

**SOCIOCULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMS AND POLICIES FOR
MIGRANT CHILDREN IN ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY**
**ASYA-PASİFİK ÜLKELERİNDEKİ GÖÇMEN ÇOCUKLARA YÖNELİK PROGRAM VE
POLİTİKALARIN SOSYOKÜLTÜREL VE EĞİTİMSEL ANALİZİ: ÇOKLU BİR DURUM
ÇALIŞMASI**

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the educational and sociocultural aspects of migrant education programs and policies implemented in selected Asia-Pacific countries exposed to high migration flows for many years. This research was based on a multiple case study design. The study group included four Asia-Pacific (the United States, New Zealand, Japan and the Republic of Korea) countries. The data for this study consisted of official documents and was analyzed using content analysis. From an educational standpoint, this study found that most countries provided individual learning opportunities for migrant children in their programs or policies through pedagogical ways, considering migrant children's past academic experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social life standards. The second educational perspective observed in education programs or policies was the role and importance of language development programs. From a sociocultural standpoint, most countries aimed to provide continuous social adaptation support, especially for migrant children, from their first entry into the host country to the following years without exposure to interruption/administrative challenges. This study suggests key policy actions for countries that are increasingly exposed to migration movements and do not have extensive historical experience in accepting and integrating domestic and international migrants into their social systems.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, uzun yıllardır yüksek göç akımlarına maruz kalan seçilmiş Asya-Pasifik ülkelerinde göçmen çocukların eğitimine yönelik uygulanan göçmen eğitim programları ve politikalarını eğitimsel ve sosyokültürel açılarından analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırma çoklu bir durum çalışmasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışma grubu, dört Asya-Pasifik ülkesini (Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Yeni Zelanda, Japonya ve Kore Cumhuriyeti) içermektedir. Çalışmanın verileri, göçmen çocukların eğitimi konusunda seçilmiş ülkeler tarafından hazırlanan ve uygulanan resmi belgelerden oluşmuş olup içerik analizi aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir. Eğitimsel açıdan bakıldığında bu çalışma, birçok ülkenin göçmen çocukların geçmiş akademik deneyimleri, kültürel arka planları, ve sosyal yaşam standartlarını göz önünde bulundurarak programlarında veya politikalarında göçmen çocuklara pedagojik yollar aracılığıyla bireysel öğrenme fırsatları sağladığını bulmuştur. Eğitim programlarında ve politikalarında gözlenen ikinci eğitimsel bakış açısı, dil gelişim programlarının rolü ve önemi üzerinedir. Sosyokültürel açıdan bakıldığında bu çalışma, birçok ülkenin özellikle göçmen çocuklar için ev sahibi ülkeye ilk girişlerinden devam eden yıllara değin herhangi bir kesinti/idari zorluğa maruz kalmadan sürekli bir sosyal uyum desteği sağlamayı amaçladığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışma, göç hareketlerine giderek daha fazla maruz kalan, yerel ve uluslararası göçmenleri sosyal sistemlerine kabul etme ve adaptasyonlarını sağlama konusunda kapsamlı tarihsel deneyime sahip olmayan ülkeler için temel politika eylemlerini önermektedir.

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Introduction

This study aims to analyze the educational and sociocultural aspects of migrant education programs and policies implemented in Asia-Pacific countries, where migrant populations have preferred to settle permanently for many years. From past to present, high-volume migration flows from undeveloped countries to developed ones have required a multidimensional preparation for destination countries in different management levels through laws, policies, programs, or regulations to comprehensively integrate those newcomers into their existing cultural, economic, and social systems (Atobatele & Mouboua, 2024; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2012; Doomernik & Bruquetas-Callejo, 2016; Hübschmann, 2015; Gathmann & Garbers, 2023; Joppke, 2007; Penninx, 2005; Qi et al., 2024). In addition to the adult migrant population, their children also have constituted a critical mass that needs to be addressed in migration flows. The reason is that these children are affected by several cultural, social, and educational challenges that arise from permanent migration to a new country or environment.

The key reason behind the design and implementation processes of educational programs for migrant children is mainly based on the inequality between migrant children and their domestic peers. In education settings, many research that focused on migrant children in different world countries revealed the fact that migrant children are always in a risk in terms of low school enrollment (Wu & Zhang, 2015), high dropout rates (Brinbaum & Guégnard, 2013; Miller, 2016; Tjaden & Hunkler, 2017), low test scores or academic success (McKenzie & Rapoport, 2011; Meng & Yamauchi, 2017; Tavassolie et al., 2018), or discrimination issues (Crush & Tawodzera, 2014). These factors made countries take immediate and long-term innovative and comprehensive actions to provide equality for migrant children in educational environments. Countries also offer migrant children better integration chances by reflecting host countries' or regions' cultural, financial, and educational norms and expectations.

The programs or policy implementations to meet migrant children's education are significant in wiping out possible inequality between migrant children and their domestic peers in education. Countries that are exposed to external or internal migration also have to consider migrant children's social, emotional, and psychological requirements or problems that they face (Andrade et al., 2023). That is because these factors may have a direct effect in terms of inequality in educational settings against migrant children. Several factors, including being separated from their parents during migration, exposed to forced migration due to unforeseen or unexpected global issues such as wars or natural disasters, negatively affect migrant children's emotional and psychological situations (Diaz, 2024; Kapel Lev-Ari et al., 2024; MacLean et al., 2020).

In addition to different types of emotional and psychological problems, a low level of successful social integration, especially in educational environments, constitutes one of the other major challenges encountered by migrant children in their host countries (Martin et al., 2023; Kösters et al., 2024). Considering the side effects of these multidimensional challenges faced by migrant children in their host countries where they settled, the existence of inequality in social and educational orders is inevitable. Therefore, it is critical that countries around the world that are at the center of various migration flows design and implement national policies, laws, or regulatory actions. These actions are also significant as they can minimize and eliminate inequality between migrant children and their local peers in educational settings.

The literature shows that the existing research on the analysis of education programs for migrant children mostly focused on some specific countries or regions, which are preferred by the migrant population. As a leading Pacific country in education, several researchers thoroughly examined the structural characteristics of the *Migrant Education Program* (MEP) implemented in the United States, including their contents, application principles, focal points, and ultimate goals through the migrant population and their needs (DiCerbo, 2001; Kindler, 1995; Madrid, 2019; Perry, 1997). In addition, some studies analyzed migrant children's needs in the US through various cases. For instance, Johnson (1987) examined the ways to improve existing educational quality in migrant education problems through observed issues in classroom settings by offering some solutions to instruction and collaboration factors. Paying attention to Mexican migrant children's different problems, such as low level of academic success, inadequate English, and unconstructive communication with other people in school environments, Gibson and Bejinez (2002) revealed how migrant education programs played a significant role in boosting these migrant children's educational engagement rates thanks to the existence of teacher-student interaction. By comprehensively analyzing policy implementations regarding the education of migrant children

in the US through the example of Michigan, Tatto et al. (2000) found that policies need to be improved in many ways to offer more inclusive opportunities from a technological standpoint, including the use of computers, internet sources, for migrant children. Their analysis report also suggested that migrant students' needs must be considered to obtain successful outcomes in this manner (Tatto et al., 2000). In another study, Núñez (2009) examined another important education program titled *Migrant Student Leadership Institute*, and she found that attending these programs had positive reflections on migrant students' changing thoughts and attitudes since these programs prompted them to apply for and enroll in HEIs at higher rates than before.

Similar to the US example, there are also Asian countries with a rooted historical background and the potential to attract migrant populations thanks to high-level social, educational, and financial standards and welfare. The literature demonstrated that some research examined past and present implementations regarding migrant children's education in Asia countries. Many studies aimed to investigate local or general education policies in different regions or cities in China, focusing on the consequences that may positively or negatively affect the migrant population, including children, youth, and families (Hu & West, 2015; Jiang, 2023; Li, 2020; Liu et al., 2017; Wang, 2019). In Japan, which is one of the other countries exposed to migration flow in Asia, migrant education has been examined in terms of benefits or problematic points of central or local policy initiatives/reforms offering educational, cultural or social support for migrant children and adults from various aspects (Green, 2014; Kobayashi, 2014; Kondo, 2011), and critical factors considered by the central government in revising national migration policy to pull more foreign people into Japanese society (Park, 2021). Even though these studies did not only focus on the analysis of migrant education programs or similar activities, they offered a broad perspective for the literature to see the general policies regarding the education of the migrant population in China and Japan cases.

This study is critical and necessary to improve the current literature based on many standpoints. As seen in the past and current research regarding the education programs offered to migrant children with examples from Pacific and Asia countries, there is a significant gap in the literature due to the lack of studies that emphasize similar tendencies and implementations between observed countries' education programs. Even though there is a notable amount of research regarding overall policy evaluations in almost every country examined, most of them either focused on only the challenges faced by the migrant population or were out of date. Except for the United States case, most studies did not establish a solid background about current education programs or policies and their contextual structure in Asia countries. Moreover, no study has approached these rooted education programs and thoroughly analyzed them to guide the governments of less developed or developing world countries in designing and implementing comprehensive and progressive education programs for the migrant population. Therefore, examining the structural basis of education programs and policies designed and implemented by developed countries where the centrals of migration flow is vital because it may offer governments of the world countries a structuralist vision for future education programs and policy plans to integrate each part of their societies and have a well-structured social, cultural, and educational environment. For these reasons, this study aims to provide a high-level contribution to the existing literature and seeks to find answers to the research questions below:

- 1) What is the educational and sociocultural structure of the educational programs and policies designed and implemented for the education of migrant children in selected Asia-Pacific countries?
- 2) How these programs and policies designed for the migrant population can be used as a guide by countries newly exposed to high-volume of migration flows in designing and implementing progressive education programs and policy actions?

Methodology

Research Design

This research was designed based on the dynamics of the qualitative research methodology. According to Saldaña (2011), "Qualitative research is an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches to and methods for the study of natural social life" (p. 3). The main characteristic of qualitative research is associated with reaching deep meanings about an issue and trying to understand the background of complex problems from a comprehensive outlook (Creswell, 2013). By aligning with the general characteristics of the qualitative research methodology, this research is based on a multiple case study design. Multiple case study design not only allows

researchers to focus on situations or issues from a comprehensive view but also allows them to make comparative analysis through the cases based on similar or different points observed (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021). Therefore, choosing this research design is appropriate for this study. This study contextually examines the contents of education programs and policies designed and implemented for migrant populations' education through their common characteristics by presenting these cases as qualified samples for other world countries in developing new education programs and policies for migrant populations.

Study Group

The study group consisted of four Asia-Pacific countries (n=4). These countries are the United States of America, New Zealand, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. The main factor for including the United States in the study group was its deep-rooted social efforts and comprehensive education policies for migrant children from the past to the present. The United States was described and chosen as a major country example in the Pacific region as it borders the Pacific Ocean. For the Asian region, most studies on the education of migrant children have focused on specific developed countries, such as China and Japan. Thus, there are two key reasons for selecting Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea for the study group as Asian cases. The first reason is the lack of studies on the education programs and policies for migrant children implemented in these countries. The second reason is that these developed countries have global effects from social, educational, and economic aspects. Based on these reasons, the purposeful sampling method was used to create the study group. In general, this method shows appropriateness to the nature of the qualitative research design as it focuses on unique and representative samples of people or documents in generating perspectives, opinions, or conclusions about a topic or issue (Creswell, 2014). As one of the strategies considered under the purposeful sampling method, intensity sampling was chosen. According to Patton (2002), "Using the logic of intensity sampling, one seeks excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest, but not highly unusual cases" (p. 234). Therefore, this method is not only consistent with the nature of the multiple case study research design but also beneficial for researchers to reach comprehensive conclusions as answers to the research questions through the qualified samples.

Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study consist of various official documents, including policy texts and informative papers prepared and implemented by the United States, New Zealand, Japan, and the Republic of Korea regarding the education of migrant populations. Open accessibility and relevance were used as two criteria in selecting data sources. The official documents that include comprehensive information in seeking answers to the research questions were collected through government or government-based websites belonging to the selected study group (MEXT, n.d.; MEXT, 2014; Ministry of Education, n.d.-a; Ministry of Education, n.d.-b; Ministry of Justice Korea Immigration Service, n.d.; Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2021). Most of the documents collected from the websites were either in English or the websites had English language support. However, some documents/information were non-English. The readability of these non-English documents was ensured by translating them from their original language into English before the data analysis.

Data Analysis

The content analysis procedure was employed to analyze the data in this research. In content analysis, categories can be created before starting the analysis process based on the existing theoretical explanation/framework or what the researcher aims to discover in the data (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 475). Therefore, after explaining the core dynamics of the selected education programs through the official documents, two categories were created to be analyzed. These categories were sociocultural perspectives of the programs or policies and educational perspectives of the programs or policies. Then, each category was comprehensively analyzed based on the contextual structures of the education programs or policies implemented in the United States of America, New Zealand, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. Finally, future policy recommendations were presented on how these contents could be revised and used by undeveloped or developing countries to better respond to the future needs of migrant children in the context of the constantly changing social order due to globalization.

The validity of this study was ensured by the external auditor method (Creswell, 2014). This method aims to discover validity-related issues that may affect the research by examining all components of the qualitative study, such as methodology, data analysis, or presentation of data/results processes, by an external person (Creswell, 2014). Firstly, the researcher found and contacted an external auditor working in another department once the data collection and analysis processes were completed. Then, the researcher asked the external auditor to comprehensively examine the study through the methodological approaches, presentation and analysis of qualitative data that could affect validity. As the last step, based on the comprehensive feedback received from the external auditor, the researcher has revised and clarified all problematic points in the entire written document to provide validity throughout the study.

Findings

In this section, well-established education programs and/or policies designed and implemented by the United States of America, New Zealand, Japan, and the Republic of Korea for the education of migrant children will be examined from educational and sociocultural perspectives.

The United States of America

As one of the most developed countries in educational, cultural, social, and financial aspects, the United States of America receives a high migration stream from various world countries. Each year, either adult or non-adult, citizens of world countries aim to enter the US legally or illegally to establish a new life with better conditions or obtain comprehensive opportunities that may offer enhanced welfare in the short or long term. The recent report explaining immigration-related statistics indicates that in 2022 1,018,349 people in the US obtained lawful permanent status, and 25,519 people came to the country with refugee status (United States Department of Homeland Security, 2023). Furthermore, the US also encountered a high level of migration flow by people having no legal authorization to enter the country, and the estimated number of these people reached 10,990,000 in 2022 (Baker & Warren, 2024). Not only international migration has always been a hot topic in the US but also internal migration has constantly shaped the ongoing economic dynamics of the country. For instance, according to the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2021-2022, seasonal and migrant crop workers constituted 32% of the total migrant population while the international migrant population rate was 43%, the migrant newcomer rate was 25%, and 69% of the migrant crop workers had at least one child in their families (Fung et al., 2023). The fact that the United States has historically faced a constant flow of domestic and international migration has been a powerful force for the government to take immediate and continuous actions. For this reason, the United States has developed a comprehensive federal-based policy plan, titled the *Migrant Education Program*, to focus on migrant students' educational necessities and provide actions to solve the problems they encounter in education settings through collaboration with responsible agencies (Kindler, 1995).

The *Migrant Education Program* (MEP) focused on a specific group, agricultural workers' children, who were a part of the seasonal movement within the country's borders for employment purposes (Madrid, 2019). The structure of this program is based on a partnership between the federal government and each state education agency (SEAs) by presenting SEAs the opportunity to receive grants to be used in the education of migrant students through various educational programs or activities (Perry, 1997). Therefore, through this program, the US aims not only to ensure that migrant children receive better education considering the problems they face but also to ensure that this population is integrated into US society at the highest level in many aspects.

Migrant Education Program from an Educational Perspective

The vital role of the migrant education program implemented in each state of the US as a fully funded program provided by the federal government generally covers cumulative development for migrant children from the educational perspective. Desiring to offer academic support for migrant children who are 3 between 21 years old and had to move within states of the US due to the financial mandates, this program mainly aims to eliminate both observable and hidden discrepancies that may occur between migrant children and their local peers through implemented in-school educational activities, including curricula, academic standards set by schools or states, or graduation-related issues (Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2021). Focusing

on various vital educational factors that can cause direct or indirect effects on migrant children's academic development in school settings against their local peers, educational support offered by this program provides constructive and progressive ways of creating balance and equality in their educational experiences. Based on its educational purposes, this program tries to intervene in curricula by revising them through dynamic improvement processes in the context of the migrant children's necessities and lack of education backgrounds from the start of their education to the graduation process.

In line with the nature of being an inclusive program example, the *Migrant Education Program* does not have a centralized and inward-looking implementation approach to increase the quality of academic support for migrant children. In this context, the Program does not exhibit an attitude closed to external solidarity for all assistance activities included in its content to reach the highest contribution level. The Program adopts constant interaction with different programs or organizations, such as *Migrant & Seasonal Head Start* or the *College Assistant Migrant Program (CAMP)*, by aiming to offer assistance for migrant children in various education levels to achieve its goals with a high success rate (Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2021). Therefore, its collaborative attitudes and current implementations in this way try to minimize the lack of points in action and maximize the desired educational integration and success in favor of migrant children directly.

Migrant Education Program from a Sociocultural Perspective

The content of the *Migrant Education Program* also allows state agencies to redesign or recreate assistance processes through various social or health-related initiatives by seeking answers to the questions of what migrant children need or how this population can be better integrated into the educational settings in areas/regions where they newly settled in. Instead of strict program regulations or rules, the program itself provides agencies to use given funds to help migrant children improve their health conditions (i.e., medical or dental needs) or other social necessities and bolster their integration processes into the social order (Office of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2021). This cumulative assistance aims to increase the efficiency of equality and increase success in education as the other supportive factors.

New Zealand

New Zealand, another country appealing to migrant populations from all over the world with the dream of a better life or high-respected career opportunities for the future, hosts numerous migrant children in its various areas. The increasing number of this special population is a solid standpoint of current and future policies aiming to offer better education, social integration, and cumulative well-being for migrant children or children with refugee backgrounds. Each year, New Zealand welcomes around 1,500 refugees as a part of a United Nations program (Ministry of Education, n.d-a). Even though being a highly preferred destination for the migrant population, New Zealand does not have a central comprehensive program structure that is directly managed and implemented by the government. On the contrary, different programs supporting each other constitute general assistance for migrant/refugee children in the country. Currently, two general assistance plans, which are the concrete initiatives carried out by the government to improve these children's academic success gradually, are being implemented by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. These assistance initiatives regarding providing not only education but also integration for migrant children in New Zealand differ by the migrant children's ages and their education levels.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) Program from an Educational Perspective

One of the programs, which is called *English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)*, aims to improve the general English proficiency of specific groups consisting of migrant students, refugees, or other eligible people who were born within New Zealand borders but have a migrant or refugee parent (Ministry of Education, n.d-b). This education program that mainly targets the migrant or refugee population in New Zealand is funded by the Ministry of Education, and schools within the New Zealand borders can apply to this program if they have met some required standards in the scope of enrolled students they had. One of the main requirements that must be met by schools is having eligible participants with a lower level of English proficiency based on a scoring

system assessed by their educational institutions (Ministry of Education, n.d-b). Then, eligible participants' schools must submit all these required documents that indicate the existence of an eligible student or students who need to improve English proficiency in their institutions. After this process and following the approval procedure, administrated by the Ministry of Education, these schools become eligible to receive funding at changing rates for each eligible student. Thus, these educational institutions can use these funds to support students in acquiring higher-level English language skills so that they can have better educational experiences in the long term.

Refugee Flexible Funding Pool Program from a Sociocultural Perspective

Another policy initiative, the *Refugee Flexible Funding Pool*, aims to improve migrant or refugee children's education experience in New Zealand's schools by presenting extensive support to all education institutions to cover migrant or refugee students' needs in various areas (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a). This program goes beyond only offering one-dimensional support activities for students for educational purposes (e.g., language support) and covers all other social, cultural, or economic issues that may cause essential hardship in participating in education settings for refugee students. The comprehensive content of this program, which offers social and cultural development, provides welfare to the migrant or refugee population as it can eliminate concrete deficiencies that may negatively affect the educational experiences of these children in the country. Refugees or migrant masses who have newly arrived and settled in the country can be directly affected by various problems that may arise due to different reasons, such as the inability to find safe housing options, exposure to discrimination, and malnutrition as a result of financial difficulties. The general effects of these variables can negatively influence the current and future desire, ambition, and adaptation of these specific populations who are starting to study in a new country. As a result, without meeting these basic human needs, migrant or refugee families may not be able to focus on ensuring that their children receive quality education or become a qualified part of the country's education system. Thus, the implementation of this formative financial program aims to include all refugee students in the education system by removing social, cultural, or other barriers that may negatively impact their educational experiences in New Zealand schools.

Japan

As a country mostly known for its past and current role in changing world order and contributions to globalization thanks to the various positive reasons, Japan pulls foreigners not only for temporary visits but also for permanent settlement. Although the general approaches of policies in Japan regarding migration to the country were not incentive and supportive for international migrants, this situation recently gained new momentum in the opposite direction (Okubo, 2021). In particular, Japan started to create various programs to appeal particularly to skilled people for highly qualified jobs to provide long-term cumulative contributions to the future of Japan (Oishi, 2014; Wakisaka & Cardwell, 2021). For a long time, the number of people who preferred to settle in Japan increased, and this caused vital consequences for the future of Japan from social, political, and economic perspectives (Douglass & Roberts, 2000). The most recent statistics report about the total number of foreign people who came to Japan indicated that the country received 39,885 foreigners from world countries as external migrants in August 2024 (Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2024). This constantly increasing trend in mostly international migration inevitably creates a demand for comprehensive and inclusive reform actions in education for the migrant population, including children and youths. However, in Japan, there are no unique migrant education programs designed especially for migrant populations living and studying within country borders. Rather than a comprehensive framework program for migrant children similar to the US example, the Japanese Government currently implements some separate programs that support each other to offer educational and social well-being for foreign students but are not valid for migrant children in Japanese schools. These programs are about developing and implementing a special curriculum for foreign students to acquire the Japanese language, school admission conditions, other school-related supports, and ongoing collaboration to improve existing quality standards in favor of them in educational settings (MEXT, n.d.). This study will focus on these different programs implemented by the Federal Government for foreign children in Japan.

A Special Curriculum Initiatives for Foreign Students from an Educational Perspective

The Japanese Government adopts to design and implement a special program to better adapt foreign students to Japan and the Japanese language through a smooth transition from their own cultural and educational experiences in their homelands. This program, which is implemented between 10 and 280 units each year, especially for elementary or junior high school students, does not have to be performed using the same teaching methods used in the standard academic curriculum at the grade levels that the students are studying since learning outcomes can be transferred with diverse modified teaching methods and adapted to the learning levels of students (MEXT, 2014). This opportunity allows teachers to carry out individualized educational activities and learning outcomes that best provide linguistic development for non-Japanese students or students who came back to the country from overseas countries and have insufficient levels of Japanese. From the educational perspective, implementing this type of curricular activity, which can be totally revised in terms of students' needs, learning styles, or information process capabilities, can also play a constructive role in the entire learning experience since it can encourage foreign students to learn Japanese by following their learning pathways. In addition, schools can be more flexible in the standardized procedures used in selecting students to the appropriate grade levels by age to provide maximum learning acquisition by non-Japanese students in the Japanese language (MEXT, 2014). Thanks to this flexibility, students are placed in classrooms based on their cognitive capabilities and readiness for the Japanese language as foreigners. Thus, they can acquire that language, which may be completely different from their mother language, without creating a bias or hesitation that may impede their learning performance directly.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea is a crucial Asian country with a long record of welcoming refugees, asylum seekers, or international migrants through international and national legal actions such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol, and the 2013 Refugee Act (UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency, n.d.). As of 2020, the Republic of Korea has a total of 1,728,182 people in terms of international migrant stock compared to the other world countries (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2020). This notion of the Republic of Korea regarding accepting asylum-seekers, migrants, or refugees for many years enables this country as a qualified example to be examined in terms of currently implemented education programs and policy initiatives for children who are coming from other world countries and settling in this country. However, the Republic of Korea does not show any active and dynamic performance in providing various laws, regulations, or government education programs, especially for migrant children. Although there are some general laws and policy texts for foreigners or multicultural families in the country, government-based programs or reform initiatives currently implemented for the social and educational development of children with migrant status appear to be insufficient. Currently, there is a significant program to provide social and cultural assistance through various actions for children with migrant statuses in the country. The governmental program initiative, *Initial Adjustment Support Program for Immigrants*, implemented in the Republic of Korea is explained with its sociocultural dimensions below.

Initial Adjustment Support Program for Immigrants from a Sociocultural Perspective

The *Initial Adjustment Support Program for Immigrants* is a government-based policy initiative that mainly aims to minimize sociocultural shocks experienced by newly arrived migrant populations in Korea by providing a variety of ways of social integration into society. This program is open to people of different statuses in Korea, and participation in this program includes mandatory participation and voluntary participation (Ministry of Justice Korea Immigration Service, n.d.). In addition to the other existing groups, such as international students or seasonal workers, migrant children and youths of multicultural families who live in Korea can voluntarily participate in the program, whereas new foreigners who arrived and started to work in some selected fields in Korea have to participate in this program mandatorily (Ministry of Justice Korea Immigration Service, n.d.). Even though this program does not mainly aim to provide educational support for the development of the specific migrant children who are part of multicultural families residing in Korea, it mostly focuses on offering

social and cultural support for the better integration of this population. For this reason, the structural core of the program consists of transferring basic daily knowledge, including security and law-related procedures, and the characteristics and processes of immigration services currently implemented in the country, which is essential for a smooth transition to the new culture and environment (Ministry of Justice Korea Immigration Service, n.d.). From the sociocultural standpoint, mandatorily implementing this program for the migrant population is practical and functional for the children for their social integration process into Korean society since they can learn how the current system in the country where they are new works. The reason is that this first contact may be a triggering power in demonstrating the main discrepancies between the receiving country and sending countries so that migrant children can adapt themselves by exploring ways of better integration. Thus, this action not only prevents the side effects of the sudden challenges of many new rules for this population (children) but also sets a barrier to experiencing high-level hesitation or confusion in their relationships with the current sociocultural environment.

Conclusion and Discussion

Various factors that directly or indirectly affect the internal relations of nations and their external network of relations with other nations expose the world to the impact of a constantly ongoing migration stream. The increasing momentum of migration worldwide, towards some selected countries, prioritizes thinking about the role of education for migrant children in the globalized world order. Due to this reason, this study explored the structural characteristics of education programs and policy plans from educational and sociocultural perspectives implemented in selected Asia-Pacific countries that have received high-volume migrant flow for many years. By analyzing common elements and general practices in education program structures and policy initiatives of Asia-Pacific cases, this study offered policy recommendations for other world countries newly exposed to high-volume migration flows and do not have extensive historical experience in accepting and integrating international migrants into their social systems.

The findings obtained from the case analysis of main education programs and policy initiatives in the United States of America, New Zealand, Japan, and the Republic of Korea indicated that the first educational dimension that the majority of countries focused on was providing individual learning opportunities for each migrant children through different pedagogical ways considering their past academic experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social life standards. The study results showed that some countries aimed to implement unique or flexible curricula for each migrant child by age and learning capabilities. Considering the potential positive impact of transnational curricula on children of different statuses (Bajaj & Bartlett, 2017) and the effects of other curricular requirements or innovations on the comprehensive development of foreign groups who started to get education in a new country (Ibesh et al., 2021), this action is a constructive way of providing high-level educational outcomes for migrant or refugee children. Furthermore, a country analyzed (Japan) has put the option of redesigning their curricula for foreign language acquisition in action prepared by age categories for migrant children to enhance knowledge transfer and constructive learning. By doing those initiatives, the countries as the popular destinations of migration streams desired to positively trigger migrant children's willingness to participate in classes and boost their ambition to become competitive among their local peers in school settings.

The findings revealed that some country examples were quite flexible in changing or revising the curricula and ignored some vital needs that local children had to meet in favor of migrant children. Beyond that, one of the countries, the United States, took this flexibility a step further, implementing the idea that academic standards or norms set by the authorities could be redesigned in favor of migrant children who become part of the education system. In the United States, the extensive flexibility to reshape or redesign academic standards is a constructivist attitude toward the education of migrant children. Since each individual's learning process may be unique, setting unchangeable or solid educational standards in educational settings may reduce migrant children's desire to participate in educational environments. Therefore, providing opportunities for migrant children in the United States through flexibility in academic standards or norms can be considered an effective way to include them in education. The focal point of all these implementations for the education of migrant children was to prepare migrant or foreign children for a new academic environment, which might be completely different from their past educational experiences, and to provide qualified national education by not excluding these children but trying to include all of them into the national educational system as if they were born there.

The second educational dimension mainly observed in education programs or policies of some countries examined for migrant children was the role and importance of language development programs. For instance, in the New Zealand case, this study has concluded that this country adopted designing and implementing comprehensive language support programs for the migrant population who live within country borders as one of the prioritized educational outcomes that must be acquired for the migrant children in educational environments. The high level of success of children settling in a new country is related to their proficiency in the language used in the host country and their maximum benefit from the educational environment (Stanat & Edele, 2016). Thus, these types of programs can be considered as the primary key factor for children to provide the best integration process not only for the societal order but also for the educational settings. Giving importance to this type of language assistance programs by countries through their educational activities and educational policy initiatives can be explained as an indicator of how they desire to not only integrate foreign nationals into their social and educational systems but also to protect their different sorts of national values in terms of educational, social, and cultural perspectives. Besides, implementing language programs or other social programs for these specific groups may play a key role in the best integration process in the shortest term. These programs introduce migrant communities to the customs, traditions, and other key issues necessary to ensure a peaceful environment in that country or region. Thanks to these programs, the psychological and emotional adaptation of migrant communities settling in a new area that may be significantly different from their homeland will be achieved in a shorter period. This policy and related actions supported the current literature that pointed out the importance of language and language education in the host countries for qualified educational, social, and cultural integration of groups that arrived and settled in these destinations (Cassar & Attard Tonna, 2018; Meehan et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Izquierdo & Darmody, 2019; Trasberg & Kond, 2017).

This study also revealed that the sociocultural dimension of the education programs or policies in some countries examined is to provide comprehensive and continuous social adaptation support, especially for migrant children, from their first entry into the host country to the following years without exposure to interruption or administrative challenges. Based on the Japan case, for instance, this study found that this country believed in the power of offering full assistance to foreigners beginning from their first entrance to the country. This action is important because it can play a facilitating role in the process of smooth acceptance of these groups into a new society. Through this action, migrant groups can abandon their past individual habits that reflect the sociocultural rules or norms of their homeland and easily adopt the policies, practices, or traditions of a new country. To successfully carry out this action, this country has shaped its education policy programs for migrant children in a way that every individual coming to the country learns both basic and advanced dynamics of social life so that they can more easily adapt and adopt the new cultural environment. This belief can positively affect migrant children because they can create new schemes mentally regarding the life of a new country without any confusion or complexity since they would be exposed to educational, cultural, and social knowledge as soon as they settle in. Thus, accepting this action as an ongoing policy plan may be helpful for countries that receive a high number of migrants to familiarize migrants with a new environment by eliminating their biases or hesitations against accepting the rules or people of a new country. This action may also maintain social cohesion that might be disrupted by the increasing number of foreign people of different nationalities from many countries.

Even though this study focused on some selected cases regarding education programs or education policies in developed countries, it had two limitations. The first limitation of this study was that it did not examine other developed countries on different continents, such as Europe, which received high migration flow for years. Due to the inadequate number of academic studies in the literature that particularly examined Asian or Pacific regions, this study focused solely on selected cases in these regions. Since this study only analyzed education programs or policies regarding migrant children, it ignored other types of education programs or policies currently implemented for other migrant masses of different ages and sexes, and that was the second limitation. Considering these limitations by future researchers in the field will help expand the number of qualified academic works on this issue and offer a high contribution to the existing literature.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis results that put forward educational and sociocultural perspectives adopted and implemented by selected Asia-Pacific countries in their education programs and policies for migrant populations, this study offers policy reform recommendations, especially for the less developed or developing countries that became new destinations for high-volume migrant flows worldwide. Therefore, this study proposes the policy actions below:

- Countries should first consider creating a long-term roadmap that thoroughly demonstrates how they intend to offer comprehensive social integration support for migrant populations beginning from their entry to their countries. As the initial part of this plan, they should lay the foundations of cooperation with all governmental units and third-party organizations.
- From the educational perspective, the first thing that countries must focus on regarding the education of migrant children should be correctly determining each child's current skills, capabilities, and level of proficiency in the language of their countries to design comprehensive language assistance programs by beginning the first years of their school experiences.
- In school settings, countries should also prioritize designing dynamic curricula for migrant children rather than implementing only standard national curricula, which are resistant to change. This action can be vital since it can increase migrant children's ambition and willingness to embrace new educational environments with all components, including their teachers and peers.
- Lastly, countries should invest in funding programs through the collaborative movements of government and private organizations/institutions to provide full financial support to meet the social and educational needs of migrant children. Adopting this as an ongoing policy plan may be effective in boosting migrant children's academic achievements. This policy plan may minimize or gradually eliminate migrant children's biases, negative thoughts, or levels of unacceptability against the new country and its social and educational environments. Thus, being aware of the ongoing government support and feeling secure in financial situations may positively influence migrant children's academic achievements. Besides, this may also contribute to the cumulative growth of countries in the long term.

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Statements of Publication Ethics

I hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

The study was conducted and reported by a single author.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

Since this research does not involve human and/or animal participants, ethics committee approval is not required.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Geçmişten günümüze gelişmemiş ülkelere doğru yönelim gösteren yüksek hacimli göç akışları, varış ülkeleri için yeni gelenleri kendi mevcut kültürel, ekonomik ve sosyal sistemleriyle bütünleştirmek adına kapsamlı kanunlar, politikalar, programlar veya düzenlemeler aracılığıyla farklı yönetim seviyelerinde çok boyutlu bir hazırlık sürecini gerektirmiştir (Atobatele & Mouboua, 2024; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2012; Doomernik & Bruquetas-Callejo, 2016; Hübschmann, 2015; Gathmann, & Garbers, 2023; Joppke, 2007; Penninx, 2005; Qi et al., 2024). Yetişkin göçmen nüfusun yanı sıra, göçmen çocukların da göç akımlarında ele alınması gereken kritik bir kitleyi oluşturduğu görülmektedir. Çünkü göçmen çocuklar da yeni bir ülkeye veya çevreye kalıcı göçün getirdiği çeşitli kültürel, sosyal ve eğitimsel zorluklardan etkilenmektedirler. Göçmen çocuklara ve göçmen nüfusa yönelik eğitim programlarının tasarlanması ve uygulanmasının ardında yatan temel neden, esasen göçmen çocuklar ile yerli akranları arasındaki eşitsizliğe dayanmaktadır. Eğitim ortamlarında, dünyanın farklı ülkelerindeki göçmen çocuklara odaklanan birçok araştırma, göçmen çocukların düşük/yetersiz okul kaydı (Wu & Zhang, 2015), yüksek okul terk oranları (Brinbaum & Guégnard, 2013; Miller, 2016; Tjaden & Hunkler, 2017), düşük sınav puanları veya akademik başarı (McKenzie & Rapoport, 2011; Meng & Yamauchi, 2017; Tavassolie et al., 2018), veya ayrımcılık sorunları (Crush & Tawodzera, 2014) gibi farklı açılardan her zaman risk altında olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Söz konusu faktörler, ülkeleri göçmen çocuklara yalnızca eğitim ortamlarında eşitlik sağlamak üzere değil, aynı zamanda kendi ülkelerinin/bölgelerinin kültürel, ekonomik ve eğitimsel kural ve beklentilerini yansıtarak onlara daha iyi uyum şansı sunmak için acil, uzun vadeli, yenilikçi ve kapsamlı adımlar atmaya yöneltmiştir.

Bu çalışma, uzun yıllardır yüksek göç akımlarına maruz kalan seçilmiş Asya-Pasifik ülkelerinde göçmen çocukların eğitimine yönelik uygulanan göçmen eğitim programları ve politikalarını eğitimsel ve sosyokültürel açılardan analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırma, çoklu bir durum çalışmasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışma grubu, Asya-Pasifik bölgesinden toplam dört ülkeyi (Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Yeni Zelanda, Japonya ve Kore Cumhuriyeti) içermektedir. Çalışmanın verileri, göçmen çocukların eğitimi konusunda seçilmiş ülkeler tarafından hazırlanan ve uygulanan resmî belgelerden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, içerik analizi yöntemi aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir.

Araştırma sonuçları, incelenen ülkelerin çoğunluğunun eğitim programları ve politika girişimlerinde odaklandığı ilk eğitimsel boyutun her göçmen çocuğa geçmiş akademik deneyimleri, kültürel geçmişleri ve sosyal yaşam standartları dikkate alınarak farklı pedagojik yollarla bireysel öğrenme fırsatları sağlamak olduğunu göstermiştir. Araştırma sonuçları, bazı ülkelerin her göçmen çocuk için yaşa ve öğrenme becerilerine göre benzersiz müfredatlar uygulamayı amaçladığını göstermiştir. Ulusötesi müfredatların farklı statülerdeki çocuklar üzerindeki potansiyel olumlu etkisi (Bajaj & Bartlett, 2017) ve diğer müfredat gereksinimlerinin veya yeniliklerin yeni bir ülkede eğitim almaya başlayan yabancı grupların kapsamlı gelişimi üzerindeki etkileri (Ibesh et al., 2021) göz önüne alındığında bu eylem, göçmen veya mülteci çocuklar için üst düzey eğitim çıktıları sağlamanın yapıcı bir yoldur. Göçmen çocuklar için incelenen bazı ülkelerin eğitim programlarında veya politikalarında esas olarak gözlemlenen ikinci eğitimsel boyutun dil geliştirme programlarının rolü ve önemine dair olduğu görülmüştür. Çocukların yeni bir ülkeye yerleşirken elde ettikleri yüksek başarı düzeyi, ev sahibi ülkede kullanılan dilde yeterliliklerine ve eğitim ortamından en üst düzeyde fayda sağlamalarına bağlıdır (Stanat & Edele, 2016). Bu nedenle bu tür programlar, çocukların yalnızca toplumsal düzen için değil aynı zamanda eğitim ortamları için de en iyi uyum sürecini elde etmeleri için birincil anahtar faktör olarak düşünülebilir. Bu politika ve ilgili eylemler, bu yerlere gelen ve yerleşen grupların nitelikli eğitimsel, sosyal ve kültürel uyumu için ev sahibi ülkelerde dil ve dil eğitiminin önemine işaret eden mevcut literatürü desteklemektedir (Cassar & Attard Tonna, 2018; Meehan et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Izquierdo & Darmody, 2019; Trasberg & Kond, 2017). Bu çalışma ayrıca incelenen bazı ülkelerdeki eğitim programları veya politikalarında gözlenen sosyokültürel boyutun, göçmen çocuklar için, ev sahibi ülkeye ilk girişlerinden sonraki yıllara değin herhangi bir kesinti ve/veya idari zorluğa maruz kalmadan kapsamlı ve sürekli sosyal uyum desteği sağlamak olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Araştırma sonuçları, özellikle dünya çapında yüksek hacimli göç akışları için yeni varış noktaları haline gelen daha az gelişmiş veya gelişmekte olan ülkelerin; a) göçmen nüfuslarına ülkelere girişlerinden başlayarak kapsamlı sosyal uyum desteğini nasıl sunmayı amaçladıklarını ayrıntılı bir şekilde gösteren uzun vadeli bir yol haritası oluşturmalarını, b) göçmen çocukların eğitimi konusunda her çocuğun mevcut becerilerini, yeteneklerini ve ülkelerinin dilindeki yeterlilik düzeyini doğru bir şekilde belirleyerek okul deneyimlerinin ilk yıllarından

bařlayarak kapsamlı dil yardım programları tasarlamalarını, c) okul ortamlarında, yalnızca deęiřime dirençli standart ulusal müfredatları uygulamak yerine göçmen çocuklar için deęiřime açık dinamik müfredatlar tasarlamayı önceliklendirmelerini, d) göçmen çocukların sosyal ve eęitimsel ihtiyaçlarını karřılamak için tam mali destek sağlamaları gerektięini önermektedir.