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Social Inclusion and academic performance of the Immigrant Students in Türkiye

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to investigate the connection between immigrant students' social and economic standing and their academic success. We select Turkey as a case where internal and external migration has become an issue of increasing concern particularly over the last decade. In this study, the immigrant status is based on the condition that language other than Turkish is spoken at home (diversity group). Through a mixed-method research design we attempted to explore the indicators that have an influence on the social inclusion and achievement levels of students at risk (diversity group) in order to recommend policies to break the intergenerational cycles of disadvantage at the EU and national levels. The data for the mixed-method research is based on an innovative approach by interpreting the 2018 PISA student data outcomes with the meta-synthesis results of research studies published between January 2011 and 2022 July.

The quantitative analysis relies on using the PISA 2018 data and explores indicators that intersect with the student's social inclusion and achievement levels in Turkey. We use the 2018 PISA student data. Out of the total of 6890 Turkish student respondents, 512 students speak a language other than Turkish in their homes, out of which only 36 of the students have at least one member born outside Turkey. The analysis includes a comparison of the diverse group of 512 students with the rest of the students in the sample that consists of Turkish-speaking homes (control group) using independent sample t-test. The comparison is made using variables that measure student achievement, social and economic status, student's cognitive abilities, student's perceptions related to the school, student's perceptions related to their ability, student's attitudes in life and parent characteristics. Statistical comparison of the average values will be followed by a regression analysis where the dependent variable is student achievement. The independent variables include a dummy variable that measure whether or not the student belongs to the diversity group as well as additional explanatory social and economic variables that may have an impact on student performance. The analysis is facilitated by the syntax developed by the IDB Analyzer (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) that is used in studies of large-scale databases and suitable for using plausible values.

The qualitative part is a meta-synthesis of a review of the literature on migration starting from 2011 onwards due to the dramatic influx of migrants from neighboring countries to seek asylum from conflicts, wars, and political and economic turmoil in their home countries. Accordingly, the in-migration process inter-regionally and intra-regionally have accelerated the more external migrants have become apt to reside in districts where former external migrants settled or reside. Thus, the schools in those in-migration localities experience out-migration simultaneously and the turnover rates of students, teachers, and school managers are considerably high.

Our meta-synthesis, is based on a number of inclusion exclusion criteria, and only studies that are interpretive by nature, or are part of a mixed-method study adopting an interpretive approach are selected from articles that are indexed in WoS and Scopus, empirical peer- reviewed articles that are published in English and Turkish and are open-access meet our inclusion-criteria. The quality of the meta-synthesis is based on the trustworthiness, credibility and dependability of qualitative studies included. Through the meta-synthesis we aim at exploring complementary or explanatory findings that intersect with school-based factors, home-based factors, students' SES, social inclusion and achievement levels of migrant students overall.

The meta-synthesis data is based on using the keywords, *migration, *Turkey, *Türkiye, 2011-onwards in the WoS, the first screening yielded 1670 studies available, through excluding the studies that are *quantitative in nature, *not empirical, the data reduced to 170 studies. Through screening the abstracts and excluding university student-related studies, the data is reduced to 12 studies. As for the Scopus-indexed studies, the same trend above is used and data revealed from 57 studies to 23 studies dealing with internal and external migrant students' education, and the schools they attend. Yet, overlapping/similar studies have not yet been explored by comparing the synthesized data by both authors to validate the inclusion criteria. In case the data may not be satisfactory to complement the quantitative findings, grey literature from research reports and unpublished thesis studies will be included in the synthesis considering the same inclusion-exclusion criteria.

Preliminary synthesis findings indicate that poor school quality indicators of migrant students' schooling are reproduced for both in-migrant and external migrant students. Quality indicators are likely to range from poor school infrastructure to lack of qualified teachers due to high turnover rates, and the over-crowding of class sizes. A common reality is the low socio-economic status of children and family backgrounds. The poor language skills in the official language, i.e. Turkish intersect with low academic outcomes and social adaptation.

Similarly, the initial findings of the quantitative analysis reveal that there are significant differences across Turkish-speaking homes and non-Turkish-speaking homes with regards to the index of economic and social status. Factor analysis results show that the student-based factors can be summarized in 8 dimensions: competitiveness, perceived feedback, cultural awareness, interest in reading, cooperation, perceived discrimination, perception to immigrants, and general fear of failure. The regression analysis demonstrates that the students' achievement scores (plausible values) in reading, math, and science are significantly correlated with the student-based factors as well as the index of economic and social status and language spoken at home.