

Investigating the attitude of educational managers toward Pluralistic Curriculum

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Abstract

Introduction: The main purpose of this research is investigating the attitude of educational managers toward Pluralistic Curriculum. **Methodology:** To achieve this goal, the research method combined with the exploratory approach is used. The research method was the grand theory in the qualitative section, and survey in the quantitative part. Based on purposeful sampling, 30 school principals who were expert in this area, selected and were interviewed using the in-depth interview method. The interview continued until the theoretical saturation point. In the quantitative part, according to the results obtained from the previous studies the target group interviews, a questionnaire prepared by the researcher and used. In the qualitative section, the acquisition of credibility, through believability, transferability and verifiability were achieved. In the coding processes to increase the trust two encoders were used. Three types of open, axial and selective coding were used in the method of data analysis in the qualitative section. The factor analysis and Friedman test were also used in the quantitative part. **Findings:** The result of the research revealed that from the viewpoint of educational managers, the pluralistic curriculum has five components, including racial and ethnic inequality, linguistic diversity, gender inequality, social inequality, and religious diversity. **Conclusion:** The dimensions of the pluralistic curriculum in comparison with the existing situation that, consisting of two components including racial and ethnic inequality and gender inequality, has five components, including racial and ethnic inequality, linguistic plurality, gender inequality, social inequality, and the Religious diversity.

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1. Introduction

Pluralistic can be defined as "reflection of the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society in all institutionalized educational structures, including norms, values, and curricula" (Banks and Banks, 2010, p435). Therefore, the main feature of pluralism is liberation, which requires the connection between the majority and minority populations, and often between the minorities themselves (Lawson, 2011, p65). The increase of migration and the spread of the use of different cultures from educational systems in space of the world pluralistic community, has doubled the necessity of paying attention to educational systems in applying pluralistic approaches in different educational dimensions (Anderson & Govan, 2015, p39).

Because in such a condition, the construction and exchange of meaning by paying attention to various types of symbolic systems are essential for increasing the communication capabilities of students with the socio-cultural environment and due to that, one can better be in the flow of world interactions. And engaging in global interactions makes you find new solutions for common problems of humans, and offer suggestions and solutions. This for Iran which claims to be the pioneer of a great civilization is especially important and is considered as one of the basic necessities and leads to a more active role in the global community. Cultural symbiosis is considered as one of the forms of being social. On the other hand, attention to educational pluralism can increase the tolerance of individuals to work with different people (Bradfield, 2017, p35).

The scholars of pluralism in education believe that if educational systems are more coordinated with the process of contemporary social, political and cultural developments and provide an appropriate floor for change and evolution of identity, they must inevitably develop programs in accordance with the components and goals of pluralistic education (Carpenter, 2013). If they ignore cultural changes of other communities and do not interact with other cultures and they deny the fact that preventing the penetration of other cultures (due to the domination of media tools) is practically impossible, students will face an identity crisis that came from not knowing the realities of other cultures (Kendall, 2012, p. 205). According to this important fact, from various perspectives, educational planners and designers have devised programs in terms of attention to the diverse nature of science and knowledge (Kluth & Straut, 2016, p45).

Sometimes due to the variety of teaching methods, subjects taught and learners; these programs have been undertaken (Kendall, 2012, p.215). The biases of the mono-cultural education (which due to the specifications of that community is inescapable) has some consequences. Things like the limitation of the growth of creativity, curiosity, and self-confidence of children with subculture (non-dominant culture) and the selfishness and intellectual and moral arrogance of children belonging to the dominant culture. Some of other consequences of Unitarian education are moral, social and national sympathy reduction, identity confusion, self-alienation, fear of separating from its true root. Opponents of the Unitarian education citing the above issues recommend the pluralistic education. From the viewpoint of the advocates, pluralistic education is about to release of the child from the limits and rigors of ethnic-racial segregation. The main duty of pluralistic education is to inform the child of the existence of other cultures, societies, and ways of life and thought, and its goal is changing the status of the child so that he or she can be freed from the limits and prejudices of the world and walk in the world and be determined in the discovery of its varieties. Of course, pluralistic education not only does not separate children from their own culture, but also gives them an opportunity that without losing their cultural roots find a better and wider view of their own culture. The basic principle of pluralistic education is to create sensitivity to the inherent plurality of the world. A pluralistic curriculum must have two main characteristics. Firstly, it should not be narrow-minded. Because there is no educational program in the world that can cover all the issues and thus it should be a sort of selective. Secondly, the presented curriculum should stay as far away as possible from

superstition and prejudice. Teachers should teach about other communities, cultures, religions and ethical systems. They should talk with students about other cultures and communities and ask them questions and let them judge on their own. Of course, pluralistic education does not believe that all cultures, societies, and religions are just as good. It accepts the severity and weakness of them (Torres, 2005, p. 42).

Pluralistic teaching is a philosophical concept based on this assumption that all kids, regardless of race, social class or gender, should have equal opportunities to learn at school. The reform movement based on this aspiration and the attention to the diversity of cultures and societies in education is considered to start from the 1990s to the 1980s. Because in these years numerous reports on the importance of educational institutions attitude to the diversity of cultures and nationalities have been published (Adams, 2004, p. 20). In the current conditions, the construction and exchange of meaning through the consideration of various types of symbolic systems is essential for increasing the communication capabilities of students with the socio-cultural environment. Basically, one of the important duties of the educational system is to act as a jumping board for students (Lawson, 2011, p65).

For example, in today's world, with the propounding the globalization idea and confrontation or dialogue and the familiarity of cultures with one another, the ability to communicate is one of the urgent needs of humans. Since the establishment of communication takes place in the context of culture and using the existing symbols in it, increasing these symbols and increasing the reality representation forms leads to the enrichment of culture and the further fertilization of this communication path and this not only includes the diversity of cultures and ethnicities and religions but also consider the variety of students' physical abilities (Brotherton, 2000, p. 20). In today's pluralistic culture of the world, students who can communicate with more symbolic systems and express their intentions, and are able to apply wider representation forms, can more effectively interact with other cultures and humans. Therefore, they can better be in the flow of world interactions. And being engaging in global interactions, makes them find new solutions for common problems of humans, and offer suggestions and solutions. This to a country which claims to be the pioneer of a great civilization is especially important and is considered as one of the basic necessities and leads to a more active role in the global community.

Despite the oppositions to pluralistic education, the advocates of this kind of education are thinking of globalizing this approach and pursuing a global approach to this issue. This group seeks to reach an agreement on the general principles, goals, and methods of education so that all education systems follow it. This group states that to achieve these goals the following points should be noted: (Delors, 2014, p67)

1. It should be known that the growth of information and awareness, which is the primary goal of education and learning, is inevitable. The information has infiltrated all aspects of our social life and for economic, social and cultural dynamism and competition, access to this information is inevitable. Supplying too much information also causes difficulties for schools and schools should teach students how to use and distinguish the information they find.

2. Technology is constantly changing and growing and this change affects all dimensions of life, including societies economic rebuilding, which will have consequences itself. In all of these dimensions, education plays an important role and adapts the skilled manpower to the growing economic needs. Therefore, education must be in harmony with the growth of technological change.

3. With the extension of new information and modern technology and the globalization of economic markets, countries become more and more dependent on one another. In other words, the security and welfare of each region, and in fact the preservation of world peace, depends on the same conditions that are prevailing in other areas. This condition causes a coherent form of humanity, pacifism, and global unity. And this not only is important for human circulation and the flow of goods between countries but also has a great effect on the broader international understanding and exchange and opens borders and thoughts. Therefore, there must be new educational efforts in the direction of education, which is the mainstream of intercultural understanding and progress.

4. New considerations are emerging and it is expected that education plays an active role in it. Perhaps attention to the environment, justice and global peace, and the strengthening of the legal and democratic values among the people is one of the considerations that in each of them, education has an essential role. Anyway, education must be effective in saving and preserving global social communication and the changing patterns of family relationships and cultural relations. These cases will only happen if our attitude toward education is a pluralistic approach. Because the focus of a pluralistic approach to education is on creating opportunities for learners to engage in active participation as a member of a school and a larger community (Kerr & Cleaver, 2012, p 120).

Therefore, pluralistic education tries to achieve the following goals through the curriculum: 1.

Breeding of main capabilities of human such as critical reaction, imagination power, self-critical, debate, and judgment to find the ability of self-expressing, access to free-living, avoid of insipience, prejudice, delusive ideas. 2. Develop and strengthening of mental and moral abilities like love for the truth, being happy about the surrounding world, curiosity, humility, constructive doubt against all claims until achieving truth and mutual respect. 3. Familiarize students with important scientific, ethical, religious, literary achievements of mankind and use of all cultural wealth of humanity and creating a human orientation rather than a particular social orientation and study of language, history, cultural geography, social structures, and religions and so on.

What we understand from these goals is that the goals pursued by the pluralistic educational systems are quite the opposite of the goals pursued by the Unitarian educational systems. Basically, educational systems of any society are not in a historical and social vacuum to be indifferent to the existing culture, politics, and society. Therefore, this education system is not culturally neutral and its content biases cannot be indifferent to culture as it cannot be unpolitic because it breeds special values and orientations that help special social and political order.

But according to the advantages and necessities of pluralism in educational systems as a necessity of living in the international community and the orientation of global education toward pluralism, designing a pluralistic curriculum for running in Iranian schools seems to be necessary. Although the possibility of running such a program has not yet been achieved in the country and needs important cultural and scientific infrastructures, we can create the necessary conditions and use this approach. Basically, one of the main areas of curriculum planning is its epistemic domain. In this area, we will present different theories and approaches, although some of them will not be applicable. Therefore, this research has been done to explain the views of pluralistic education managers in the in Iran. In this way, we can find important factors and methods for the presentation and implementation of a pluralistic curriculum for Iran's education system. Therefore, the main question of this research is, what the viewpoints of educational managers about pluralistic curriculum are?

2. Methodology

The method of this research is mixed with an exploratory approach. In this research, the method of qualitative research is the Grounded Theory method or theoretical method based on data and in the quantitative part, the exploratory factor analysis method has been used. Since the present research is a mixed one, according to the needs, the quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data. Therefore, in the first stage of the research after identifying the target sample, deep interviews were conducted with sample members. For this purpose, deep interview questions were designed and used to find out the managers' view about the pluralistic curriculum. In the quantitative part, according to the results of the studies of the previous stage and interview with the target group, the researcher made questionnaire was adjusted and used. In the qualitative part, the statistical society included all school principals in Shiraz and a group of 30 principals who were eligible for the research were

selected using purposeful sampling method and data were collected through in-depth interviews. The interview continued until the saturation of information. The statistical society in the quantitative part of the research was all of the 9696 school principals in Shiraz and using Cochran's formula, 370 people were selected as samples. In the qualitative section, the acquisition of credibility, through believability, transferability and verifiability were achieved. In the coding processes to increase the trust two encoders were used. It should be mentioned that at all stages of the coding, the guidance of the supervisor professor and other professors was used and the contradictions were corrected at all stages of coding. Three types of open, axial and selective coding were used in the method of data analysis in the qualitative part. The factor analysis and Friedman test were also used in the quantitative part.

3. Findings

As mentioned in the previous section, after conducting interviews and collecting and categorizing them, three stages of analysis were carried out, the final result, under the title of the main components and sub-components of the pluralistic curriculum are listed in the table below

Table1. main components and sub-components of the pluralistic curriculum

sub-components of the pluralistic curriculum	Components
A curriculum that helps reduce prejudices about different cultures	Racial and ethnic inequality
Attention on equal opportunities (Variety of educational strategies) in curriculum	
Attention to the reality of the existence of different identities, races and beliefs in educational settings	
Providing appropriate backgrounds for familiarizing with different cultures	
Introducing the national and religious culture and values to the world	Inequalities in the social classes
Providing backgrounds for familiarizing with poverty	
Introducing the concept of social justice	
Familiarity with the methods of reducing social gap	
The teaching of norms and social values	Religious inequalities
Familiarity with different religions	
Providing backgrounds for avoiding religious prejudice	
Teaching respect for other religions	
Familiarize with local languages and recognize them	Inequalities and linguistic diversity
Providing backgrounds for multilingual tutoring	
Familiarize everyone with a common language for conversation	
The official teaching of a second or foreign language at the national level	
Preparing the field for abandoning negative attitudes and unawareness about language diversity in society	Gender inequalities
Providing background for familiarity with women's rights	
Attention to interpersonal relationships between men and women	
Providing backgrounds to improve woman's conditions	
Familiarity with the active role of women in community development	
Providing equal educational opportunities for girls and boys	
Paying attention to the increase of educational texts in the girls' curriculum	

According to the components that proposed as pluralistic curriculum components namely, attention to racial and ethnic inequalities, attention to the inequalities of the social classes, attention to the religion inequalities and religion diversities, attention to linguistic inequalities and diversities, and attention to gender inequalities, the objectives of the pluralistic curriculum can be summarized as follows:

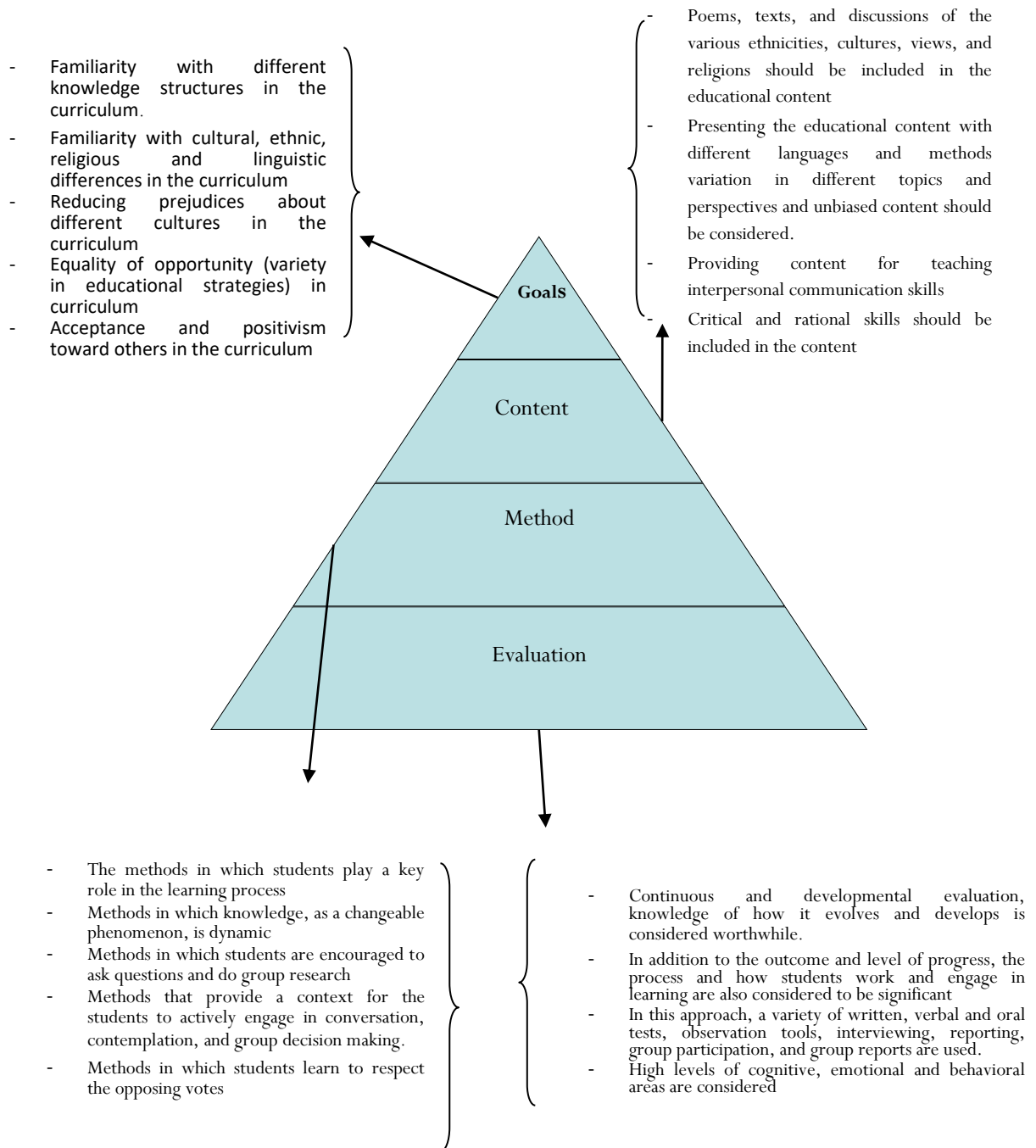


Figure1. Analyzing pluralistic features in curriculum elements

To analyze the dimensions of the pluralistic curriculum for Iran, initially based on the library study and the comparative survey, important factors in the pluralistic curriculum were collected a questionnaire consisting of 29 questions was gathered based on it. After reviewing the validity of the questionnaire through consultation with academic and curriculum experts in Iran and analyzing the reliability of the questionnaire, which was 94% in a preliminary study based on Cronbach alpha, the questionnaire was used

to survey the pluralistic dimension in Iran and then and was used to analyze data through factor analyzing method and the Friedman test.

Since the goal of this study was to identify the components of the pluralistic curriculum, to identify the components, exploratory factor analysis was used. For this purpose, it was done in such a way that the critical factors in creating a pluralistic curriculum are identified.

Before the exploratory factor analysis, the suitability of the correlation matrix for factorization was studied through the KMO test and the Bartlett sphere test. The KMO value is 758/0, which according to the significance level of this test, the level of significance is acceptable (Zare Chahuki, 1389, p. 4). The significance level of Bartlett's sphere test was less than 0.001. Overall, the results of both tests were satisfactory. The proper value of the KMO index (0.75) indicated that the items were suitable for extracting the factors. The significance of the Bartlett test was also a reason for the internal correlation of variables and the possibility of forming a set of variables (factors).

Table2.Kaiser-Meyer and Bartlett's Sphere test

0.758		Kaiser Meyer test
2126.638	Chi square	Bartlett's sphere test
253	Degrees of freedom	
.000	level of significance	

Performing the exploratory factor analysis was used using the principal component analysis and varimax rotation to determine the number of pluralistic curriculum sub-components. The minimum factor load for the variables on a factor, based on the Kaiser test was considered 0.30.

In order to determine the number of factors, factors with a specific value greater than 3 were chosen. Based on this, in this analysis, two factors have extracted in the present situation, making a total of 10 variables. The extracted factors are named and together with the specific value, the percentage of variance and the percentage of cumulative variance are listed in Table 3.

Table3. Describing variance of the key factors of existing conditions

Gender inequality	Racial and ethnic inequality	Factors
3.812	6.208	Special value
17.539	22.085	Percentage of variance
39.624	22.085	Cumulative variance

As Table 3 shows, in the current situation, the two factors of racial and ethnic inequality and gender inequality have the highest correlation with all the factors of the pluralistic curriculum.

Table4. Ranking of factors in the existing situation based on Friedman test

Average rank	Factor
4.6	Racial and ethnic inequality
4.04	Gender inequality

Table 4 shows the Friedman rank test results for the ranking of dual components, which are as follows:
1. Racial and ethnic inequality 2. Gender inequality

As came in the results of the first question in order to determine the number of factors, factors with a specific value greater than 3 were selected. According to this, in favorable condition, five factors have been extracted in this analysis, all of which have 23 variables. The extracted factors are named and together with the specific value, the percentage of variance and the percentage of cumulative variance are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. The descriptive variance of key factors of favorable conditions

Religion divesity	Social inequality	Gender inequality	Language plurality	Racial and ethnic inequality	Factors
1.758	2.639	3.240	3.908	4.423	Special value
11.285	12.408	14.670	15.167	15.898	Variance percentage
69.428	58.143	45.735	31.064	15.898	Cumulative variance

Since meaningful structural factor loads did not obtain from the un-rotated matrix, extracted factors were obtained based on the conventional method using varimax rotation and this rotation caused the factors to increase to 5 factors in favorable conditions. As shown in Table 6, the five components are 1. Racial and ethnic inequality 2. Linguistic pluralism 3. Gender inequality 4. Social inequality and 5. Religious diversity.

Table6. The extracted matrix 5 and their factor loads after rotation in favorable conditions

Religious diversity	Social inequality	Gender inequality	Language plurality	Racial and ethnic inequality	Pluralistic curriculum components in different areas
				0.880	Provide backgrounds for reducing prejudices about different cultures in the curriculum
				0.913	Attention on equal opportunities (Variety of educational strategies) in curriculum
				0.840	Attention to the reality of the existence of different identities, races and beliefs in educational settings
				0.925	Providing appropriate backgrounds for familiarizing with different cultures
				0.616	Introducing the national and religious culture and values to the world
			0.922		Familiarize with local languages and recognize them
			0.915		Providing backgrounds for multilingual tutoring
			0.521		Familiarize everyone with a common language for conversation
			0.915		The official teaching of a second or foreign language at the national level
			0.922		Preparing the field for abandoning negative attitudes and unawareness about language diversity in society
		0.913			Providing background for familiarity with women's rights
		0.824			Attention to interpersonal relationships between men and women
		0.631			Providing backgrounds to improve woman's conditions
		0.349			Familiarity with the active role of women in community development
		0.900			Providing equal educational opportunities for girls and boys
		0.333			Paying attention to the increase of educational texts in the girls' curriculum
	0.932				Providing backgrounds for familiarizing with poverty
	0.619				Introducing the concept of social justice
	0.932				Familiarity with the methods of reducing social

		gap
0.390	0.799	The teaching of norms and social values
		Familiarity with different religions
0.381		Providing backgrounds for avoiding religious prejudice
0.826		Teaching respect for other religions

Based on the results of Table 6, the five extracted factors overall explain 69/428 percent of the total variance. In this research, the factor of racial and ethnic inequality explains the highest amount of total variance. As Table 7 shows, the variable "Providing appropriate backgrounds for familiarizing with different cultures" is the most important variable which has loaded the most on this factor. The "linguistic plurality" factor is the second factor that explains the most remained variance. As shown in Table 7, "Familiarize with local languages and recognize them", "Preparing the field for abandoning negative attitudes and unawareness about language diversity in society" are variables which jointly have loaded the most on this factor.

According to the table 7, the priority rank of factors in the favorable pattern of pluralistic curriculum based on Friedman's test is as follows:

Table 7. Ranking of factors in the favorable situation based on Friedman test

Average ranking	Factor
4.60	Racial and ethnic inequality
3.50	Language plurality
3.18	Gender inequality
2.19	Social inequality
1.15	Religions diversity

4. Discussion

One of the essential characteristics of today's world is variety in race, culture, ethnicity, social class, religion and language, which is count an effective factor in interpersonal interactions and social fabrication. Nowadays, because of the extensive physical and virtual interactions of individuals and cultures and the elimination of traditional contractual boundaries, inevitable links have been created between individuals and cultures. The presence of cultures alongside each other and their confluence has increased the likelihood of a challenge and tension between individuals and cultures. For this reason, predict the proper mechanism for the proximity of cultures and establish the understanding and interaction between them for peaceful coexistence and eliminate possible misunderstandings is very necessary. In this regard, designing a diversity-sensitive curriculum, responsive to multicultural features is one of the main missions of the education system in multicultural societies. Hence, in multicultural societies that want to live a peaceful life, the pluralistic curriculum as a necessary requirement is vital. This approach rejects and challenges issues such as racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and communities and instead, it emphasizes pluralism (ethnic, cultural, and racial).

With the acceptance of the importance of the attention of educational systems to the multicultural education policy and, consequently, the development of pluralistic curricula, due to the existence of different ethnic groups, a variety of cultures and different languages, the necessity of developing such a program in Iran as one of the examples of the multicultural societies seems very necessary. In this research, the researcher has looked carefully at the pluralistic curriculum in Iran and determined the contribution of each of the different dimensions of the pluralistic curriculum to the Iranian education system by doing the necessary analysis and in this way provides a pattern for pluralistic curriculum in Iran.

The result of the research showed that the dimensions of the pluralistic curriculum in comparison with the existing situation that, consisting of two components including racial and ethnic inequality and gender inequality. The result of the research showed that the dimensions of the pluralistic curriculum in comparison with the existing situation that, consisting of two components including racial and ethnic inequality and gender inequality.

The result of the research showed that the dimensions of the pluralistic curriculum in comparison with the existing situation that, consisting of two components including racial and ethnic inequality and gender inequality, has five components, including racial and ethnic inequality, linguistic plurality, gender inequality, social inequality, and the Religious diversity. In fact, these dimensions, in addition to racial and ethnic inequality and gender inequality, the components of linguistic pluralism (second priority), social inequality (fourth priority), and religious diversity (fifth priority) are also included.

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