pedagogy, empowering school culture. Furthermore, the proposed model encompassed four essential elements: objectives, content and learning activities, methods, and evaluation. The results of quantitative phase of the study indicated that the multicultural curriculum model was deemed valid by designers in the field of curriculum development. As a result, it is recommended for adoption by English language educators in Iranian high schools.

Keywords: Curriculum; Multiculturalism; Multicultural Curriculum Design; Multicultural Components

طراحی الگوی برنامه درسی چند فرهنگی برای آموزش زبان انگلیسی در دبیرستان های ایران
پژوهش حاضر با هدف ایجاد الگوی برنامه درسی متنوع برای آموزش زبان انگلیسی در دبیرستان های ایران انجام شد. این مطالعه با استفاده از یک طرح ترکیبی اکتشافی برای جمع‌آوری داده‌های مورد نظر، با مشارکت 38 طراح برنامه درسی ایرانی، با توزیع جنسیتی 26 مرد و 12 زن انجام شد. برای ارزیابی مدل، پرسشنامه‌ای تهیه شد و پایایی آن با استفاده از آلفای کرونباخ سنجیده شد. اعتبار مدل برنامه درسی از طریق تحلیل عاملی اکتشافی با استفاده از تحلیل مولفه‌های اصلی (PCA) ایجاد شد. در مرحله کیفی، تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها چندین مولفه کلیدی برنامه درسی چند فرهنگی، از جمله آموزش چند فرهنگی، تنوع فرهنگی، و تربیت برابر، اجتماعی، جنسیتی و برابری آموزشی، کاهش تعصب، حفظ کرامت ذاتی، آموزش برابری، آموزش توانمندسازی مدرسه را آشکار کرد. فرهنگ علاوه بر این، مدل پیشنهادی شامل چهار عنصر اساسی است: اهداف، محتوا و فعالیت‌های یادگیری، روش‌ها و ارزشیابی. نتایج مرحله کمی پژوهش نشان داد که مدل برنامه درسی چند فرهنگی از نظر طراحان در زمینه تدوین برنامه درسی معتبر است. در نتیجه، برای پذیرش توسط مربیان زبان انگلیسی در دبیرستان های ایران توصیه می‌شود.

کلیدواژه: چند فرهنگی؛ طراحی برنامه درسی چند فرهنگی؛ برنامه تحصیلی؛ مولفه های چند فرهنگی

Introduction

Contemporary scholars in the field of education are presently grappling with the challenges presented by cultural shifts on a global and local scale, as well as the increasing prevalence of multicultural phenomena. These advancements have sparked intense political and social debates concerning the fundamental principles, extent, and components of multiculturalism as a societal framework. It is evident that students are consistently immersed in the diverse environment that surrounds them; however, they often lack the necessary knowledge, perspective, and essential skills to effectively navigate this diversity. As a result, students have legitimate expectations for educational institutions to develop and implement initiatives that aim to enhance their ability to comprehend and engage with various cultures (Davis, 2015; Gagnon & Iacovino, 2016; Portera, 2004).

Iranian society, characterized by its multicultural nature, demonstrates strained relationships among various ethnic groups in the country. For example, the Azari, Baluchi, Mazani, Gilaki, and Arabs face challenges in effective communication due to limited familiarity with each other's ethnic backgrounds and traditions. Furthermore, studies have shown that educational matters are often neglected in Islamic Iran. This strategy is designed to enhance individuals' cognitive abilities to excel in a diverse society by encouraging mutual understanding, acceptance of cultural variations, acknowledgment of diversity, promotion of positive attitudes towards ethnic-cultural characteristics, and the prevention of discrimination and bias. Moreover, initiatives are being implemented to strengthen the educational environment and systems to ensure equal access to education for all (Fazeli, 2016; Mohammadzadeh, 2009; Zokaei, 2022).

Foreign language acquisition, such as English language learning and teaching, is a complex process influenced by a variety of factors and barriers. In recent times, the field has faced certain difficulties, some of which are partially due to the impact of globalization. Currently, globalization has made the teaching of English an essential task. In this regard, individuals need to adjust to changes in social and cultural dynamics. To improve individuals' communication abilities in diverse social and cultural environments, support students' integration into a global society, and empower students to develop effective responses to global challenges, it is crucial to create and enforce multicultural educational frameworks.

Societies across the globe have experienced substantial changes in different dimensions, and Iran is no exception to this trend. A crucial aspect of these societal transformations is the rise of various symbolic systems, underscoring the importance of integrating elements of multicultural education in heterogeneous communities. According to Stika (2012), there has been a transition towards embracing multicultural education in societies, recognizing the presence of diverse value systems that could potentially clash or vie for dominance. Stika (2012) contends that multiculturalism strives to cultivate fresh perspectives and insights, viewing diversity as a cornerstone for progress.

Furthermore, a new generation of individuals has been found with new and various requests that education systems should answer them. Throughout the world including Iran, learners' conditions have changed deeply during the last 15 years. The new conditions are provided by more variety and complexity in individuals' needs, requests, wishes, purposes, ideals, models, and so on (Salimi & Rad, 2024).

According to GiselBrecht (2009), there has been a noticeable change in people's attitudes towards cultural acceptance and openness in response to the changing needs of the new generation. This shift has resulted in the emergence of multicultural phenomena in the field of education. By embracing multicultural perspectives, a more comprehensive global approach to language learning and teaching can be adopted. GiselBrecht argues that multicultural education embodies democratic principles that cater to the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of

individuals, promoting tolerance and openness towards the cultural and social norms of other societies. Multiculturalism places emphasis on social exchange and equity, with the goal of nurturing individuals who possess global awareness, political astuteness, critical engagement, advocacy for cultural dialogue, and a well-informed approach to learning.

It is essential for students in academic settings to have an understanding of different cultures through intercultural education, aligning with the principles of multicultural education. This exposure helps students acquire the skills and knowledge needed to effectively engage in interpersonal relationships with individuals from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Embracing diversity through multicultural education encourages students to avoid isolating themselves from peers with varying cultural backgrounds, ultimately creating a more inclusive and harmonious learning environment (Blue et al., 2018; Chung, 2018).

Cherng and Davis (2017) posited that the concept of multiculturalism originated in the early 1940s as a response to the nationalist movement, which failed to acknowledge the cultural and ethnic differences present in society. In contrast, multicultural education emphasizes the importance of exposing students to various cultural messages, ideals, attitudes, and values, as it can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity. This, in turn, can lead to improved interpersonal relationships among students. Goo (2018) supports this perspective, highlighting that multicultural education plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' effectiveness and providing students with greater opportunities for learning. Additionally, Hajisoteriou and Angelides (2016) advocate for educators and other stakeholders to adopt an inclusive approach towards students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, further emphasizing the benefits of multicultural education.

The curriculum holds a significant role in educational systems and is widely acknowledged as a fundamental element in shaping the learning process. In the context of the Iranian education system, the continuous revision of the curriculum is of utmost importance for effective educational planning. Furthermore, the process of curriculum renewal provides an opportunity for educators and curriculum developers to incorporate new perspectives and evolving demands into academic programs, ensuring their relevance and effectiveness in meeting the needs of learners (Riazi & Razmjou, 2004; Zohrabi, 2019). Scholars in the field have put forward various definitions for the curriculum (Johnson, 2007; Kelly, 2009; Wiles, 2008; Adams & Adams, 2003). For example, Eisner (2002) characterizes curriculum as a compilation of educational events designed for one or more students.

The absence of consensus regarding the notion of curriculum presents a significant obstacle, as it is interpreted differently by various scholars. This lack of agreement has had a negative impact (Gouédard et al., 2020). Consequently, the concept lacks theoretical depth and suffers from a scarcity of research. In the limited research conducted in Iran, the exploration of a multicultural curriculum remains largely uncharted territory for ELT researchers.

The objective of the current research was to establish a multicultural curriculum model for the instruction of English language in high schools in Iran. Moreover, an assessment was carried out to ascertain the utility, credibility, and validity of the model. To this purpose, the following research questions were asked:

RQ1. What are the components included in a multicultural curriculum?

RQ2. What potential benefits could a multicultural curriculum model offer for English language teaching in Iranian high schools?

RQ3. Is the designed multicultural curriculum model equipped with the necessary psychometric characteristics?

Literature Review

The origins of multicultural education can be traced back to the landmark case of *Brown V. Topeka Board of Education* in 1954, where the court ruled that segregated schools were inherently unequal. This decision marked a significant shift in educational policies, as it declared laws enforcing separate schools for white and black students as unconstitutional (Tiedt, 1990). Following this pivotal moment, the US Commission on Civil Rights was established in 1957 to address discrimination in various sectors, including employment and housing. Efforts made by the commission led to the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the implementation of the Civil Rights Act, which aimed to combat discrimination (Tiedt, 1990).

In 1968, the culmination of these efforts resulted in the Bilingual Education Act, which aimed to provide students who spoke languages other than English as their first language with a solid educational foundation (Tiedt, 1990). Additionally, the case of *Lau V. Nichols* emphasized the importance of promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in schools, further shaping the landscape of multicultural education (Tiedt, 1990). Colombo (2013) delved into the complexities of multiculturalism in education, highlighting the challenges posed by the intersection of socialism and multiculturalism in educational systems. He argued that embracing multiculturalism can be a valuable tool for navigating the diverse classrooms of today, offering insights into the implications of multicultural education.

Balci (2023) conducted an extensive inquiry where the author rigorously analyzed and compared the results of different studies, facilitating a detailed examination of similarities and differences. The main objective of this research was to clarify the effects of Critical Multicultural Education (CME) on teacher training, particularly in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study's results emphasized the importance of understanding how CME could impact teacher education, providing educators with useful guidance on effectively integrating CME principles into their teaching approaches.

Abacioglu et al. (2020) worked on a study with the objective of the ongoing study was to offer numerical proof in favor of educators' multicultural mindsets and capacity for taking different perspectives into consideration. The research aimed to confirm earlier study results and enhance the professional growth and interventions of teachers. By utilizing multivariate multiple regression analysis, the scholars explored the correlation between these characteristics and teachers' participation in teaching that is socially and culturally aware, which are fundamental elements of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). The outcomes of the analysis revealed significant links between the attributes of teachers and their level of engagement in socially and culturally sensitive teaching. Notably, the ability to take different perspectives emerged as a more influential predictor for both aspects of CRT.

Accordingly, Abacioglu et al. (2023) utilized the Self-Determination Theory to examine how the implementation of multicultural practices can enhance students' engagement. Additionally, they investigated the potential role of students' peer relationships as a mediator in this process. Through the use of structural equation modeling, they found that in classrooms with a lower concentration of minoritized students, peer relationships can mediate both the positive and negative effects of different aspects of multicultural education on student engagement.

As shown in the reviewed literature, extensive research has been conducted in both Iranian and foreign studies to delve into the notions of multiculturalism and multicultural education. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has hitherto formulated a comprehensive model for English Language Teaching (ELT) specifically tailored for Iranian high schools.

Methodology

The Design of the Study

This study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-method methodology. The sequential exploratory mixed-method methodology consists of an initial phase of qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by a quantitative phase that builds upon the insights gained from the qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The selection of this specific methodology was based on several factors: firstly, the initial phase of the study concentrated on gathering and analyzing qualitative data, while the subsequent phase focused on quantitative data; secondly, greater emphasis was placed on the qualitative phase; and finally, the analysis of the qualitative data led to the development of a framework that was subsequently applied in the quantitative phase. Due to the nature of the research questions, a mixed- research design (exploratory) was used: qualitative-quantitative. In order to answer the first and second research questions, a qualitative research design was conducted and in order to answer the third research question, a quantitative research design (survey method) was conducted.

Participants of the study

The study included a total of 38 Iranian curriculum designers, consisting of 26 males and 12 females. All participants were affiliated with the Iranian Curriculum Studies Association (ICSA). The selection of participants was conducted through a snowball sampling technique, whereby initially chosen designers within ICSA suggested additional designers who fulfilled the criteria for inclusion in the study.

Instruments

The researcher developed a semi-structured interview by consulting previous research and two colleagues with expertise in multicultural education. This interview comprised of five questions. To ensure the credibility of the proposed MC model, the researcher designed a questionnaire of 24 items to gather insights from curriculum designers. In order to assess the reliability of the instruments used, Cronbach's Alpha was employed. Furthermore, the validity of the instruments was evaluated through Exploratory Factor Analysis using Principal Component Analysis (PCA).

Data Collection Procedures

The study's data collection process consisted of two distinct phases. Initially, a qualitative methodology was utilized, involving an extensive review of English and Persian literature on multiculturalism and multicultural education. This was followed by the development of a semi-structured interview with input from colleagues and curriculum designers with a long experience in teaching and designing curriculums for high schools aimed at exploring multicultural education through the perspectives of the interviewees. The data obtained from these sources were then used to identify components of a multicultural curriculum model for high schools.

To ensure the reliability of the findings, inter-coding was employed, where colleagues independently recoded segments of the interview data. In cases of disagreement, guidance was sought from a curriculum designer. Member checking was also utilized, involving the return of transcripts to participants for validation. The second phase of the study involved the administration of a questionnaire based on the proposed multicultural curriculum model, completed by 38 curriculum designers to assess its validity.

Data Analysis

In this study, two distinct methods of analysis were utilized. Initially, the researchers employed content analysis techniques to qualitatively review and analyze the existing literature on multicultural education. This involved a meticulous examination of the content, followed by

conducting interviews with curriculum designers. To ensure accuracy, all interviews were transcribed verbatim, resulting in written data that could be analyzed. The transcribed version of the interviews underwent coding, which included open, axial, and selective coding, in order to identify recurring patterns, themes, categories, and sub-categories within the obtained data (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the designers' perspectives.

Furthermore, secondly, data analysis techniques were employed. The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistics, as well as exploratory factor analysis. These methods allowed for a more quantitative examination of the data, providing additional insights into the research findings. This dual approach of employing both qualitative and quantitative methods ensured a comprehensive analysis of the data, enabling a more robust understanding of the research topic.

Results

The Qualitative Phase

The objective of the first research question was to delve into the components of the MC model. By combining the transcribed interviews with the available literature and documents on multiculturalism and multicultural education, a total of seven elements of the MC model were recognized. These components encompass multicultural education, cultural diversity and educational equality, empowering school culture, and equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, upholding the intrinsic dignity, and gender equality.

Multicultural education aims to free students from the confines of racial and ethnic divisions, with the primary goal of enhancing students' comprehension of other communities and cultures.

Cultural diversity and educational equality, as emphasized by Gay (2004), aim to offer equal educational opportunities for learners from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, promote dialogue among different student groups, appreciate cultural differences and similarities, and equip all learners to be democratic citizens in a multicultural society.

Empowering school culture is one that fosters educational equality and liberation for students of all races, genders, ethnicities, language groups, social classes, sexual orientations, etc. (Banks & Banks, 2019). From this perspective, the entire school is viewed as a unit that needs constant change to keep up with the ever-evolving popular culture.

Equity pedagogy involves strategies that assist children from different racial and cultural backgrounds in acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to thrive in a multicultural community and contribute to the establishment of a fair, humane, and democratic society. This pedagogy entails utilizing diverse teaching methods and approaches that cater to the varied learning styles within different racial and cultural groups.

Upholding the intrinsic dignity of each person is a core principle that should govern our interactions with others. It is crucial to treat all individuals with dignity and respect, acknowledging their inherent value and worth. This principle is applicable to individuals of all ages, as every person deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, irrespective of their age or any other distinguishing characteristic.

Prejudice reduction aims to intervene with students to reduce bias towards racial minorities and promote positive democratic and racial dimensions among them. Moreover, this strategy encourages students to comprehend the influence of the learning environment and the attitudes of the dominant community on ethnic identity. Prejudice reduction deals with creating attitudes that help students to develop more positive racial and ethnic understandings of others (Banks, 2016; Parker, 2019). This can be done by providing realistic images of ethnic and racial groups in teaching materials and providing more opportunities for cooperative learning activities within diverse groups of learners.



Gender equality, as highlighted by designers and documented sources, involves treating male and female students equally. It requires the elimination of gender discrimination and ensures that both girls and boys have the freedom to attend school, learn, and engage in a secure and inclusive environment. Additionally, gender equality opens doors for individuals of all genders to access a variety of economic, political, and educational opportunities.

The multicultural curriculum model, as delineated in official documents and endorsed by designers, serves as a valuable instrument for enhancing students' advancement and evaluating policies. This framework acknowledges the presence of diverse perspectives and values, striving to find a middle ground that considers the interests of various stakeholders. It recognizes that there are numerous manifestations of goodness within multiculturalism, and a sound policy should aim to address the needs and concerns of all individuals involved.

In relation to the second research question after validating by curriculum designers, the model was designed based on the identified components as an MC model for English language teaching in the Iranian high schools. The construction of the MC model, comprising four essential components was confirmed by the previous studies (Abacioglu, Volman & Fischer, 2020; Asrianti, Iskandar & Patak, 2022; Lin, Brown & Durst, 2019; Parker, 2019; Sadeghi, 2010; Zohrabi, Razmjoo & Ahmadi, 2019). These components encompassed objectives, content and learning activities, methods, and evaluation, encompassing diverse facets of learning, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes. To guarantee the model's efficacy, it was imperative to take into account all dimensions. Following is a comprehensive understanding of the MC model elements:

Objectives

To prepare students for success in a diverse society, it is crucial to emphasize the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This involves encouraging self-reflection, participating in meaningful dialogues, demonstrating perseverance, communicating effectively, utilizing creativity, embracing liberty, and avoiding prejudices.

To stimulate intellectual curiosity, nurturing a positive outlook towards the community, and to foster critical thinking skills to enable students to uncover truths and cultivate respect for others. Furthermore, creating an inclusive educational environment that values the diversity of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, while highlighting various religions, histories, and influential figures, is essential. All students, regardless of their backgrounds, should have equitable opportunities to address academic challenges.

To ensure equitable access to academic success for students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds is imperative. Teachers have a significant role in implementing tailored approaches and techniques to assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds in reaching their full potential. Demonstrating empathy and moving beyond self-centered interests are crucial elements in creating a conducive and harmonious learning atmosphere.

To establish clear expectations for students from the beginning is vital for achieving educational objectives. Without a comprehensive understanding of the anticipated outcomes, evaluating the effectiveness of a program becomes challenging, even if it seems to be running smoothly. Promoting tolerance is essential as it fosters respect, leading to a more open-minded perspective and paving the way for equality.

Content and learning activities

To encompass a wide range of races, ethnicities, and cultures, while refraining from any form of derogatory treatment towards a specific race, ethnicity, or culture. The alignment of content with the evolving needs of society is of utmost importance, as it serves to bridge the gap between high school teachings and the requirements of the broader community. Therefore, the design of educational content should prioritize the needs of the community.



To encompass a diverse selection of poems, religious texts, proverbs, idioms, and examples that highlight both the similarities and differences among various racial and ethnic groups. Furthermore, it should incorporate advancements in technology and employ innovative strategies to enhance the overall learning experience.

To delve deeply into the history, traditions, arts, and customs of both minority and majority populations, shedding light on the cultural richness and contributions of each group. Moreover, it should emphasize the linguistic, religious, environmental, and ethnic diversity that exists within society.

To feature a variety of poems, idioms, and visual representations that showcase the multifaceted nature of different ethnicities. Additionally, active engagement among students is crucial, as it fosters collaboration, exploration, and the achievement of educational objectives. By dividing individuals into groups based on their interests and needs, while promoting mutual respect, a conducive learning environment can be established.

Method

To encompass students participating in discussions and collaborating with one another, employing an investigative instructional method that highlights hands-on involvement in addressing educational issues.

To cater to the unique requirements of every student, fostering critical thinking and innovation instead of restricting students to standardized learning experiences.

To link students' in-class activities to regional, national, and international settings, prompting them to utilize scientific principles and devise resolutions to educational obstacles. Within this strategy, students are viewed as the central emphasis, while the teacher assumes the role of a facilitator and collaborator in the educational journey.

Evaluation

To take into account both cognitive and emotional dimensions and to recognize the learners' progress in knowledge, skill, and attitude aspects.

To incorporate qualitative data and flexibility in the evaluation process besides the traditional pen and pencil tests.

To choose an appropriate environment that promotes interaction among all students during the evaluation process. The different forms of evaluation should adhere to principles of cooperation and representation, fostering a more democratic approach.

Reciprocal evaluations and self-evaluations should be included to assess the students' achievement of learning objectives, encompassing both performance-based and summative-based tests of the learning outcomes.

The Quantitative Phase

To answer the third question of the study and to evaluate the model, a questionnaire was developed, and its reliability was gauged using Cronbach's Alpha. The validity of the curriculum model was established through Exploratory Factor Analysis employing principle component analysis (PCA).

Table 1

Internal Consistency of The Factors of the Elements of the MC Model

Factor	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Objectives	8	.92
Content	5	.96
Methods	5	.89

Evaluation	6	.82
Whole items	24	.83

According to Table 1, the value for the Cronbach's alpha for the four factors of the model exceeds .8, suggesting that the model enjoys a good level of internal consistency. Additionally, the value for reliability of the whole model is also above 0.8.

The 24 items of the questionnaire were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA) employing SPSS version 23. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was checked first and the result is presented in table 2.

Table 2
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.701
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	871.911
	Df	276
	Sig.	.000

As the table shows, the value for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure is .70, which is above the proposed value of .6. Moreover, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance ($p = .000$). Accordingly, the sample was adequate for factor analysis.

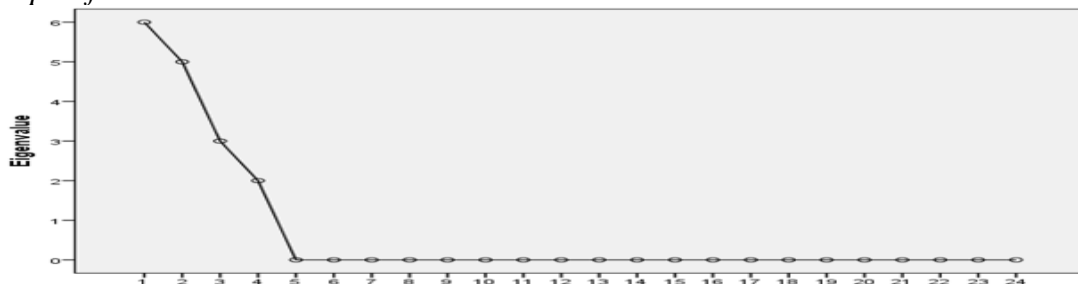
Table 3
Eigenvalues and Variances Explained by Each Factor

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.064	25.265	25.265	6.064	25.265	25.265
2	5.180	21.585	46.850	5.180	21.585	46.850
3	3.612	15.048	61.898	3.612	15.048	61.898
4	2.919	12.161	74.059	2.919	12.161	74.059

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The results of PCA in Table 3 show the presence of four factors with eigenvalues above 1. Accordingly, the initial eigenvalue of the first factor is 6.064, which explains 25.2% of the variance. For factor two and three, the initial eigenvalues are 5.180 and 3.612, which explain 21.5% and 15% of the variance, respectively. The eigenvalue of the fourth factor is 2.919, which explains 12.1% of the variance. Overall, the four factors explain 74 % of the variance.

Figure 2
The Scree plot for the Extracted Factors



As it is indicated in Figure 2, four factors with eigenvalues above 1 were extracted after performing the exploratory factor analysis on 24 items of questionnaire.

Table 4

Item Loading of the 24 Items on each Factor

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Item2	.946			
Item4	.843			
Item1	.833			
Item5	.827			
Item3	.803			
Item19	.784			
Item6	.760			
Item17	.683			
Item20		.958		
Item21		.954		
Item22		.951		
Item12		.945		
Item11		.824		
Item18			.936	
Item7			.890	
Item8			.860	
Item9			.793	
Item10			.690	
Item15				.880
Item13				.855
Item14				.827
Item23				.806
Item16				.672
Item24				.336

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4 shows the items loadings on four factors with eight items loading above .3 on factor one which are 8 factors, five items loading on factor two, five items loading on factor three, and six items loading on factor four. Based on the results of the analysis, all the items of the questionnaires were kept. Hence, drawing upon the loading factors of all items, it can be inferred that the formulated multicultural curriculum model demonstrated its validity.

Discussion

The aim of the first research question was to ascertain the different aspects that form a multicultural curriculum for teaching the English language in high schools in Iran. The qualitative phase of the research produced outcomes that emphasized the fundamental constituents of this curriculum, including multicultural education, cultural diversity, equity pedagogy, social, gender, and educational equality, prejudice reduction, upholding intrinsic dignity, and empowering school culture.

The results of the study indicated that schools that integrate comprehensive multicultural education into their classrooms positively influence the psychological, social, and academic well-

being of English Language Learner (ELL) students. The multicultural education curriculum sends a vital message to all students it serves, underscoring that regardless of their gender, social status, ethnicity, race, and other variables, they are all entitled to equal access to a quality education.

The findings of the second research question exposed four main components, in addition to supplementary elements, specifically goals, content, methods, and evaluation addressing different facets of learning, including knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. To guarantee the efficiency of the model, it is essential to take into account all aspects. As Ehsani (2021) explored the four key elements of a multicultural curriculum, namely objectives, content, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. The results of the investigation revealed a deficiency in the integration of multicultural education within the English curriculum of high schools in Iran. It is suggested that educators could enhance their understanding of the advantages of multicultural education for all students by acquiring more knowledge and engaging in professional development activities, especially considering the diverse factors affecting English language teaching in Iranian high schools.

The findings of the quantitative phase of the study related to the third research question for evaluating the designed curriculum revealed that the Cronbach's alpha value for the four factors of the model surpasses .8, indicating a high level of internal consistency within the model. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity demonstrated statistical significance ($p = .000$), confirming the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis. Collectively, the four factors accounted for 74% of the variance. Following exploratory factor analysis on the 24 questionnaire items and drawing upon the loading factors of all items, it was revealed that the formulated multicultural curriculum model demonstrated its validity.

It is important to note that although there is a lack of previous research specifically focused on the development of a multicultural curriculum model for teaching English in Iranian high schools, numerous studies in this era have been conducted globally on multiculturalism in English language teaching, which support the findings of the current study (Serafimovska, 2021; Asrianti et al., 2022; Parker, 2019; Sudartini, 2009; Akar & Ulu, 2016; Serafimovska, 2021).

The findings of the study aligned with Sudartini's (2009) research on multicultural English language teaching, which sought to uphold national identity. Sudartini determined that multicultural education enables students from various backgrounds, encompassing different genders, ethnicities, races, cultures, social classes, religions, and exceptionalities, to have equal chances to acquire valuable educational experiences. Furthermore, it provides them with the essential attitudes, knowledge, and skills to effectively navigate their micro-culture, mainstream culture, and the global community.

The results of the study are consistent with the research conducted by Asrianti et al. (2022), which identified four main dimensions of multicultural education in the context of English language teaching: content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy. These findings are in agreement with the viewpoints presented by Gay (2004) and Banks (2010), which underscore the democratic essence of multicultural approaches towards different communities and cultures, encompassing a wide array of social and cultural diversities.

The study outcomes align with the discoveries of Mostafazadeh et al. (2015), emphasizing the significance of integrating multicultural education into the curriculum at both global and national levels. According to Mostafazadeh et al. (2015), the empowerment of schools and social reform takes place when schools undergo a significant transformation that enables students from various social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds to have equal opportunities and a feeling of empowerment. In order to ensure that students can genuinely reap the benefits of equality and empowerment, it is crucial for schools to undergo restructuring by implementing modifications in the curriculum, testing methods, as well as the behaviors and mindsets of educators and administrators.

Furthermore, the results are consistent with Gay (2004), who advocated for multicultural education as essential for fostering peaceful coexistence in diverse communities by addressing issues like racism, nationalism, and other forms of discrimination, while also highlighting and celebrating ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity.

Moreover, the development of cognitive and moral abilities, along with the acquisition of cultural and ethnic consciousness, can be nurtured (Askarian, 2006; Gay, 2004). When students possess a realistic comprehension of society, they are more inclined to demonstrate compassion towards others and surpass their own self-interest (Mehr Mohammadi, 2000).

By implementing equity pedagogy, educators have the ability to utilize diverse teaching strategies that cater to the educational requirements of students, irrespective of their varied racial backgrounds (Gorski, 2009). This can be accomplished by dismantling the power dynamics between teachers and students, thereby establishing a learning environment where students actively contribute to the generation of knowledge rather than passively receiving information.

Culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the achievements of individuals as it exerts influence over their conduct and the wider society. It is through culture that individuals construct their own understanding and adapt to their surroundings. Culture serves as a reflection of the collective behavior of people from diverse backgrounds and is deemed to be transmissible. Essentially, culture encompasses beliefs, arts, customs, language, and knowledge, encapsulating the entirety of the human community. Moreover, the recognition of the varied social needs in the contemporary world is addressed through policies promoting multicultural education, which underscores the significance of upholding human dignity (Ahmadi, & Sadeghi, 2016; Taylor, 2000).

The subsequent phase of a multicultural curriculum focuses on reducing prejudice. As indicated by the research conducted by Parker (2019) and Lin, Brown, & Durst (2019), the goal of prejudice reduction is to promote attitudes that allow students to develop more positive racial and ethnic perceptions of people from various backgrounds. This can be accomplished by including authentic representations of diverse ethnic and racial groups in educational materials, as well as by offering numerous opportunities for collaborative learning experiences within diverse groups of students. Prejudice reduction involves guiding students through classroom activities to eliminate any biases they may have towards individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Ultimately, teachers aim to instill positive ethnic and racial attitudes in their students.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to develop a comprehensive curriculum model that promotes multiculturalism in the teaching of English in Iranian high schools. The study aimed to identify the various components that should be included in a multicultural curriculum, explore the advantages it offers to the educational system, and assess the psychometric properties of the developed model. The study findings identified seven components, four of which were deemed as main components following a content analysis of the interview data. Furthermore, the statistical analysis results demonstrated the reliability and validity of the model.

The results of the present study may be implicated pedagogically in Iranian high schools for teaching English language. The education curriculum may expose students to a variety of cultural perspectives, traditions, and contributions. This can help students develop a greater appreciation for diversity and foster a more inclusive and respectful learning environment. By incorporating texts, literature, and activities from different cultures, students can gain a deeper understanding of the English language and how it is used in different contexts. This can lead to improved language proficiency and communication skills. Engaging with diverse texts and perspectives can help students develop critical thinking skills as they analyze and interpret different viewpoints.

The findings of the present study could have significant implications for the teaching practices in Iranian high schools concerning the instruction of the English language. The school curriculum has the potential to expose students to a variety of cultural perspectives, traditions, and contributions. This exposure may help in fostering students' respect for diversity and in establishing a more inclusive and respectful learning environment. By incorporating texts, literature, and activities from different cultures, students can improve their understanding of the English language and its application in various contexts.

As a result, this could lead to improved language skills and communication abilities. Engaging with a range of texts and viewpoints can also assist students in developing their critical thinking skills as they analyze and interpret different perspectives, promoting creativity and problem-solving abilities. In today's interconnected world, having a multicultural understanding and communication skills is crucial for success. By integrating multicultural content into the curriculum, high school students can better prepare themselves for a globalized workforce and society. The inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives in the curriculum can empower students from all cultural backgrounds and allow them to see themselves reflected in the materials they study, thereby increasing confidence and motivation in the classroom.

While implementing a multicultural curriculum model may present challenges for educators, such as finding appropriate resources and addressing sensitive topics, it also provides opportunities for professional development and growth, enabling teachers to explore new teaching approaches and incorporate diverse perspectives into their lesson plans (Asrianti, Iskandar & Patak, 2022; Ehsani, 2021; Dias, 2019; Ahmadi & Sadeghi, 2016).

In conclusion, the implications of adopting a multicultural curriculum model in English language education at the high school level are broad and varied. By embracing diversity and inclusivity in the educational environment, both students and teachers can benefit.

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