Identifying, Analyzing And Ranking The Most Popular Sources Of Curriculum Studies In Iran From The Perspective Of Doctoral Students

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to identify, analyze and rank the most popular sources (translation and compilation) in the field of curriculum studies at present. The research method in this research was quantitative and Shannon and Tapsis entropy type. The statistical population was the students and graduates of the doctoral degree in the field of curriculum studies in the public universities of Tehran city, which was determined by using the sample size formula of 112 people and determined by the available sampling method. The tool used was a researcher-made (structured) questionnaire containing the names of books and related and validated questions, which was made available to the statistical community of the research through the study groups and channels of the curriculum studies field. The indicators (components) used in the present research were obtained by using the qualitative content analysis method and interviews with professors who are members of the faculty of Tehran's public universities in the field of curriculum studies.Based on the obtained results, 12 works were ranked. Curriculum planning Curriculum theories, Mehr Mohammadi, Basic principles and concepts of curriculum planning, Koresh Fathi Vajargah, and curriculums towards new identities, Fathi Vajargah are ranked first to third among the most popular curriculum resources in Program Studies. They are a lesson in Iran.

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INTRODUCTION

Based on the historical evidence and the consensus of experts, the field of curriculum or the more common term of curriculum studies, as an epistemological domain or one of the specialized fields of the domain of education in 1918, with the publication of Franklin Bobbitt Hoyt's curriculum book found and recognized (Mehdizadeh, 2022). In fact, because of the publication of the first book titled Curriculum, Bobbitt's name is reminiscent of the official beginning of the field of curriculum studies as a systematic field of study.

The second work that was published in the field of curriculum studies was called "Making Curriculum" which was written by Charters. However, as a scientific field with academic identity and dignity, the first curriculum studies group was formed in 1937 in the Faculty of Teacher Education of Columbia University in New York (Fathi Vajargah, 2015).

Therefore, the field of curriculum studies should be considered a young field which is now going through the stages of its development and evolution (Malki and Ghadri, 2023). In fact, curriculum studies field as a specialized field was practically born in the early 20th century by Franklin Babbitt. After that, the issues of this field drew the attention of many education experts (Fathi Vajargah, 2018).

It can be said that the curriculum has a long past but a short history, although the concept of curriculum has been implicit in the early educational programs and prescriptions in all civilized societies, but curriculum as a regular research field, from the 1920s to has come into existence.

Curriculum studies are said to recognize, predict, organize and shape educational activities in the field of learning for students. Curriculum is a branch of educational sciences. Curriculum planning is one of the most important branches of curriculum studies that deals with "compilation, implementation and evaluation" of curriculum (Shehbazi et al., 2019).

It should be noted that, curriculum includes curriculum studies, curriculum planning and other related reforms such as curriculum engineering, etc. (Fathi Vajargah, 2018). The field of curriculum studies in Iran has acquired the aspect of "epistemological refuge" and has become an imported field; in which not thinking and giving birth or theorizing to solve problems and society, but rather

translating mostly American and Western works and spreading them at the level of universities and scientific and executive circles is on the agenda (Khushi and Fathi Vajargah, 2018).

The field of curriculum studies is one of the main branches of educational sciences, which, despite being young and with little historical background, is considered one of the most challenging and controversial fields of human knowledge in terms of theoretical issues (Yar Mohammadian, 2021).

The newness of this specialized field has caused that there is no consensus in most of the fields of this field, such as the explanation of the limits and gaps and the nature of the issues that should be discussed in this field. One of the most important features of the field of curriculum studies in Iran is undoubtedly the lack of serious signs and, of course, suitable conditions for the production of thought and thought in the field of curriculum. In such a way, the prevailing situation shows a kind of conflict between the literature of the classical period on curriculum studies. On the one hand, it is the reproduction of the discourses arising from the ideas of the neo-realism period or the Pinar's period, on the other hand (Ghadri, 2018).

During these relatively short years, many scientific works in this field have been offered to those interested in education and training, especially experts and practitioners of curriculum studies in different societies, and their number reached 5390 volumes until 2001. The publication of this number of scientific works in this field may be considered as an indication of its dynamism at the world level. Of course, the contribution of the scientific community of Iran in creating this number of sources has not been very promising in the past years (Mehrmohammadi et al., 2010).

While curriculum theory is considered an important part of curriculum studies from the dominant point of view of scientists in this field, it seems that many decision makers and Decision makers of educational systems ignore. Even some implementers have institutionalized the misconception that curriculum theory has nothing to do with their daily decisions (Glathorne, 2005; Ornstein and Hankins, 2018).

They emphasize that the development of curriculum studies includes how to plan, Curriculum implementation and evaluation includes the relevant

people, processes and procedures. In this situation, curriculum models help designers to systematically and transparently select and establish specific logic for teaching, learning and assessment approaches. Even some experts in the field of curriculum studies use approaches to enable educators and other interested parties to define their views and formulate them in the form of curricula (Skyro, 2013).

Despite the deficiencies and shortcomings in the field of curriculum studies, authors and experts in the field of curriculum studies have started to write university textbooks and on the other hand, important foreign sources of the field of curriculum studies have been translated by them. These books are a great contribution in introducing the curriculum field to the people of the field and the education system.

The purpose of the current research was determining, ranking and analyzing the most popular sources (authored and translated) is currently the field of curriculum studies in Iran. Thus, the current study has tried to introduce, rank and analyze the most popular and most used resources in the field of curriculum studies. The fundamental question is what are the most important reasons for choosing an academic source and what will be the consequences of this issue. According to the practical nature of this research, the results can be used in the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology; Universities and higher education centers and students interested in studying in the field of curriculum studies.

Research Method

A. Approach and Strategy: A Multi-method design used in this research: qualitative content analysis (inductive), Shannon's entropy, and TOPSIS method. In order to conduct the present research, firstly, qualitative content analysis method and interviews with experts who are part of the history of curriculum studies in Iran's higher education system, and indicators (components) were prepared to develop a questionnaire, and then using the Shannon entropy and TOPSIS method ranked 12 sources of authorship and translation in the field of curriculum studies in Iran

B. Research Field and Sampling: The field of the qualitative phase are all experts and university faculty members with research and executive experience in the field of curriculum studies in Iran. According to

the subject of the research, two targeted sampling methods were used, that is, accessible and snowball sampling methods (Delavar, 2018). In this study, 15 people were interviewed, and in the last person, the theoretical saturation of the data was reached.

C. Tools: The tool used was a semi-structured interview. The interview questions were extracted using previous research topics in this field as well as the opinions of respected faculty members and advisors. Its validity (validity), both formal and content, has been done with the opinions of supervisors and advisors, as well as other experts of Khwarazmi University faculty members who were participants of the research. and its reliability (reliability) through taking detailed notes on the scene, high-quality audio recording, transcribing notes, noting pauses and details, anonymous coding with the help of a coder who was not part of the research team, and finally data analysis with the help of Anonymous people who had no effect on the data analysis were conducted, as well as the agreement and discretion of the coders and the research team, i.e. the researcher, supervisors and advisors. After collecting the data, the researcher made a questionnaire and a checklist of resources for the field of curriculum studies. Finally, a list of 134 curriculum studies books was prepared.

D. Data Analysis: The data analysis was done according to the qualitative nature of the information obtained from the interview and the extraction of similar concepts in them with the method of coding qualitative data using Collaizi method. In this process, each protocol was referred to and sentences and phrases that were directly related to the studied phenomenon were extracted. In fact, after studying each interview, the related parts that can be considered as the primary code according to the objectives of the research are identified and as the key points and index codes (components) of the most popular sources in the field of curriculum studies. Then, common primary concepts are classified in a higher class in the form of components, categories, and finally the identified components were placed in more general categories of dimensions or themes. The data was coded and analyzed using Maxqda 2020 software. The research plan is shown using a figure, and two other working methods, Shannon entropy and TOPSIS, are also described.
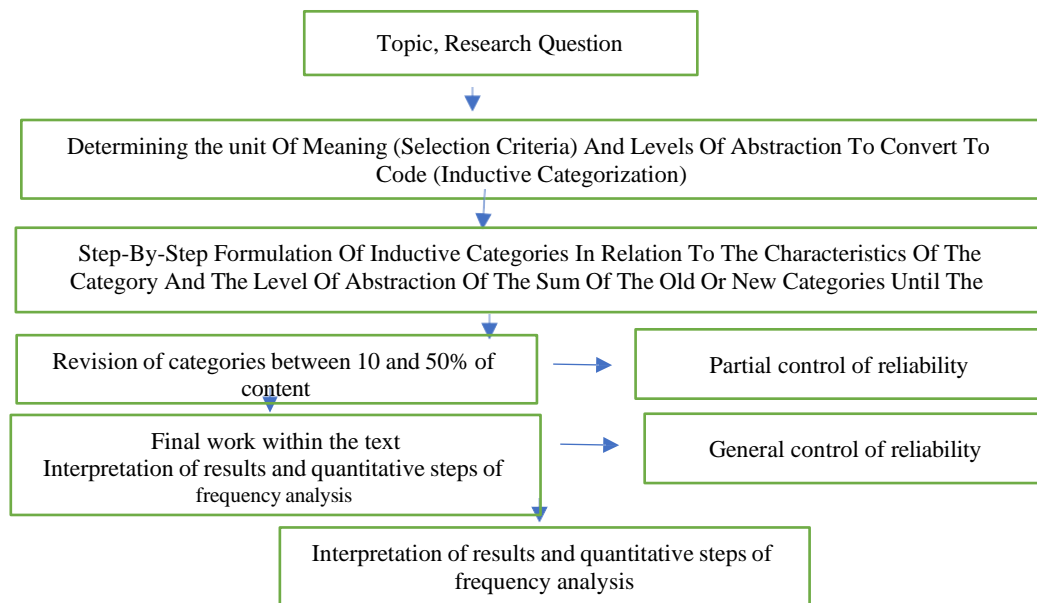
Figure 1 - The Method Of Qualitative Content Analysis
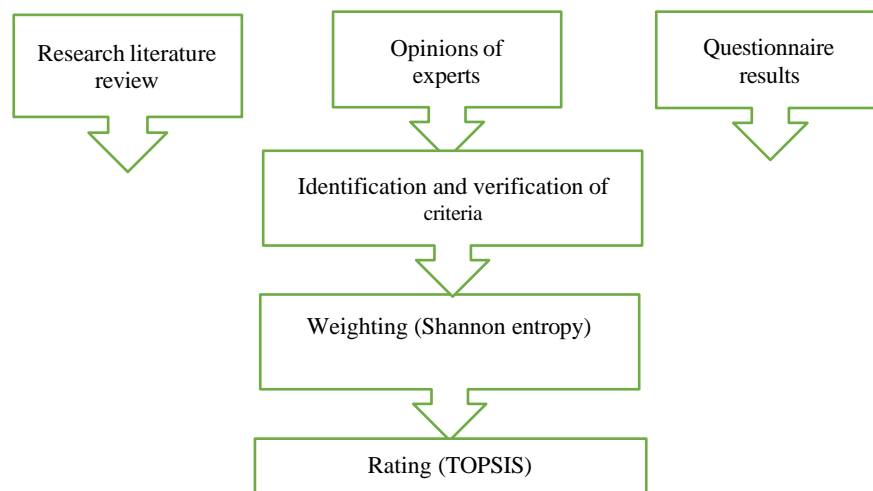
In Figure 2 the steps of the research are shown:

Figure 2. The steps of the research

Shannon Entropy and TAPSIS Method

In this research, the Shannon entropy method was used to rank the important teaching resources in the field of curriculum studies in Iran. It should be noted that in this research, the TOPSIS method was used for the final ranking, and both methods are discussed below. The main idea of this method is that the greater the dispersion in the values of an index, the more important that index is (Bani Amrian et al.,2022).

The steps of this method are as follows: In order to answer the research question which is the most

important source of curriculum studies field in Iran, first a table of books related to curriculum Studies field, which was 134 books, was prepared and available to the society through curriculum Studies field of study groups and channels. The statistics of the research were doctoral students in the field of curriculum studies of public universities in Tehran. Then, through the sampling available, the samples were answered to the questionnaire tool used by the researcher (according to Shannon and TOPSIS entropy decision matrix) and the data were extracted.

In order to estimate the sample size, first a preliminary study was conducted on 40 participants, and then the community variance was calculated using the obtained data, and then the sample size was determined using the formula; The sample size in this research was 112 participants. In the following, the two mentioned methods are discussed in detail. First, in Table 2, frequency distribution and sample size are shown in the Shannon entropy and TOPSIS entropy method.

Table No. 1- Frequency distribution of population size and sample size in Shannon entropy and TOPSIS method

Code	Population	Population Size	Sample Size
1	PhD students of Tehran universities	180	112

Shannon Entropy Method

Shannon's entropy method was presented in 1974 by Shannon and Weaver. Entropy actually expresses the amount of uncertainty in a continuous probability distribution. In decision sciences, Shannon's entropy method is used to determine the weight of indicators. This technique requires the criterion-option matrix, and if the data of the decision-making matrix is known, the entropy technique can be used to weight the indicators. The logic of Shannon's entropy method is that the greater the dispersion in the values of an index, the more important that index is (Bani Amirian and Noorbakhsh, 2023). In order to perform the Shannon entropy method, five steps were taken and finally the data was extracted and analyzed. The five steps of this method briefly include:

1. making the decision matrix - the matrix in this research includes the column that is the books of curriculum studies and the rows that include the components (university course source, entrance exam source, students' and graduates' proposal, author of the work, book content). In the following, the five steps of the Shannon entropy method are briefly mentioned.

2. Normalizing the designed matrix - normalization has been done in such a way that the area of each column is divided by the total column.

3. Calculating the entropy of each index: the entropy Ej was calculated in the form of the following formula. In this formula, it keeps the value of Ej between 0 and 1 as a constant value.

4. The fourth step: the value of dj (degree of deviation) was calculated, which indicates how much useful information the relevant index (dj) provides to the decision maker. The closer the measured values of an index are to each other; it indicates that the competing options do not differ much from each other in terms of that index.

5. In this step, the weight value of Wj is calculated. In fact, the criterion weight is equal to each dj (standard deviation) divided by the sum of djs, i.e. the standard deviation.

Calculation of index weights using Shannon's entropy method:

$$E_j = -k \sum_{i=1}^{m} P_{ij} \times Ln\, P_{ij} \qquad i = 1, 2, \ldots, m$$

In this part of the research and before calculating and ranking the sources of curriculum studies, the weight of related indicators was calculated using Shannon's entropy method. Based on the five steps mentioned, the results were determined as follows.

Table 4- Weighting of Indicators (Components)

Index	Entrance exam resource	University subject resource	introduction of students	Author of book	Book Content
WJ (weight)	0.22	0.22	0.17	0.25	0.25

Next, in table number (5), a part of the research results based on the Shannon entropy method and their weighting and without ranking is shown.

Table 2. Part of the Shannon Entropy Table

Indicators	Sources of National exam	Teaching Resource	Introducing by the Students	The Author of the book	Content
Curriculum Theory (Moharram Aghazadeh)	0.17	0.28	0.149	0.39	0.35
The new contextualization movement in curriculum studies (Vajargah)	0.20	0.27	0.314	0.43	0.42
Curriculum planning of schools (Mashaikh)	0.31	0.13	0.23	0.37	0.38
Basics and principles of curriculum planning (Karmati)	0.13	0.15	0.12	0.18	0.38
Strategic lesson planning in higher education (Arefi)	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.39	0.37

Considering that the Shannon entropy method is not able to provide ranking, therefore the researcher has used the TOPSIS method to achieve this goal.

TOPSIS Method

There are many statistical methods that can be used for ranking; One of them, according to the purpose of the current research, is to use the TOPSIS method. This method by itself is not able to rank the component, but first it is necessary to obtain the weight of the indicators by other methods. The compensatory method is for multi-criteria decision-making (Amini and Norouzi, 2017). The TOPSIS method is one of the most useful multi-criteria decision-making methods in examining real-world issues, which was first proposed in 1981. In this technique, the selected option has the shortest distance from the ideal (Bani Amirian and Noorbakhsh, 2023). The classification is based on this method.

The first step - formation of the decision matrix: In the first step, the decision matrix was prepared. The decision matrix of this method includes a series of criteria and options. Our matrix in this research includes the criteria (curriculum studies books) which were placed in the columns and options (book content, university course source, entrance exam source, students' suggestion) and graduates and

the author of the work) was placed in the line, which   is shown in the figure below in its raw form.

Table 3. Specifications of the Decision Matrix

The author of the work	suggested by students/ graduates	entrance exam source	university course source	book content
A1	-	-	-	-
A2	-	-	-	-
A3	-	-	-	-
A4	-	-	-	-

1.   De-scaling the indicators (normalizing the decision-making index).

2.   The third step: weighting the indicators: in this step, the weight of the criteria obtained from Shannon's entropy method is multiplied in the normal matrix, this has caused the weighted matrix to be obtained.

3.   Ideal and anti-ideal limit: here the type of criteria is defined, the criteria are either positive or negative, it should be noted that in this research, except for the component (appearance characteristics of the effect), the rest of the components are positive.

4.   Calculation of the distance from the ideal and anti-ideal solution: In this step, based on the following relationship, the distance of each option from its positive and negative ideal solution has been calculated.

5.   The TOPSIS index and the ranking of the options were obtained Summary of results and practical recommendations:

From the beginning of the curriculum field, trends from the field in universities have been given attention and attention by faculty members to present to students, which the examination of thematic trends of academic books of curriculum studies in Iran shows that according to the topics of theories and perspectives of the curriculum (82 chapters), curriculum design (72 chapters), curriculum evaluation (48 chapters), curriculum compilation (33 chapters), curriculum basics (32 chapters), curriculum concept and scope (26 chapters) and curriculum implementation (24 chapters) has received more attention from writers and translators of Persian books in this field. Some of these topics, such as curriculum theories, curriculum design, especially the component of content selection and organization, and evaluation, especially final and formative evaluation, can be considered as traditional and common topics in the field of curriculum planning. Based on this, it can be said that authored and translated books in Iran are more about curriculum planning than understanding or curriculum studies.

According to Mehrmohammadi (2021) such views on subjects in this field can be considered a minimum identity for the field rather than a maximum identity. Undoubtedly, the basis of the evolution of any field begins with the internal criticism of that field by experts with regard to the achievements and failures of that field of knowledge. The field of curriculum studies with a lifetime of more than a century and of course with half of this amount in Iran, is a young field with an unparalleled acceleration in development and a little growth throughout the world. The increasing growth of specialized journals, the formation of - scientific associations for international, regional and national curriculum studies, and of course the increasing growth of distance learning programs.

Postgraduate studies and the increase in the number of graduates in this field in Iran have given a different face to this field of knowledge. According to the items extracted from the research method of qualitative content analysis and interviews with leading figures in the field of curriculum studies, the indicators for determining the most popular sources in the field of curriculum studies were extracted and finally, to complete the research, two other methods were used, namely, Shannon's entropy and TOPSIS has been used. As an example, according to the descriptive codes extracted from the seventh interview, the method of extracting codes and themes is clear.

Table 4- Descriptive Codes Extracted from The Seventh Interview

Interviewee	Key points	Open Codes
M3-1	The most important books in this field cannot be named, and whoever you ask will definitely give a personal opinion, and most of the books that are known now are translations of foreign works.	personal opinion
M3-2	If I want to name a book, the author of the work will definitely stand out more.	The writer
M3-3	3 books that have caught my attention are the curriculum theories translated by Mehr Mohammadi and the books on principles and concepts of the curriculum	Book Name
M3-4	some of the main books of the field are now available on various sites as a master's and doctoral resource.	National Entrance exam source
M3-5	I myself use some books as teaching resources depending on the course unit and section.	Learning resource
M3-9	Most of the students are familiar with the books that the faculty members have introduced to them.	Learning resource

After determining the index (component), the Shannon entropy method was used. Five indicators (components) that were used in determining and ranking the most popular sources include:

1- The author of the work: If the author of a book is a prominent figure, the reader will probably prioritize it regardless of studying and researching its content.

2- The content of the book: sometimes regardless of whether a work has an author or not, according to the content of the book and its topic, that source will be valuable.

3- Entrance exam source: During the last two decades, books have been placed as a source for the master's and doctoral entrance exams, and the questions of the exams have been more than these sources. This was the reason for choosing and studying it.

4- Students' teaching resource as a lesson unit: faculty members introduce books to the students for their teaching resource, which becomes a factor for studying and also valuing it.

1. And finally, sometimes students (especially doctoral students) introduce resources to other students, according to their interests and their studies and new and up-to-date topics, and these resources will also be important.

It should be mentioned that in total, there are a set of factors that determine the role of choosing a source for doctoral students of curriculum studies, the most logical of which is the content of the book and the author of the work from the point of view of faculty members. But according to the analyzes made, the reason for choosing the books by the students was the entrance exam source, the university course source, the author, the content, and finally the introduction by other students. In this part of the research, according to the results of the TOPSIS method, twelve popular works in the field of curriculum studies are displayed.

Ranking the top 12 in Curriculum Studies

In the last step, after calculating the TOPSIS index for each option, the steps mentioned in the research method section were carried out, and then the options were continued in order from the highest to the lowest according to the mentioned indicators, and as a result, the rankings were determined. which is shown in the following table of 12 index sources.

Table 5. Twelve Important Works Of Curriculum Studies in Iran

	Result (resource Ranking)	Proximity Coefficient
1	Curriculum theories, Mehr Mohammadi	.81
2	Basic principles and concepts of curriculum planning, Koresh Fathi Vajargah	.81
3	curriculums towards new identities, Fathi Vajargah	.80
4	curriculums: approaches, perspectives and perspectives, Mehr Mohammadi	.79
5	platforms for understanding the curriculum, Mustafa Ghadri	.78
6	Preliminaries of curriculum planning, Maleki	.77
7	Curriculum Studies Methodology, Mehr Mohammadi	.77
8	Curriculum cultures, Mehr Mohammadi	.76
9	Principles And Basic Concepts of Curriculum Planning	.75
10	Books of Science Paradigms, Curriculum Theories, Marzooghi	.74
11	An introduction to educational and lesson planning book, Ali Taghipour Zaheer	.74
12	views of the curriculum (concepts, integrations and models), Selesbili	.74

According to the results mentioned in table number 5, it is necessary to mention a few points, firstly, this list is not necessarily the most important books in the field of curriculum studies, but it is only the most used and popular sources among students. The question here is that if the society Statistics of the research, experts and faculty members of the field of curriculum studies, whether the result will be repeated or not. Second, most of the books in the first to twelfth ranks have well-known authors (or translators) such as Mehr Mohammadi, Fathi Vajargah, Maleki and other great faculty members in the field of curriculum studies. Thirdly, in general, most of the students study only the books that are useful, either for the entrance exam or for passing the course units. The researcher has made two important suggestions for the development of curriculum studies.

1- Arrangements should be made to list the important books in the field of curriculum studies in terms of content according to the standards set by expert faculty members, and this possibility to study original and useful resources for students and other interested parties should be provided.

2- Renovation national exam from the dominance of a series of duplicate sources and replaced it with newer and more updated sources.

RESEARCH IMPLICATION:

1- Using similar researches with other statistical population (experienced faculty members).
2- Using other research methods to obtain results.
3- Applying research in other educational sciences.
4- Conducting research to validate the most important sources of curriculum studies.

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