

Human Rights Principles in the Social Education Textbooks of the Elementary Stage in Jordan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to suggest including a list of human rights principles that the Jordanian Elementary stage social education textbooks lack. This study also aimed at finding out the extent to which human rights principles are available, sequenced and integrated in these textbooks. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the researcher developed a human rights principles analyses model following the structural approach. The instrument was validated and credited before conducting the study. The study used the descriptive method to analyze the social education textbooks of primary fifth, sixth and seventh grades.

The findings of the study led to suggesting an inclusion of five components consisting of (28) human rights dimensions; these components are: civil rights, political rights, economic rights, social rights and cultural rights. Results indicated that there was a disproportion of human rights principles in the social education textbooks of the Elementary stage, there was poor sequence of human rights principles in these textbooks, and there was statistically no significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the integration level of human rights principles into textbooks of social education for fifth, sixth and seventh grades. The study concluded a number of recommendations.

Keywords: Human Rights, Social Education, Elementary Stage, Jordan.

Introduction

Curricula and textbooks represent the vision of the state and its institutions that are responsible for upbringing and forming students' personalities. This happens in Jordan because of the clear influence of curricula on shaping students' psychological, intellectual and social personalities, (Murray, 2003). Studying and analyzing curricula and textbooks instruction are considered important in the field of curriculum and teaching methods; particularly because the textbook is a major component of the educational system, a tool by which objectives of curricula are achieved, and an essential tool in both teaching and learning processes (To'eima, 2004).

Education Act in Jordan Focuses on the need of curricula to hold on the national standards. School curriculum contains beliefs, values and attitudes that are meant to impart into students. As for the outcomes of the primary stage social education in Jordan, they emphasize the students' acquisition of positive values and attitudes towards themselves, their religion, their society, their country, and the humanitarian community (Saada and Ibrahim, 2007). There is no doubt that teaching and imparting human rights into individuals' culture so that they can be turned into lived reality will contribute to enhance those individuals' understanding of their rights, and deepen their sense of dignity and freedom;

and thus leads them to participate actively in the development of their country and society (Bwalun, 2005).

Therefore, the Ministry of Education in Jordan sought to include noble concepts and values in the modern school curriculum, especially principles of human rights with specific focus on social education text books. In fact, the Ministry of Education in Jordan sought to develop the citizenship rights of students so that they can feel others' and their own contributions and roles in their society, appreciates the importance civil institutions and being aware of their rights (Talafha, 2009).

The social education subject plays an important role in the upbringing of active individuals through the development of desirable attitudes, values and behavioral patterns, in addition to various beneficial daily life skills (AL-Edwan and Hawamdeh, 2009).

Since the objective of social education course is promoting citizenship among students; the content of social education curriculum should be contemporary and cope with the educational innovations at both national and global levels (Mu'taman and Al-Atrash, 2002). This requires the adaptation of school curricula and updating their contents taking into account economic and social changes particularly with regard to human rights (Le Roux, 2001).

Jordan's interest in human rights principles aims at keeping pace with global concern after the increasing attention to human rights witnessed in the twentieth century. Many studies were conducted to reveal the principles of human rights in the school textbooks. In Egypt, for instance, Abu-Zeid (2000) conducted a study aimed to detect the extent of including concepts of human rights in fourth-ninth grade English language textbooks. Results indicated that the economic and social rights were the most represented in those books.

Yamasaki's (2000) study aimed at identifying the impact of human rights education on cognitive, emotional and practical dimensions of sixth and seventh grades students. Findings of the study recommended the need to include human rights at school curricula. The study also found that students participated act in their daily lives according to their their learning and could turn their knowledge of human rights into practical applications.

Paddy (2002) conducted a study in France to identify the educational topics that can be derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and how to include them in textbooks of the first-secondary grade civil and social education. Results showed that the concepts of civic education being provided to students included all items of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with different proportions.

Williams (2002) conducted a study to find out the impact of social studies books in Alberta on human rights education. Results showed that current social subject textbooks of Alberta lacked sources of human rights which implied the need to be supported.

In Britain, Al-Sagheer (2003) analyzed the content of the primary stage's citizenship document. Results showed that courses of teaching citizenship help students acquire the democratic system, respect others, deepen their knowledge of their individual rights and duties in the society, and develop their skills of collective cooperation and responsibility.

In Latin America and the Caribbean held Suarer (2006) conducted a study to find out the most important educational issues relating to human rights, and the methods used to disseminate human rights education. Results showed that human rights education of the most common educational issues, and key elements of global educational systems.

In Jordan, Hawamdeh and Ashour (2008) conducted a study to show the extent to which the human rights principles of eighth, ninth, and tenth grade are included in the national education curricula. Results indicated the poor interest of those curricula in principles of human rights, particularly in economic and social rights. In the same context, Al-Kukhn and Abdel-Razek (2009) conducted a study to identify the principles of human rights in the Arabic language curricula of the primary stage. Results showed that the right to learn occupied the first rank, whereas both the right to vote or being elected came in the last order .

Previous studies have shown that there are shortcomings in the representation of the principles of human rights in school curricula in general; hence this study aimed at finding out the degree of including human rights principles in the textbooks of social education of primary stage in Jordan, and to find out the sequence and integration of these principles in the textbooks.

Statement of the Problem and Questions of the Study

The most important goal of Elementary education in Jordan is to appreciate human rights. In this context, the democratic principles and values of personal and social behavior are presented through preparing students to bear their responsibilities towards themselves and others, and to be aware of their political, social, cultural, economic rights and duties. The social education curricula and textbooks are considered very important for their strong relation with the lives of individual, their families, the development of society and good citizenship, the formation of the student's personality and behavior, and the maintain of identity, principles, and values of society . Therefore, this study aimed at finding out the extent to which the social education textbooks of Jordanian Elementary stage are interested in human rights. The problem can be illustrated through the following questions:

1. To which extent are the principles of human rights included in the social education textbooks of Elementary stage in Jordan?
2. What is the level of sequence between human rights principles in the Jordanian Elementary stage social education textbooks?
3. What level of integration between human rights principles included in the Jordanian Elementary stage social education textbooks?

Purpose of the Study

The content analysis study aimed at finding out the extent to which explicit and implicit features of human rights principles in the textbooks of social education of Jordanian primary schools are available. The study also sought to uncover levels of sequence and integration of human rights principles contained therein.

Significance of the Study

The study derives its significance from the importance of social education curricula, and related textbooks in Jordan and from the importance of human rights principles. The results of study may add deeper understanding and educational implications to the teaching process and social curricula application. Moreover, the study may help social curricula planers, and textbooks designers to be more aware of human rights principles taught or should be taught for Elementary stage students in Jordan in order to take these facts into consideration in near future. Results may also provide educators with better understanding of the cultural, psychological and cognitive development of primary schools' students in terms of human rights and globalization.

Definition of Terms

- **Human rights:** a set of common rules and standards that must be acquired such as freedoms that ensure human dignity at various political, civil, social, economic and cultural aspects of life. These rights will be uncovered in the course of this study i.e., the Content analysis of social education books and national for the primary stage.
- **Elementary stage:** a stage of study through which includes first grade students up to tenth are included for the school year 2009/2010.

- **Level of sequence of human rights principles:** the existence of strong relationship between human rights principles in the content of social education textbooks in the Elementary stage.
- **Level of integration of human rights principles:** the existence of a strong relationship between the principles of human rights in the contents of social education textbooks in a way that these principles appear coherent and cohesive.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited to textbooks of social education for Jordanian fifth, sixth and seventh grades of the academic year (2009/2010). Therefore, results may not be generalized to other books, grades, years, or contexts.

Method and Procedures

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of this study consisted of social education textbooks of the primary stage in Jordan (first grade – tenth grade). The study sample consisted of the social education textbooks for the fifth, sixth and seventh grade in Jordan, in the academic year 2009/2010.

Methodology of the Study

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher carried out the following procedures:

First: The structural approach was used and the educational literature and previous studies on human rights were reviewed. This helped the researcher build up a classification of human rights principles. The initial instrument of the study consisted of five components covered (34) dimensions.

Second: seminar search approach was used by inviting a group of social studies specialists and experts. Axes of discussion were limited to the initial list of human rights principles developed by the researcher. Brainstorming was employed to activate and analyze the discussion. Each participant was asked to write notes in order to receive deeper discussion together. This has resulted in an amendment to human rights principles that should be included in the textbooks of social education.

Third: the descriptive approach was used as well as content analysis method which is considered one of scientific research methods. These methods are found more appropriate than other research method in the detection of the principles of human rights under investigation.

Instrument of the Study

In the light of previous procedures, the researcher was able to list the human rights principles that should be included in the social education textbooks of Jordanian primary schools. This amended preliminary list got composed of five axes that included (32) dimension.

Validity of the instrument: the researcher offered the study instrument to jury consisted of ten faculty members specialized in the Social Studies Curriculum in Jordanian universities. According to their suggestions and recommendation, the final form of the instrument consisted of (28) dimensions distributed to five axes which were: political rights, economic rights , civil rights, social rights, and cultural rights.

Credibility of the Instrument

In order to establish an acceptable level of the study instrument, the researcher conducted the following procedures:

First: a random sample of the social education textbooks of the Elementary stage was selected and analyzed. Two weeks later, the researcher re-analyzed the sample itself in order to determine the reliability level of both analyses (inter-rater reliability). The consistency between both analyses was found to be (95.3%) which was acceptable to analyze the sample of the study.

Second: the same random sample used in one above was analyzed by two experts in the field after explaining procedures of analyses for them in order to find level of consistency (intra-rater reliability level). The percentage of consistency between the researcher's analyses and the first analyst was found to be (88.7%), while it was (90.2%) with the second one. the average of consistency was (89.5%) which was an acceptable level of reliability, and thus, the instrument was considered suitable to collect data of the study through.

Data Analysis

The full sentence unit was considered the content analysis major code including all images, figures, activities, texts and exercises in the social education textbooks. Data analysis was done through the descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussion

First question: To which extent are the principles of human rights included in the social education textbooks of Elementary stage in Jordan?

To answer this question the content of social education textbooks for each grade of Elementary stage was analyzed. Table (1) shows this result.

Table 1: Distribution of human rights principles in the of social education textbooks of the Elementary stag

#	Human Rights Principles	Fifth Grade		Sixth Grade		Seventh Grade		Total	
		Frequ ency	%	Frequ ency	%	Frequen cy	%	Frequ ency	%
First: Civil Rights									
1	Security	10	35.7	13	35.1	15	32.6	38	34.2
2	Freedom of residence and movement	7	25.0	4	10.8	10	21.7	21	18.9
3	Nationality	1	3.6	2	5.4	2	4.3	5	4.5
4	Equality and justice	5	17.9	17	45.9	13	28.3	35	31.5
5	Confidentiality of correspondence	5	17.9	1	2.7	6	13.0	12	10.8
	Total	28	100	37	100	46	100	111	100
Second: Political Rights									
1	Forming and joining political parties	4	18.2	4	17.4	3	14.3	11	16.7
2	Request political asylum from persecution	5	22.7	2	8.7	1	4.8	8	12.1
3	Self-determination and national sovereignty	2	9.1	4	17.4	6	28.6	12	18.2
4	Defend the homeland	4	18.2	4	17.4	9	42.9	17	25.8
5	Participation in elections	7	31.8	9	39.1	2	9.5	18	27.3
	Total	22	100	23	100	21	100	66	100
Third: Economic Rights									
1	Own property	2	10.0	4	16.0	9	47.4	15	23.4
2	Equal opportunity in public office	2	10.0	5	20.0	2	10.5	9	14.1
3	Equal pay right	2	10.0	1	4.00	1	5.3	4	6.3

4	Work in safe and healthy conditions	8	40.0	4	16.0	5	26.3	17	26.6
5	Working free of choice	6	30.0	11	44.0	2	10.5	19	29.7
	Total	20	100	25	100	19	100	64	100
Fourth: Social Rights									
1	Composition of the family	0	0.0	11	20.0	11	26.19	22	19.5
2	Health insurance	6	37.5	16	29.09	8	19.05	30	26.5
3	Respect for human rights and dignity	4	25.0	8	14.55	8	19.05	20	17.7
4	Social security	2	12.5	9	16.36	4	9.52	15	13.3
5	joining trade unions	0	0.0	3	5.45	7	16.67	10	8.8
6	Living in a clean environment	4	25.0	8	14.55	4	9.52	16	14.2
	Total	16	100	55	100	42	100	113	100
Fifth: Cultural Rights									
1	Teaching and learning	17	33.3	21	45.7	13	41.9	51	39.8
2	Preserving cultural heritage	3	5.88	5	10.9	2	6.5	10	7.8
3	Participation in cultural life	3	5.88	5	10.9	0	0.0	8	6.3
4	Freedom of opinion and expression	7	13.7	8	17.4	10	32.3	25	19.5
5	Participation in scientific meetings	2	3.92	1	2.2	2	6.5	5	3.9
6	Freedom of thought and religion	18	35.3	6	13.0	2	6.5	26	20.3
7	Intellectual property	1	1.96	0	0.0	2	6.5	3	2.3
	Total	51	100	46	100	31	100	128	100
	Grand Total	137	28	186	39	159	33	482	100

Table (1) shows that the social education textbooks included grand total of (482) frequencies of human rights principles. Principles of human rights included in the sixth grade textbook occupied the first rank with a total of (186) frequencies representing (39%) of all principles followed by the social education textbook of the seventh grade with (159) frequency representing (33%) of principles. The least frequencies of principles appeared in the social education textbook of the fifth-grade with (137) frequencies representing (28%) of principles. Figure (1) shows how the human rights principles were distribution in the sample of the study.

Figure 1: Distribution of human rights principles in the social education textbooks.

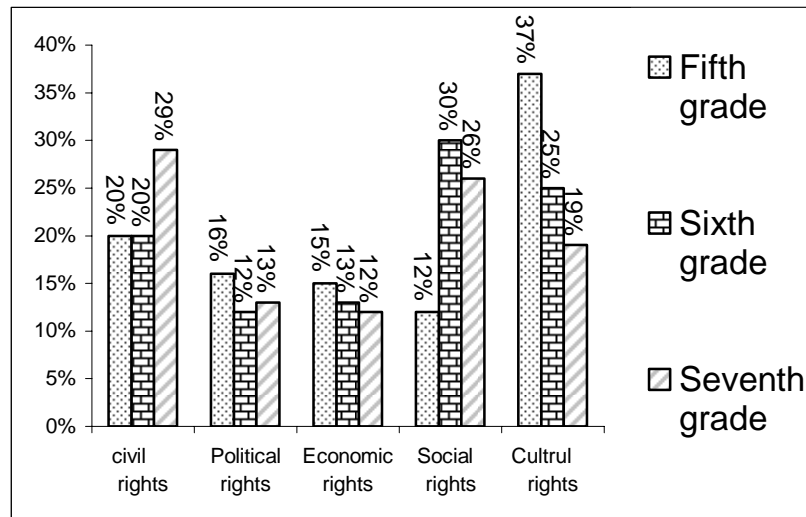


Figure 1 shows the distribution of the human rights principles in the sample of the study. For instance, it was variant in the social education textbooks of the fifth grade where the cultural rights was in the first rate with (37%) of principles' distribution followed by the civil rights, political rights, economic rights and social rights with (20%, 16%, 15%, and 12% respectively). As for the sixth grade textbook, the social rights (30%) was in the first rate followed by the cultural rights (25%), civil rights (20 %), economic rights (13%), and finally the political rights with (12%). the social education textbook for seventh grade included civil rights, social, and cultural rights with percentages of (29%, 26%, 19% respectively), while the political and economic were included with low rates.

The researcher believes that this result is due to the ambiguous and unclear insights of social education textbooks authoring committee toward the human rights principles. Besides that, these authors did not use a conceptual mapping that clarifies the proportions of human rights in the social education textbooks. Further, the committee focused their concerns on varying topics rather than on proportion or quality for each.

In addition, this result led the researcher to call for including texts and illustrations of human rights in the social education textbooks in order to deepen students' understanding and awareness's of these topics and the socialization process referred to by Abu Rayyash and Abd-Alhaq (2007). This result is consistent with other previous ones such as Yamasaki (2000) and Williams (2002).

Second question: What is the level of sequence between human rights principles in the Jordanian Elementary stage social education textbooks?

To answer this question, the researcher illustrated the level of sequence between the human rights principles in each social education textbook. Figure 2 shows this clarification.

Figure 2: Sequence of human rights principles contained in social education textbooks of fifth, sixth, and seventh grades.

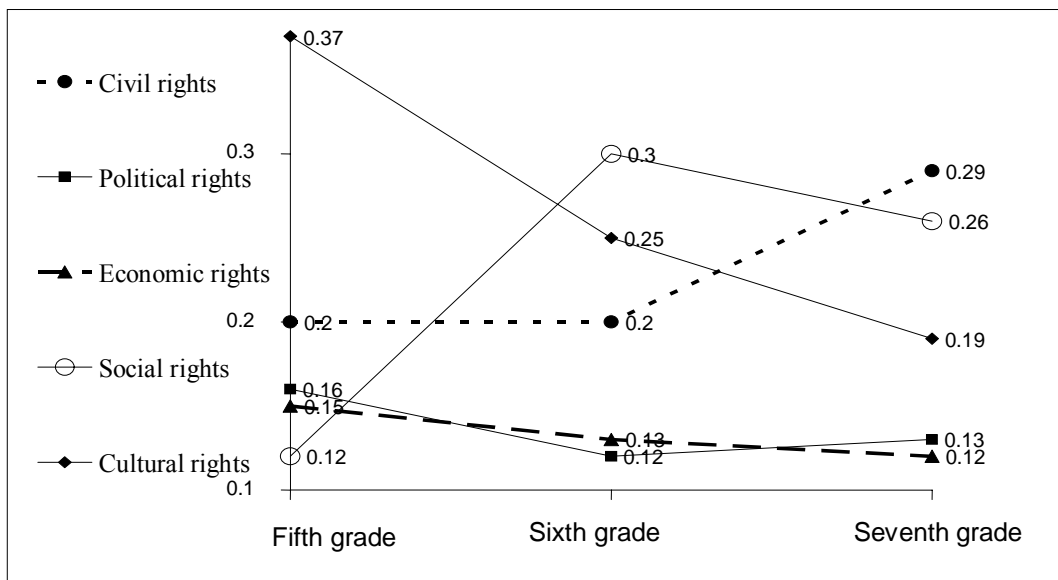


Figure 2 shows that the level of sequence between human rights principles included in the social education textbooks was low. For example, the social rights in the content of social education textbooks for the fifth grade were represented by (0.12) and rose up to a rate of (0.30) in the sixth grade textbook. However, it dropped in the seventh grade textbook to a rate of (0.26) and so on regarding the other components.

This result can be attributed to the different views of authors of social education contents and to the low degree of coordination between members of the authoring committees. This finding is

consistent with similar one of previous studies such as of Abu-Zeid (2000) and Hawamdeh and Ashour (2008).

Third question: What level of integration between human rights principles included in the Jordanian Elementary stage social education textbooks?

To answer this question, the researcher used Chi-Square test and frequencies in order to determine the level of integration between the principles of human rights. These ways were applied for all items included in each component of social education textbooks. Table 2 shows this finding.

Table 2: The integration level between human rights principles in the social education textbooks according to Chi-square test results.

Human rights principles	Fifth – sixth grades			Sixth-seventh grades			Fifth-seventh-grades		
	X ² value	F ^o	Statistical Significance	X ² value	F ^o	Statistical Significance	X ² value	F ^o	Statistical Significance
	196	27	0.000	168	27	0.000	172	27	0.000

Table (2) indicates that there was no statistically significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the integration level of human rights principles between both social education textbooks of fifth grade and sixth, between both social education textbooks of sixth and seventh grade, or between both social education textbooks of fifth and seventh grade. This result indicates the lack of integration between the human rights principles of social education textbooks for the second cycle of Elementary education in Jordan.

The researcher attributed this result to the poor interest in designing Elementary stage's social education textbooks implemented by the national team for authoring in the Jordanian Ministry of Education. The integrative approach should be followed instead. Following the integrative approach provides designers of social education textbooks with better way of sequencing content at various grades. The designers of the study sample might also have not followed pre-identified objective criteria in sequencing human rights principles, or they did not use appropriate evaluation and tracking models which might have allowed for poor levels of integration in the sample of the study. The implementation of poor design might have negative effects on the quantity and quality of human rights that students should be taught through the advanced social education textbooks. Thus continuity of knowledge acquisition might have been reduced and got shallow in the students' perceptions, awareness and behaviors.

Recommendations of the Study

In light of the above results, the study recommended the followings:

- The need for more focus on human rights principles of lower rates included in the social education textbooks of the Elementary stage in Jordan.
- The need to emphasize a suitable level of sequence when including principles of human rights in the content of each social education textbook of the Elementary stage in Jordan.
- The need to emphasize an appropriate integration level between the social education textbooks at the primary stage. The integration process of human rights principles should be based on appropriate models of predetermined weights.
- The need to conduct further research to uncover the principles of human rights in other curricula.
- The need for the Ministry Of Education in Jordan to add a separated subject of human rights to school curricula.

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