**THE NINGHT INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION (ICCI-EPOK 2021)**

**FINAL DECLARATION**

IX. International Congress on Curriculum and Instruction (ICCI-EPOK 2021), hosted by Ege University Faculty of Education in collaboration with the Turkish Curriculum and Instruction Association was held online between November 4 and 6, 2021 with the main theme of "The Effects of the Pandemic on Curriculum". The programme of the congress included two panels and five keynote sessions. The opening ceremony speeches of the congress were given by Vice Chancellor - Professor rof. Hakan Atılgan, the Dean of the Faculty of Education - Professor Hülya Yılmaz on behalf of Ege University and by the President of the Turkish Curriculum and Instruction Association - Professor Özcan Demirel on behalf of the association. Researchers from 12 countries, including Turkey, participated the congress as keynote speakers, panellists or with oral presentations. In the congress, 83 papers prepared by 167 researchers were presented. Final declaration prepared in accordance with the presentations and discussions in the congress is presented below:

On the first day of the congress, in the first keynote speech titled “The Pandemic of the Last Century: Covid-19”, Professor Serhat Ünal from Hacettepe University presented important information about vaccination procedures and the world after the pandemic by explaining the course of Covid-19 Pandemic from the beginning up to the present day with medical and technical details. In the fight against the pandemic, he suggested carrying out projects/programmes aiming at getting vaccinated and the rules in preventing the spread of the virus, giving roles to educational experts in Covid-19 Science Council.

On the first day panel of the congress (Curriculum Studies in Pandemic: Policies, Realities and Futures), presenting the educational effects of the Pandemic in 2020 in Turkey, Austria, Spain, the UK and the USA, international comparisons related to the present situation were made, forecasts about the future of education in K-12 and higher education after the Pandemic were discussed. In the discussions, especially opinions about teacher education and digitalization of curricula became prominent, and suggestions aimed at the proliferation of inclusive education, supporting students in all education levels and children with special needs were made.

As for the papers presented in the parallel sessions, the effects of the pandemic on the components of curriculum were addressed and the effects created by the activities in this process on the shareholders of curriculum were included. It was stated that in the emergency digital education process, more learning losses appeared in applied courses than in theoretical courses, according to emergency situation approach short-term professional development programmes were carried out in order to enhance the distance education proficiencies and skills of teachers.

Issues such as decline in student attendance during online education process, internet access and technical problems, content intensity in curricula, classroom management problems, assessment and evaluation problems, teachers feeling incompetent, lack of material, lack of interaction, tendency to teacher centred education, weakening in students’ reading and writing skills, disadvantaged and immigrant students’ problems in access to education were pointed out. It was remarked that the pandemic suspended especially participant oriented curriculum evaluation studies considerably as it is important to carry out programme evaluation studies in collaboration with the curriculum stakeholders.

As for the fundamental recommendations about curriculum studies in education after the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was highlighted that curricula should be developed with alternative designs which can be applied as face to face, online and flipped models, teacher education programmes should be updated so as to make teacher candidates gain digital proficiencies (especially modules such as online education, use of Web 2.0 tools should be added to Instructional Design, Instructional Principles and Methods, Programme Development courses) . It was recommended that curriculum studies related to getting educators to gain competencies in developing their classroom management skills in online and hybrid education should be carried out. It was advised that teacher education policies should be refined basing on the matters of cultural diversity, social justice, equal opportunity in education and teachers should be empowered in educating immigrant students.

On the second day of the congress, in Professor Wee Tiong Seah’s keynote speech titled “How the pandemic changed the school curriculum: Australia’s experience” school closure process during Covid-19 Pandemic was explained, it was pointed out that despite this process, there was no change in school success, present researches on students and teachers’ mental health and a course of action were shared. It was added to the agenda that models in the area of positive psychology should be referred to in order to strengthen students’ mental health, their physical, economic, social, emotional, subjective well-being, and their well-being related to the field (e.g. mathematical well-being). In this respect, it was emphasized that in curricula, initiatives should be launched not only in cognitive domain but also in affective domain, which is often neglected.

In the keynote speech titled as “The engaged university after the Corona crisis” by Professor Ronaldo Munck from Dublin City University, Ireland, the crisis the Pandemic created in social, economic, sociological, psychological, political and educational terms were addressed; nevertheless, opinions showing these crises can create brand new opportunities in higher education were expressed. In this respect, it was stated that universities should reform their systems basing on the experiences during the crisis period, develop hybrid education models, take more social responsibilities, prioritise social researches and reconsider their missions according to future needs.

In the keynote speech titled as “Designing a new story for education” by Professor Susan Drake and Joanne Reid from Brock University, Canada, a model was presented by addressing the change of educational understanding with the pandemic and the emerging new story (determining learning losses, effort in keeping schools open, compensating the gaps with tutorials, reducing anxiety and burn-out, etc.)

In the parallel sessions held on the second day, it was stated that in the pandemic process teachers used various strategies in diluted and distance education, communication with parents had an important place in this process. In the pandemic process, no steps were taken in the education of highly gifted and talented students, and teachers working in BILSEM encountered many difficulties. It was highlighted that since interaction like in face-to-face education could not be formed, in the pandemic process curricula couldn’t be applied effectively, curriculum development and evaluation studies were hindered; however, the amount of news related to this was limited. It was stated that in order to carry out assessment and evaluation in distance education, teacher candidates were given more assignments such as preparing presentations, making lesson plans, designing materials but these assignments did not serve their purpose because of the matters such as learning management system problems, insufficient time, inequality of opportunity, homework load. It was expressed that in the distance education process educational activities for teachers’ professional development were held on digital platforms but the problems which had appeared in face-to-face programmes (disconnection from practise and needs, being theory-based) remained the same.

For the fundamental recommendations in terms of curriculum studies in education after the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was suggested that trainings which will develop teachers’ skills in using augmented reality applications and various kinds of psycho-social trainings for overcoming burn-out should be included. Apart from this, it was suggested that technological infrastructure problems in online education should be solved, digital content which will make students active should be created, curriculum should be renewed so that it will be appropriate for online education, workshops about curriculum literacy, curriculum dependency and adapting curriculum to class should be held.

On the last day of the congress, in the keynote speech of Professor Hasan Şeker, titled as “The pandemic period and its reminders of program outcomes in the context of school attitudes”, factors related to school attitude were explained and the effects of the pandemic on these factors were clarified. Sense of belonging, the quality of instruction, school image, loneliness, feedback, unwillingness, extracurricular activities were pointed out as variables which have effect on school attitude. It was stressed that after the pandemic in educational curricula, it is necessary to focus on not only measurable cognitive competencies but also on affective development, aesthetic, reflective and critical thinking skills, peer learning and process evaluation.

In the last parallel sessions researches on how curriculum resources were used, student attitudes towards distance education, distance education in language learning, professional development and lifelong learning competencies of teachers in the pandemic period were presented. Also it was determined that serious problems occurred in teaching reading and writing in distance education, and it was emphasized that students who had pre-school education and parent support went through this process more comfortably and efficiently. The main recommendation the discussions concluded was that the data obtained during the pandemic process should be recollected after the pandemic and the results should be compared.

In the student panel titled “Being Student During the Pandemic”, which was moderated by Özden Ölmez Ceylan (PhD), elementary school, secondary school, high school and university students shared their experiences during the pandemic process. It was noticed that students shared more experience about the negative academic and social effects of distance education (technical problems, learning difficulties, desocialization, staying away from the nature and environment, attention and motivation problems, etc.). In terms of positive effects, in general the advantages of having free time, reading more books and getting rid of carrying school bag were expressed. Also students’ after pandemic plans were learned. Lastly, a sentence completion activity was done with the students. They completed the sentences about their experiences during the pandemic and the word cloud created by the similes emerged was shared with the audience.

 November 6, 2021

The Organizing Committee