

TURKISH EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION IN THE UKRAINIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Annotation. *The chapter examines the influence of the Turkish educational system on the development of intercultural interaction within the Ukrainian educational context. The relevance of the study is determined by increasing migration processes, globalization, educational internationalization, and the growing need for intercultural competence among students and educators. Turkey represents a unique case of a country that combines strong national educational traditions with practical experience in multicultural integration, particularly through the education of refugee and migrant populations. Ukraine, meanwhile, is implementing large-scale educational reforms aimed at European integration, democratic governance, decentralization, and competency-based learning.*

The purpose of this study is to identify the educational practices and intercultural approaches employed in Turkey that may contribute to the modernization of Ukrainian educational institutions and the enhancement of intercultural communication. The research is based on comparative educational analysis, document analysis, and synthesis of international educational reports, academic publications, and policy documents.

The findings demonstrate that Turkish educational institutions have accumulated substantial experience in the integration of culturally diverse student populations through language adaptation programs, inclusive educational policies, and intercultural learning initiatives. These practices contribute to the formation of social cohesion and intercultural understanding. At the same time, the Turkish educational system faces challenges associated with policy centralization, curriculum rigidity, and frequent reforms.

The comparative analysis reveals that Ukraine and Turkey possess complementary educational strengths. Turkey offers practical models for multicultural integration and crisis-responsive educational governance, whereas Ukraine demonstrates significant progress in competency-based education, democratic participation, and European educational standards. The study proposes an integrated framework for intercultural educational development that combines Turkish practical experience with Ukrainian reform-oriented approaches.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the development of a comparative model of intercultural educational interaction between Turkey and Ukraine and the identification of transferable educational practices applicable to contemporary Ukrainian educational reforms. The practical significance of the chapter consists in recommendations for policymakers, educational administrators, and teacher-training institutions seeking to strengthen intercultural competence and inclusive educational environments.

Keywords: intercultural education, Turkish educational system, Ukrainian educational system, educational reform, multicultural integration, refugee education, intercultural competence, inclusive education, comparative education, globalization.

터키의 교육적 실천이 우크라이나 교육체계 내 상호문화적 상호작용 발전에 미치는 영향

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국문초록. 본 연구는 터키 교육체계의 교육적 실천이 우크라이나 교육환경에서의 상호문화적 상호작용 발전에 미치는 영향을 분석하고, 우크라이나 교육개혁에 적용 가능한 시사점을 도출하는 것을 목적으로 한다. 연구의 필요성은 국제 이주의 확대, 세계화 및 교육 국제화의 진전에 따라 상호문화적 역량의 중요성이 증대되고 있다는 점에서 제기된다. 터키는 난민 및 이주배경 학생의 교육적 통합을 위한 다양한 정책과 실천 경험을 축적해 왔으며, 우크라이나는

유럽 통합을 지향하는 교육개혁을 추진하면서 역량 중심 교육과 민주적 교육 거버넌스를 강화하고 있다.

연구 방법으로는 비교교육학적 접근을 바탕으로 문헌 분석과 정책 문서 검토를 실시하였다. 국제기구 보고서, 학술 논문 및 교육정책 자료를 종합적으로 분석하여 양국 교육체계의 특성과 상호문화교육 실천 사례를 비교·고찰하였다.

연구 결과, 터키 교육기관은 언어 적응 프로그램, 포용적 교육정책 및 상호문화 학습 프로그램을 통해 문화적·언어적 배경이 다양한 학생들의 교육적 통합을 효과적으로 지원하고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 이러한 실천은 사회적 통합과 상호문화적 이해 증진에 긍정적으로 기여하는 것으로 확인되었다. 반면, 정책 결정의 중앙집권성, 교육과정 운영의 경직성 및 빈번한 제도 개편은 터키 교육체계가 직면한 주요 과제로 분석되었다. 또한 비교 분석 결과, 터키는 다문화 통합과 위기 대응형 교육 거버넌스 분야에서 실천적 경험을 제공하는 반면, 우크라이나는 역량 중심 교육과 민주적 참여 확대, 유럽 교육 기준과의 정합성 측면에서 강점을 보유하고 있는 것으로 나타났다.

본 연구는 터키와 우크라이나의 교육적 강점을 연계한 상호문화 교육 발전 모형을 제안하였다는 점에서 학문적 의의를 지닌다. 아울러 우크라이나 교육개혁 과정에서 활용 가능한 교육 실천 사례와 정책적 시사점을 제시함으로써 상호문화적 역량 강화와 포용적 교육환경 조성에 기여할 수 있을 것으로 기대된다.

주제어: 상호문화교육, 터키 교육체계, 우크라이나 교육체계, 교육개혁, 다문화 통합, 난민교육, 상호문화 역량, 포용교육, 비교교육학, 세계화

Introduction

The rapid processes of globalization, international migration, digital transformation, and educational internationalization have fundamentally reshaped the role of education in contemporary societies. Educational systems are no longer expected merely to transmit knowledge and preserve cultural traditions; they are increasingly required to prepare learners for participation in multicultural environments characterized by diversity, mobility, and continuous intercultural interaction. In this context, intercultural competence has emerged as one of the key competencies necessary for successful communication, social cohesion, and sustainable development in the twenty-first century (UNESCO, 2023; Council of Europe, 2020).

The growing significance of intercultural education is particularly evident in countries experiencing large-scale demographic, social, and political changes. Turkey represents a notable example of a state that has undergone substantial educational transformation while simultaneously addressing the challenges associated with migration, cultural diversity, and refugee integration. Due to its strategic geographical location between Europe and Asia, Turkey has become a major destination and transit country for migrants and refugees, particularly following the Syrian refugee crisis. As a result, Turkish educational institutions have accumulated considerable practical experience in managing multicultural classrooms, implementing language adaptation programs, and fostering social integration among students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Aras & Yasun, 2016; Çelik & İçduygu, 2019).

At the same time, Ukraine has experienced profound transformations within its educational system during the last three decades. Following independence, the country initiated a gradual transition from a highly centralized Soviet educational model toward a system based on democratic governance, decentralization, competency-based learning, and European educational standards. These reforms intensified after the adoption of the New Ukrainian School concept, which emphasizes learner-centered education, critical thinking, inclusiveness, and intercultural awareness as essential elements of modern educational practice (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2023). Furthermore, recent social and political developments, including large-scale internal displacement and migration caused by military conflict, have increased the importance of intercultural communication and social integration within Ukrainian educational institutions.

The comparison of Turkish and Ukrainian educational systems is particularly relevant because both countries face similar challenges related to globalization, migration, and educational modernization while pursuing different approaches to educational governance and policy implementation. Turkey's educational model remains predominantly centralized and characterized by strong governmental regulation of curricula, assessment procedures, and institutional management (Aydağül, 2018). In contrast, Ukraine has increasingly adopted decentralized governance mechanisms and competency-oriented educational reforms aligned with European Union recommendations and international

educational standards. These differences provide valuable opportunities for comparative analysis and mutual learning.

Recent studies in comparative education emphasize that educational borrowing and policy transfer can contribute significantly to the improvement of national educational systems when adapted to local cultural, social, and institutional contexts (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Turkey's experience in multicultural integration, refugee education, and intercultural communication may therefore offer practical insights for Ukrainian policymakers, educators, and researchers seeking effective strategies to address contemporary educational challenges. Simultaneously, Ukraine's experience in democratic educational reform and European integration may provide useful perspectives for evaluating the strengths and limitations of Turkish educational policies.

Despite the growing academic interest in intercultural education, limited research has specifically examined the influence of Turkish educational practices on the development of intercultural interaction within the Ukrainian educational system. Existing studies generally focus on national educational reforms, migration policies, or intercultural competence development within individual countries rather than exploring cross-national educational influences and potential areas of policy transfer. Consequently, there remains a significant gap in understanding how Turkish educational experiences can contribute to the enhancement of intercultural education in Ukraine and how the two educational systems may complement one another in addressing contemporary educational challenges.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the characteristics of the Turkish educational system and analyze its impact on the development of intercultural interaction within the Ukrainian educational context. The study seeks to identify educational practices, institutional mechanisms, and intercultural approaches that may support the modernization of Ukrainian education and strengthen intercultural competence among students and educators. Particular attention is paid to the role of multicultural integration policies, language education, refugee education programs, and governance structures in shaping intercultural educational environments.

The research is guided by the following **objectives**: (1) to examine the governance, curriculum structure, and pedagogical characteristics of the

Turkish educational system; (2) to analyze contemporary developments in Ukrainian educational reform and intercultural education; (3) to compare the approaches of both countries to intercultural competence development; (4) to identify transferable educational practices that may contribute to improving intercultural interaction in Ukrainian educational institutions; and (5) to propose a conceptual framework for strengthening intercultural educational cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine.

Methodologically, the chapter employs comparative educational analysis, qualitative document analysis, and synthesis of international educational reports, policy documents, and scholarly literature. The study draws upon publications produced by international organizations, including UNESCO, OECD, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission, as well as national policy documents and academic research concerning educational reform and intercultural education in both countries.

The scientific novelty of the chapter lies in its comprehensive comparative examination of Turkish and Ukrainian educational systems through the lens of intercultural interaction and educational transfer. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on national educational developments, this research investigates the potential contribution of Turkish educational experiences to contemporary Ukrainian educational reform. The study further develops a conceptual understanding of how practical multicultural integration strategies and competency-based educational approaches may be combined to create more inclusive, resilient, and internationally oriented educational environments.

The practical significance of the research is determined by its potential application in educational policymaking, teacher education, curriculum development, and institutional management. The findings may support educational stakeholders in designing effective strategies for intercultural competence development, inclusive education, and social integration in increasingly diverse educational settings. Moreover, the chapter contributes to broader discussions concerning educational cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine and highlights the importance of international knowledge exchange in addressing contemporary educational challenges.

In an era characterized by increasing cultural diversity and global interconnectedness, understanding the relationship between educational

systems and intercultural interaction becomes essential for sustainable educational development. The comparative analysis presented in this chapter aims to contribute to this understanding by exploring how Turkish educational practices may inform and enrich the ongoing transformation of the Ukrainian educational system.

The Turkish educational system has undergone substantial transformation over the past century, reflecting the country's broader political, social, and economic development. Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, education has been viewed as a fundamental instrument for nation-building, modernization, and social cohesion. The reforms initiated under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk aimed to create a unified national educational system capable of fostering secularism, citizenship, and national identity (Akyüz, 2020:87-89). Consequently, educational governance became highly centralized under the authority of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), a characteristic that continues to shape Turkish educational policy today.

Researchers emphasize that the centralization of educational governance has produced both advantages and limitations. On the one hand, centralized administration has enabled the implementation of nationwide educational standards, curriculum consistency, and large-scale reforms (Aydagül, 2018:127). On the other hand, scholars argue that excessive centralization may limit institutional autonomy, reduce local responsiveness, and constrain innovation at the school level (Akyüz, 2020). The balance between national coordination and local flexibility remains one of the most debated issues within Turkish educational policy.

During the last two decades, Turkey has implemented numerous educational reforms aimed at improving quality, expanding access, and aligning educational outcomes with international standards. These reforms have included curriculum modernization, expansion of compulsory education, increased investment in educational infrastructure, and participation in international assessment programs such as PISA and TIMSS (OECD, 2023). Educational policy has increasingly focused on competency development, digital literacy, and lifelong learning while maintaining a strong emphasis on national cultural values and identity (MoNE, 2023).

Several scholars have noted that Turkish educational reforms are strongly influenced by the country's aspirations for closer integration

with European educational frameworks while simultaneously preserving national traditions and cultural heritage (Çelik & İçduygu, 2019:254). This dual orientation creates a unique educational environment in which modernization efforts coexist with the promotion of national values. As a result, Turkish curricula often combine competency-oriented learning outcomes with content emphasizing citizenship, cultural continuity, and social responsibility.

Another important dimension of contemporary educational reform concerns educational equity and access. Turkey has significantly increased school enrollment rates at all educational levels and has expanded opportunities for disadvantaged populations, including girls, rural communities, and refugee students (UNESCO, 2022). Nevertheless, disparities in educational quality between regions and socioeconomic groups continue to attract scholarly attention and remain a challenge for policymakers (OECD, 2023).

The literature suggests that Turkish educational reforms should not be viewed merely as administrative changes but rather as broader social transformation processes. Educational institutions serve as mechanisms through which national identity, social integration, and economic development are pursued simultaneously. This multifunctional role of education has become particularly important in the context of migration and increasing cultural diversity, leading to greater scholarly interest in intercultural education within Turkey.

Intercultural education has become an increasingly significant field of educational research in Turkey, particularly since the emergence of large-scale migration flows and the arrival of millions of refugees from neighboring countries. While traditional Turkish educational policy focused primarily on national integration and cultural cohesion, recent demographic changes have required educational institutions to address cultural diversity more explicitly (Aras & Yasun, 2016:121).

The concept of intercultural education is generally understood as an educational approach that promotes mutual respect, cultural awareness, communication skills, and constructive interaction among individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Council of Europe, 2020). Turkish scholars increasingly argue that intercultural competence has become an essential educational objective in contemporary multicultural societies (Demir, 2018; Akşit, 2017).

One of the most influential factors shaping intercultural education in Turkey has been the Syrian refugee crisis. Since 2011, Turkey has hosted the world's largest refugee population, including millions of school-age children requiring access to educational services (UNICEF, 2023). This unprecedented situation has transformed schools into spaces of intercultural interaction where students from diverse linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds learn together.

Studies examining refugee education in Turkey highlight the importance of language adaptation programs, psychosocial support services, teacher training initiatives, and inclusive educational policies (Çelik & İçduygu, 2019). Educational authorities have implemented numerous measures designed to facilitate refugee integration while maintaining educational quality for both refugee and host-community students. These measures include Turkish language instruction, intercultural awareness activities, and support mechanisms aimed at preventing social exclusion.

Language education occupies a particularly important place within Turkish intercultural educational policy. Foreign language learning, especially English language education, is increasingly viewed not only as a tool for communication but also as a means of developing intercultural competence and global citizenship (Fullan, 2020). Educational researchers emphasize that effective language instruction contributes to the development of empathy, cultural understanding, and international awareness among learners.

Despite significant progress, the literature identifies several challenges associated with intercultural education in Turkey. These include insufficient teacher preparation for multicultural classrooms, curriculum limitations, resource constraints, and societal attitudes toward cultural diversity (Demir, 2018). Some scholars argue that educational institutions continue to struggle with balancing cultural integration and cultural preservation, particularly in contexts characterized by rapid demographic change.

Nevertheless, Turkey's practical experience with migration management and refugee education provides valuable insights for countries seeking to develop more inclusive educational systems. The Turkish case demonstrates how educational institutions can function as key actors in promoting social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and community resilience under complex social conditions.

The Ukrainian educational system has experienced profound transformation since the country's independence in 1991. Educational reform has been driven by political democratization, economic restructuring, globalization, and increasing integration into European educational frameworks. Unlike Turkey's traditionally centralized model, Ukraine has pursued a gradual process of decentralization intended to increase institutional autonomy and local decision-making capacities (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2023).

One of the most significant milestones in contemporary Ukrainian educational development is the implementation of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) reform. This reform represents a shift from knowledge-based education toward competency-based learning emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and civic responsibility (European Commission, 2023). The reform reflects broader international trends promoting learner-centered educational approaches and twenty-first-century competencies.

Scholars generally regard the New Ukrainian School as a substantial departure from Soviet educational traditions, which were characterized by centralized control, standardized instruction, and limited pedagogical flexibility (Kremen, 2019). The new model seeks to create educational environments that encourage active learning, democratic participation, and individual development. Within this framework, intercultural competence has become an increasingly important educational objective.

Research on intercultural education in Ukraine indicates that foreign language education plays a central role in promoting intercultural communication and global awareness (Kremen, 2022). Educational institutions increasingly incorporate multicultural content, international cooperation projects, and European educational values into curricula. Participation in international mobility programs, including Erasmus+ initiatives, has further strengthened intercultural engagement among Ukrainian students and educators.

Herewith, scholars note that intercultural education in Ukraine remains largely reform-oriented and conceptual rather than practice-driven (Martynchuk, Skrypnyk, Sofiy & Hanssen, 2021). Unlike Turkey, where intercultural policies have emerged partly in response to large-scale migration and refugee integration, Ukraine's approach has been shaped primarily by European integration processes and democratic

educational reforms. Consequently, intercultural education often focuses on tolerance, cultural awareness, human rights, and international cooperation rather than direct experience with multicultural integration.

Recent social developments, including internal displacement and migration associated with military conflict, have significantly increased the relevance of intercultural competence within Ukrainian society. Educational institutions are increasingly required to support diverse student populations and facilitate social integration across different cultural, regional, and linguistic groups. These developments have generated new scholarly interest in the practical dimensions of intercultural education and the need for more comprehensive inclusion strategies.

The literature suggests that Ukraine possesses strong theoretical foundations for intercultural education but could benefit from greater attention to practical implementation mechanisms. This observation creates opportunities for comparative learning from countries such as Turkey that possess extensive experience in managing educational diversity under challenging social conditions.

Comparative education provides an important theoretical framework for understanding educational development across different national contexts. Comparative educational scholars argue that educational systems should be analyzed not only as isolated institutions but also as products of historical, cultural, political, and socioeconomic influences (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2014).

One of the central concepts within comparative education is educational transfer, which refers to the process through which educational ideas, policies, and practices move between countries (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). However, researchers emphasize that successful policy transfer requires adaptation to local contexts rather than simple replication. Educational reforms that are effective in one national environment may not produce similar outcomes elsewhere unless cultural, institutional, and political differences are carefully considered.

Comparative studies of Turkey and Ukraine remain relatively limited within international educational literature. Existing research tends to focus separately on educational reforms, governance structures, curriculum development, and internationalization processes within each country. Nevertheless, several common themes emerge from the available scholarship.

First, both countries have sought to modernize their educational systems while preserving national cultural identities. Second, both systems have been influenced by globalization and increasing participation in international educational networks. Third, each country faces challenges associated with balancing centralization and decentralization, standardization and flexibility, and national traditions and international standards (OECD, 2023; European Commission, 2023).

The literature further suggests that Turkey and Ukraine possess complementary strengths in the field of intercultural education. Turkey contributes practical experience in multicultural integration, refugee education, and intercultural communication under conditions of large-scale migration. Ukraine contributes reform-oriented educational frameworks emphasizing democratic participation, competency development, and European educational values. Combining these perspectives may contribute to the development of more comprehensive and resilient educational models capable of responding to contemporary social challenges.

Consequently, comparative educational research provides a valuable foundation for examining how Turkish educational practices may influence intercultural development within the Ukrainian educational system. By identifying similarities, differences, and transferable practices, comparative analysis contributes not only to academic knowledge but also to evidence-based educational policymaking and international educational cooperation.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative comparative research design to investigate the influence of the Turkish educational system on the development of intercultural interaction within the Ukrainian educational context. The selection of a qualitative approach is justified by the complexity of educational systems as social institutions shaped by historical, political, cultural, and economic factors. Since intercultural education involves values, attitudes, communication practices, and institutional policies, qualitative methods provide an appropriate framework for understanding the relationships between educational structures and intercultural development.

The research is grounded in the principles of comparative education, which seeks to identify similarities, differences, and transferable practices

across national educational systems. Comparative educational research enables scholars to examine how educational policies and practices emerge in different sociocultural contexts and how successful experiences can contribute to educational improvement in other countries (Bray et al., 2014). Within this framework, Turkey and Ukraine were selected as comparative cases because both countries have experienced significant educational reforms while responding to challenges associated with globalization, migration, and intercultural communication.

The study focuses on four interconnected dimensions of educational development: governance and administration, curriculum and pedagogy, intercultural education policies, and educational responses to cultural diversity. These dimensions were selected based on their relevance to the development of intercultural competence and inclusive educational environments.

Comparative analysis serves as the primary methodological approach of the study. Comparative education scholars emphasize that educational systems should be analyzed not only through their structural characteristics but also through their social functions and cultural contexts (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Accordingly, the present research examines both the institutional organization and the practical implementation of educational policies in Turkey and Ukraine.

The comparative analysis was conducted through several stages. First, the structural characteristics of both educational systems were examined, including governance models, curriculum design, policy implementation mechanisms, and institutional organization. Particular attention was given to the degree of centralization, educational reform strategies, and the role of governmental institutions in educational decision-making.

Second, the study compared approaches to intercultural education, focusing on how educational systems address cultural diversity, social inclusion, language education, and intercultural competence development. The analysis explored similarities and differences in educational priorities, pedagogical approaches, and policy objectives.

Third, the study identified educational practices that may be transferable between the two countries. Rather than assuming direct policy borrowing, the research considered how educational experiences from Turkey could be adapted to the Ukrainian context while respecting

differences in historical development, governance structures, and educational traditions.

The comparative approach was selected because it allows for the identification of both common educational challenges and context-specific solutions. By examining two distinct educational systems, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of intercultural education as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by national and international factors.

The second methodological component of the research involves ***policy document analysis***. Educational policies represent formal expressions of governmental priorities and provide valuable insights into the objectives, principles, and strategies guiding educational development. Document analysis is widely recognized as an effective method for investigating educational reform processes and institutional change (Bowen, 2009).

The study analyzed a range of official national and international documents related to educational policy, reform, and intercultural education. Turkish sources included policy reports and statistical publications issued by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye, educational development strategies, and official documents concerning refugee education and inclusive educational practices. Ukrainian sources included the Law of Ukraine “On Education,” the New Ukrainian School Concept, strategic documents issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and national educational reform programs.

In addition, the research incorporated documents produced by international organizations, including UNESCO, OECD, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission. These documents were selected because they provide internationally recognized frameworks for educational quality, intercultural competence, inclusion, and educational governance.

The analysis focused on identifying key themes related to intercultural education, educational inclusion, language policy, multicultural integration, competency development, and educational governance. Particular attention was paid to the ways in which official documents conceptualize cultural diversity and propose mechanisms for addressing intercultural challenges within educational settings.

Document analysis was conducted systematically through the identification, categorization, and interpretation of relevant policy themes.

This process enabled the researcher to compare educational priorities across countries and evaluate the extent to which intercultural education is embedded within national educational strategies.

To complement the comparative and policy analyses, the study employed *qualitative content analysis* as a method for examining academic literature, policy documents, and educational reports. Qualitative content analysis is particularly useful for identifying recurring themes, patterns, concepts, and relationships within textual data (Schreier, 2012).

The content analysis followed an inductive-deductive approach. Initially, a set of analytical categories was developed based on the research objectives and theoretical foundations of intercultural education. These categories included educational governance, curriculum development, intercultural competence, multicultural integration, refugee education, inclusive practices, language adaptation, educational reform, and internationalization.

Subsequently, academic publications, policy documents, and international reports were systematically reviewed and coded according to these categories. The coding process aimed to identify how intercultural education is conceptualized, implemented, and evaluated within Turkish and Ukrainian educational contexts. Particular attention was paid to recurring themes associated with educational responses to cultural diversity and the development of intercultural competence.

The analysis also examined the frequency and significance of specific concepts across different sources. This procedure facilitated the identification of dominant trends in educational policy and research while revealing similarities and differences between the two countries. Through this process, the study generated a comprehensive understanding of the educational mechanisms supporting intercultural interaction and inclusion.

An additional objective of the qualitative content analysis was to identify educational practices that may serve as examples of successful intercultural engagement. Special consideration was given to Turkish experiences in refugee education, language support programs, and multicultural classroom management, as these areas provide practical insights relevant to contemporary educational challenges in Ukraine.

To enhance the reliability of the findings, the study relied on multiple sources of evidence, including academic literature, governmental

documents, and reports produced by international organizations. The use of data triangulation enabled the researcher to compare information from different sources and reduce potential bias associated with individual publications or institutional perspectives.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relies primarily on secondary data rather than original empirical field research. Second, educational systems are continuously evolving, and policy developments occurring after the completion of data collection may influence future interpretations. Third, intercultural education is a complex and context-dependent phenomenon, which means that educational practices cannot always be transferred directly from one country to another.

Despite these limitations, the combination of comparative analysis, policy document analysis, and qualitative content analysis provides a robust methodological framework for examining the relationship between Turkish educational practices and intercultural development within the Ukrainian educational system. The methodological approach enables a comprehensive assessment of educational structures, policies, and practices while supporting the formulation of evidence-based conclusions and recommendations.

Results and Discussion

The comparative analysis of the Turkish and Ukrainian educational systems demonstrates that governance structures play a decisive role in shaping educational priorities, curriculum implementation, intercultural policies, and institutional adaptability. Although both countries have experienced significant educational reforms during the last decades, their approaches to governance differ substantially. Turkey maintains a predominantly centralized educational model, whereas Ukraine has increasingly adopted decentralized governance mechanisms aligned with European educational standards.

The Turkish educational system is characterized by a strong centralized administrative framework coordinated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Educational policy, curriculum development, teacher recruitment standards, assessment procedures, and school management regulations are largely determined at the national level. This centralized structure reflects the historical role of education as an instrument of nation-building and social integration since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.

One of the major advantages of centralized governance is policy coherence. Educational reforms can be implemented simultaneously throughout the country, ensuring consistency in educational standards and learning outcomes. National curricula, teacher qualification requirements, and assessment mechanisms are designed and regulated through unified procedures, reducing regional disparities in educational content and administrative practices (Aydagül, 2018).

The Turkish government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis illustrates the operational advantages of centralized educational governance. Following the arrival of millions of refugee students, national authorities rapidly introduced language support programs, teacher training initiatives, and integration mechanisms applicable across the country. The existence of centralized decision-making structures enabled educational institutions to respond relatively quickly to unprecedented demographic challenges (Aras & Yasun, 2016).

However, the literature also identifies limitations associated with extensive centralization. Educational institutions often have limited autonomy regarding curriculum adaptation, budget allocation, and local policy development. Scholars argue that highly centralized governance may reduce institutional flexibility and inhibit innovative educational practices adapted to local social and cultural contexts (Gümüş & Gök, 2016).

Furthermore, frequent changes in national educational policies have generated concerns regarding policy continuity and long-term strategic planning. Since educational reforms are largely dependent on governmental priorities, changes in political leadership may result in modifications to curriculum standards, examination systems, and educational objectives. Such fluctuations can create uncertainty among educational stakeholders and complicate sustainable educational development.

In contrast to Turkey, Ukraine has pursued a gradual process of educational decentralization since independence. Educational reforms accelerated significantly following the adoption of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) framework, which emphasizes institutional autonomy, community participation, democratic governance, and competency-based learning (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2023).

The decentralization process seeks to transfer greater decision-making authority from central governmental institutions to regional educational

authorities, municipalities, and individual schools. Educational institutions increasingly participate in curriculum implementation decisions, budget planning, and community engagement initiatives. This approach reflects broader democratic reforms occurring within Ukrainian society and aligns with European educational governance principles.

A significant advantage of decentralization is increased responsiveness to local educational needs. Schools and local educational authorities can adapt educational practices to specific demographic, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions. Such flexibility may be particularly valuable in regions characterized by cultural diversity or unique social challenges.

The decentralization model also promotes stakeholder participation. Teachers, parents, local communities, and educational administrators are increasingly involved in educational decision-making processes. Research suggests that participatory governance contributes to greater institutional accountability and enhances the relevance of educational initiatives (European Commission, 2023).

Nevertheless, decentralization presents several challenges. Educational quality may vary between regions due to differences in financial resources, administrative capacity, and local expertise. Furthermore, the transition from centralized governance requires substantial institutional restructuring and professional development efforts for educational administrators and teachers.

The recent challenges associated with internal displacement and wartime educational disruption have further highlighted the importance of balancing local flexibility with national coordination. While decentralization enables context-sensitive responses, national educational authorities remain essential for ensuring educational continuity and equitable access to educational services.

The comparative analysis reveals that neither governance model can be considered universally superior. Rather, each system demonstrates distinct strengths and limitations shaped by historical, political, and social circumstances.

Turkey's centralized model provides strong coordination capacity, policy consistency, and rapid implementation of nationwide reforms. Such characteristics proved particularly valuable during periods of large-scale migration and educational expansion. Centralized governance

facilitates uniform educational standards and enables the rapid mobilization of resources in response to emerging challenges.

Ukraine's decentralized approach, by contrast, promotes institutional autonomy, democratic participation, and local adaptability. These characteristics support educational innovation and encourage schools to respond effectively to diverse community needs. The Ukrainian model aligns more closely with contemporary European educational governance principles emphasizing stakeholder engagement and institutional flexibility.

From an intercultural perspective, both governance approaches offer valuable lessons. Centralized coordination can facilitate the implementation of nationwide intercultural education policies, teacher training programs, and inclusion initiatives. Simultaneously, decentralized governance enables educational institutions to adapt intercultural practices to local cultural contexts and community characteristics.

The governance structures of both countries significantly influence the implementation of intercultural education. In Turkey, intercultural initiatives are generally integrated into broader national educational strategies and implemented through centralized policy frameworks. This approach ensures policy consistency but may limit local adaptation.

In Ukraine, intercultural education is increasingly promoted through local educational initiatives, international cooperation projects, and competency-based curricula. Decentralized governance creates opportunities for innovative intercultural practices but may also result in variations in implementation quality across regions.

The findings suggest that an effective intercultural educational system requires a balanced governance approach combining national strategic coordination with local institutional flexibility. Such a model would allow educational authorities to establish common standards for intercultural competence while enabling schools to adapt educational practices to specific community needs.

The governance comparison demonstrates that educational effectiveness depends not solely on the degree of centralization or decentralization but on the capacity of governance structures to support educational innovation, social inclusion, and institutional resilience. The Turkish case highlights the advantages of strong policy coordination during periods of social transformation and migration. The Ukrainian

experience demonstrates the importance of democratic participation and local adaptability in educational reform.

From the perspective of intercultural interaction, the most significant finding is that successful educational systems require both strategic coherence and contextual responsiveness. Educational institutions must simultaneously maintain common educational standards and respond effectively to cultural diversity, migration, and changing social conditions.

These findings provide the foundation for the subsequent analysis of curriculum development, intercultural educational practices, and refugee education strategies. They also support the development of an integrated Turkish–Ukrainian model of intercultural education that combines centralized strategic coordination with decentralized institutional flexibility.

The comparison of Turkish and Ukrainian curricula reveals two different but partially complementary models of educational development. The Turkish curriculum is more centralized, structured, and outcome-oriented, whereas the Ukrainian curriculum increasingly follows a competency-based and student-centered approach influenced by European educational standards.

In Turkey, curriculum development is primarily regulated by the Ministry of National Education. This means that educational content, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and subject distribution are largely determined at the national level. Such a model ensures uniformity across the country and allows the state to maintain control over the ideological, cultural, and academic direction of education. Turkish curricula traditionally emphasize national identity, civic responsibility, respect for cultural heritage, discipline-based knowledge, and measurable academic outcomes (Aydagül, 2018; MoNE, 2023).

A distinctive feature of the Turkish curriculum is its strong connection with national consolidation. Education is regarded not only as a process of knowledge transmission but also as a mechanism for strengthening social unity and cultural continuity. Therefore, subjects such as Turkish language, history, social studies, and religious culture often play an important role in forming students' understanding of citizenship, belonging, and national values. This approach contributes to social cohesion but may also limit broader intercultural flexibility if cultural diversity is not sufficiently represented in educational content.

Ukraine, by contrast, has been gradually transforming its curriculum from a knowledge-centered Soviet model toward a competency-based model. The New Ukrainian School reform emphasizes key competencies, critical thinking, communication, creativity, democratic values, and lifelong learning. Instead of focusing only on the reproduction of information, the Ukrainian curriculum aims to develop students' ability to apply knowledge in real-life situations. This reflects the broader European tendency toward competency-based education and learner-centered pedagogy (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2023; European Commission, 2023).

The Ukrainian curriculum places growing emphasis on democratic citizenship, human rights, tolerance, inclusion, and intercultural communication. These principles are especially visible in foreign language education, civic education, literature, history, and social studies. In comparison with Turkey, Ukraine's curriculum appears more open to European integration, pluralism, and decentralization. However, the practical implementation of these principles remains uneven because schools differ in resources, teacher readiness, and local administrative capacity.

From the perspective of intercultural education, Turkey demonstrates stronger practical experience, especially in relation to refugee and migrant students. Turkish schools have had to adapt curricula and learning support mechanisms to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Language adaptation programs and integration-oriented practices have become important components of the Turkish educational response to migration (Aras & Yasun, 2016; UNICEF, 2023).

Ukraine, on the other hand, has a stronger theoretical and normative orientation toward intercultural competence. Ukrainian educational documents emphasize tolerance, European values, democratic participation, and inclusion, but intercultural education is often implemented through general educational principles rather than through systematic practical mechanisms. This means that Ukraine has a well-developed reform discourse, while Turkey has accumulated more applied experience in multicultural classroom management.

The comparative analysis shows that the Turkish curriculum may be described as structured and integration-oriented, while the Ukrainian curriculum may be described as competency-based and

transformation-oriented. Turkey's strength lies in its ability to implement unified educational standards and respond to large-scale integration challenges. Ukraine's strength lies in its reform orientation, flexibility, and focus on democratic and intercultural competencies.

However, both systems also face limitations. The Turkish curriculum may be too centralized and standardized, which can restrict teacher autonomy and local adaptation. The Ukrainian curriculum, while progressive in its principles, may face difficulties in consistent implementation due to decentralization, regional disparities, and the ongoing effects of social crisis.

Therefore, the most productive approach is not to copy one model into another, but to combine their strongest elements. Ukraine may benefit from Turkey's practical mechanisms of multicultural integration, language support, and social adaptation. At the same time, Turkish educational practice may benefit from Ukraine's stronger emphasis on student-centered learning, decentralization, and democratic competence.

Thus, the curriculum comparison demonstrates that intercultural education requires both structured institutional support and flexible pedagogical implementation. A balanced Turkish-Ukrainian approach could include: national intercultural education standards, school-level adaptation mechanisms, teacher training for multicultural classrooms, language support for displaced and migrant students, and curriculum content that promotes both national identity and intercultural openness.

Based on the conducted comparative analysis of the two educational systems we have elaborated a model of an integrated Turkish-Ukrainian model of intercultural education may be defined as a coordinated educational framework that connects policy, curriculum, teacher education, inclusion, and international cooperation in order to develop intercultural competence, mutual understanding, and inclusive learning environments within Turkish and Ukrainian educational contexts. The core aim of elaborating such model is to develop an educational system that supports intercultural dialogue, democratic values, multilingual awareness, social inclusion, and cooperation between Turkish and Ukrainian educational communities.

Table 1. A Comparative Table of the Turkish and Ukrainian Educational Systems

Dimension	Turkey	Ukraine	Comparative Conclusion
<i>Curriculum model</i>	Centralized, standardized	Competency-based, reform-oriented	Turkey ensures consistency; Ukraine supports flexibility
<i>Main focus</i>	National identity, measurable outcomes	Democratic values, competencies, European integration	Different priorities can complement each other
<i>Pedagogy</i>	More structured, teacher-guided	Increasingly student-centered	Ukraine shows stronger learner-centered orientation
<i>Intercultural aspect</i>	Practice-driven through migration experience	Normative and reform-based	Turkey offers practical tools; Ukraine offers value-based framework
<i>Main limitation</i>	Rigidity and centralization	Uneven implementation	A mixed model is preferable

The model is based on five interconnected components:

1. Strategic educational governance

This component defines the policy and institutional framework.

It includes:

- national and institutional strategies for intercultural education;
- cooperation between ministries, universities, schools, NGOs, and local communities;
- integration of intercultural values into education standards;
- monitoring of equality, inclusion, language access, and cultural representation.

Function in the model: it creates the legal, administrative, and financial conditions for intercultural education.

2. Competency-based curriculum development

The curriculum should move beyond factual knowledge about cultures and focus on intercultural competencies.

Key competencies include:

- intercultural communication;
- respect for cultural and linguistic diversity;
- critical thinking about stereotypes and prejudice;
- democratic citizenship;
- multilingual and comparative cultural awareness;
- conflict-resolution skills.

Turkish and Ukrainian examples, literature, history, civic education, language learning, and shared Black Sea regional contexts can be used as curriculum content.

Function in the model is: it translates intercultural goals into learning outcomes, teaching materials, and assessment.

3. Intercultural teacher preparation

Teachers are central actors in the model. Teacher education should include:

- intercultural pedagogy;
- bilingual and multilingual teaching strategies;
- trauma-sensitive education, especially relevant for displaced Ukrainian learners;
- comparative Turkish–Ukrainian educational studies;
- anti-discrimination and inclusive classroom management;
- international teaching practice, exchanges, and joint seminars.

Function in the model: it prepares teachers to act as mediators between cultures, languages, and educational traditions.

4. Inclusive educational practices

This component ensures that intercultural education reaches all learners. It includes:

- support for refugee, migrant, minority, and displaced students;
- culturally responsive teaching;
- language support in Turkish, Ukrainian, and other relevant languages;
- inclusive school environments;
- parent and community participation;
- prevention of bullying, xenophobia, and exclusion.

Function in the model: it turns intercultural education into everyday classroom practice.

5. International educational cooperation

This component connects Turkish and Ukrainian institutions. It may include:

- university partnerships;
- school twinning projects;
- Erasmus+, TÜBİTAK, Ukrainian academic mobility, and bilateral exchange programs;
- joint research on intercultural education;
- digital classrooms and virtual exchanges;
- shared teacher-training modules and student projects.

Function in the model: it sustains long-term Turkish–Ukrainian educational dialogue and innovation.

The five components should operate as a cycle: Governance → Curriculum → Teacher preparation → Inclusive practice → International cooperation → renewed governance.

This means that international cooperation and classroom experience should feed back into policy, curriculum reform, and teacher education.

As an outcome, the model should produce:

- interculturally competent students;
- teachers prepared for diverse classrooms;
- inclusive Turkish and Ukrainian schools/universities;
- stronger bilateral educational cooperation;
- reduced stereotypes and cultural distance;
- shared democratic and humanistic educational values.

Below the given model is illustrated as a hub-and-spoke model.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to examine the characteristics of the Turkish educational system and to analyze its influence on the development of intercultural interaction within the Ukrainian educational context. Through comparative analysis, policy document analysis, and qualitative content analysis, the study explored the governance structures, curriculum approaches, intercultural education practices, and educational responses to cultural diversity in both countries.

The findings demonstrate that Turkey and Ukraine have followed different trajectories of educational development, resulting in distinct but

complementary approaches to educational governance and intercultural education. Turkey has maintained a predominantly centralized educational system characterized by strong governmental coordination, standardized curricula, and nationally regulated educational policies. This model has facilitated the implementation of large-scale educational reforms and enabled the rapid development of educational responses to migration and refugee integration. Ukraine, in contrast, has pursued a process of decentralization and educational modernization aligned with European educational standards. The New Ukrainian School reform has contributed to the development of competency-based education, democratic governance, learner-centered pedagogy, and increased institutional autonomy.

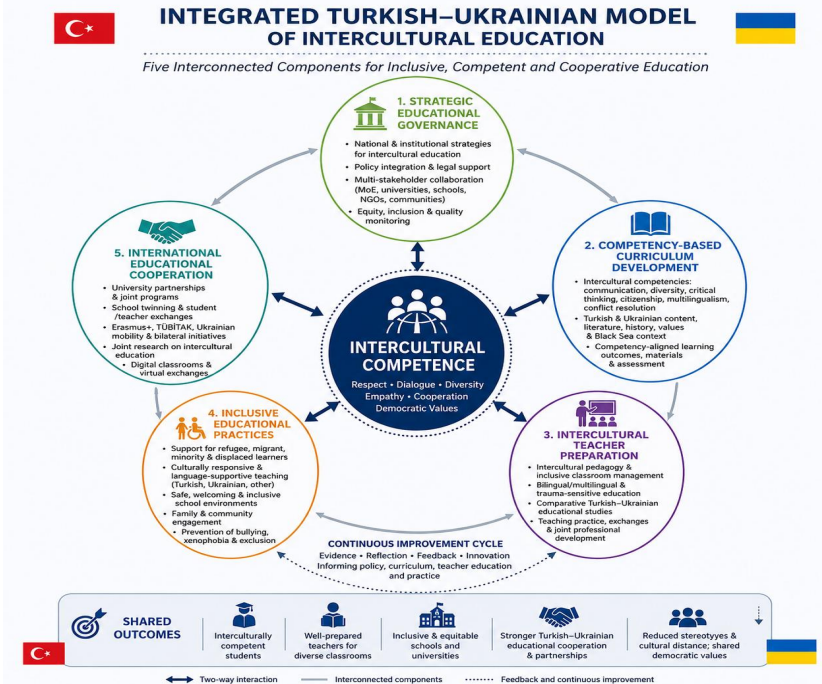


Fig. 1. Integrated Turkish-Ukrainian Model of Intercultural Education

The comparative analysis of curricula revealed significant differences in educational priorities and pedagogical approaches. Turkish curricula emphasize national identity, cultural heritage, measurable learning outcomes, and social cohesion. Ukrainian curricula focus more strongly on competency development, critical thinking, democratic citizenship, and European integration. While Turkey demonstrates greater consistency in curriculum implementation due to centralized governance, Ukraine offers greater flexibility and responsiveness to local educational needs. These differences suggest that both systems possess strengths that may contribute to the improvement of intercultural education.

Particular attention was given to intercultural education and multicultural integration. The study found that Turkey has accumulated substantial practical experience in managing culturally diverse educational environments, primarily as a result of large-scale migration and refugee education. Turkish educational institutions have implemented language adaptation programs, inclusive educational practices, and social integration mechanisms that support the educational participation of students from different cultural backgrounds. These experiences provide valuable examples of how educational systems can respond effectively to increasing cultural diversity.

In contrast, intercultural education in Ukraine has developed primarily within the framework of educational reform and European integration. Ukrainian educational policies emphasize tolerance, cultural awareness, democratic values, human rights, and intercultural communication. However, the research indicates that intercultural education in Ukraine remains more normative and conceptual than practice-oriented. Consequently, there is potential for incorporating selected Turkish educational practices into Ukrainian educational policy and institutional development.

One of the most important findings of the study is that effective intercultural education requires the integration of both structural and pedagogical dimensions. Educational institutions must not only promote intercultural values through curricula but also provide practical mechanisms that facilitate communication, inclusion, language adaptation, and social participation. This observation highlights the importance of combining policy frameworks with everyday educational practices.

The scientific novelty of the chapter lies in the development of a conceptual Turkish–Ukrainian Intercultural Education Model. The proposed model combines the strengths of both educational systems and is based on five interconnected components: strategic educational governance, competency-based curriculum development, intercultural teacher preparation, inclusive educational practices, and international educational cooperation. The model suggests that successful intercultural education requires a balance between centralized strategic coordination and local institutional flexibility. Such an approach enables educational systems to maintain common standards while adapting educational practices to specific social and cultural contexts.

The study also demonstrates that educational cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine can generate mutual benefits. Turkey's experience in refugee education, multicultural classroom management, and language support programs may contribute to strengthening inclusive educational practices in Ukraine. At the same time, Ukraine's experience in competency-based education, democratic governance, and European educational integration may provide useful perspectives for further modernization of Turkish educational policies. The relationship between the two systems should therefore be understood not as a process of unilateral policy transfer but as a form of reciprocal educational learning.

From a practical perspective, the findings may support policymakers, educational administrators, curriculum developers, and teacher education institutions in designing strategies aimed at strengthening intercultural competence and educational inclusion. The results highlight the importance of systematic teacher training in intercultural communication, the integration of multicultural perspectives into curricula, the development of language support mechanisms for displaced and migrant learners, and the promotion of international educational partnerships.

Several limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The research relied primarily on secondary sources, policy documents, and academic literature rather than original empirical data collected from educational institutions. Future research may therefore benefit from conducting interviews, surveys, and case studies involving educators, students, and policymakers in both countries. Such investigations would provide deeper insights into the practical implementation of intercultural educational policies and their impact on educational outcomes.

Future research may also explore the effectiveness of specific Turkish intercultural educational practices in Ukrainian educational settings, particularly in the context of migration, displacement, and post-conflict educational reconstruction. Additional comparative studies involving other countries may further contribute to understanding how educational systems can respond to increasing cultural diversity while maintaining social cohesion and educational quality.

In conclusion, the study confirms that intercultural education has become an essential component of contemporary educational development. The Turkish and Ukrainian educational systems offer valuable and complementary experiences that can contribute to the creation of more inclusive, adaptive, and globally oriented educational environments. By integrating practical multicultural strategies with competency-based and democratic educational principles, educational institutions can better prepare learners for successful participation in increasingly interconnected and culturally diverse societies.

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