

Study on the Features of Universal Citizen and the Level of Attention to Its Components in the Social Studies of Primary Schools from the Viewpoint of Lesson-planning Experts, Principals and Teachers Employed in the Ministry of Education & Training at Elementary Level in Tehran, Iran

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Abstract: It is more than two decades that globalization has turned into an important political, economic, social and cultural subject in many countries. Many commentators have optimistic and positive approach to this phenomenon; whereas, many others look at it pessimistically, and some critics use the term 'globalization'. On the other hand, the concept of citizenship aims at propagating the main principles of democracy among people, so as most of these principles play vital role in the formation of a nation and strengthening the pillars of democracy. Due to the undeniable need in training citizenship, and necessity of being informed of science and technology and paying heed to this point that globalization is not a decision, but an already-occurring inevitable process; it seems indispensable to understand globalization to be able to use its advantages and avoid its deficiencies. Therefore, the aim of this research is studying on the features of universal citizen and the level of attention to its components in the social studies of primary schools from the viewpoint of lesson-planning experts, principals and teachers employed in the ministry of education & training at elementary level in Tehran during the school-year 2010-2011. The sample size is calculated based on Morgan table that consists of 427 lesson planners, principals and teachers of primary level using the hierarchical random sampling method. In the present research, three topics have been scrutinized as the components of citizenship known as the criteria of training, used in social studies textbooks in primary schools. They are 'wisdom', 'assuming responsibility', 'commitment', and 'criticism'. The methodology employed in this research is 'field finding', and a twenty-six questions questionnaire is used for data collection. Descriptive statistic methods (abundance & percentage) and deductive statistics, (chi square) are used for the analysis of the data. The research shows that the textbooks on social studies taught at levels 3, 4, and 5 in elementary schools have paid an average level of attention (and higher) to the fore-cited topics in the training of global citizens.

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1. Introduction

It can be said that globalization is the procedure of compactness of increasing time and space through which all people in the world – more or less – are almost being mixed consciously in the universal community. Mochida reminds that despite the fact that many books and articles have been written on globalization; there is still no fixed, unified and comprehensive definition on it (Mochida, 2005). In general, one can distinct five thorough definitions on globalization from each other, as stated by Mochida quoted from Scholte . They are as follows:

1. Globalization as being internationalization, emphasizing on the growth of exchange and mutual international dependence.
2. Globalization as meaning emancipation and liberation, that here, it underlines removing the

restrictions imposed by the government for making an open and borderless universal economy.

3. Globalization as meaning universalization and becoming public that emphasizes on expanding various goals and experiences for all people round the world.
4. Globalization as meaning to become western or modern, mostly into American form that is a kind of dynamism on which social structures of modernity including capitalism, logicity, industrialization and bureaucracy are extended in the whole world. Consequently, native and already-existing cultures will be deteriorated in this process.
5. Globalization as meaning deterritorialization that requires a new geographical form.

According to Carnoy (1999), Tofler in his well-known book entitled, *Education and Training for Tomorrow* states: "Nowadays the existing educational systems round the world have got two significant responsibilities. First, they should make attempt to make the youth familiar to the experience gained by previous generation, so as to enrich and accumulate the experiences obtained through subsequent generations, so that they can be presented to the young citizens as priceless capitals of civilization to be used in their social and individual lives. Secondly, educational systems should train their products – that is the same students and the potential future citizens of national and international societies – in a way that they can be equipped with special knowledge and skills after graduation to be able to solve both their own problems, and also be able to challenge their issues at local, national and universal levels (Carnoy, 1999).

Tofler also believes that at the age of globalization of education and training, educational systems need to train citizens in a way to be able to present their own professional services both in their hometowns, and in other societies based on their industrial and economic needs. To achieve such a goal, Tofler believes it is indispensable for all developed or underdeveloped nations to add universal, regional and national objectives to their training aims and purposes, so that the man of future can gain adequate efficiencies and capabilities (Soudien, 2001).

One of the most important objectives is that all children enjoy primary education, so that all of them pass primary education by 2015. It is also important to disregard any racial and sexual discrimination in this regard (Debkin, 2009). The significance of education and training citizens is not merely caused by rapid social changes, extremist ideologies, racism, sectarian differences, and equalization of people psychologically, and it is not just for making people familiar to their responsibilities; but the ultimate aim of such education is to help people think liberally and move toward democracy. Education of citizens is a plan for the creation of such society in which individuals are trained to act responsibly, consciously and faithfully.

This plan is not merely restricted to the experts of humanities or just for those working in the field of educational sciences, but it also includes policy-makers and planners interested in social institutions (Kerr, 1999). Democratic values should be deeply stabilized and fixed in people's daily lives. Therefore, political democracy will not be preserved safely unless these values are permanently kept in people's minds (Dewey, 1937). European council of training democratic citizens points out that: "Education for

democratic citizens is not basically inculcation of democratic forms, but expansion and reinforcement of innovative activists, upgrading the capability of their active participation and enabling them to ask question (Buttery, 2003).

One of the fundamental purposes of training citizens is enabling them to think critically to take part in political debates (Helestead & Pike, 2006). As stated by Maksakovsky, any change for globalization requires the preparedness of social and cultural grounds. Definitely, the same paradigm used in developed countries pertaining to education and training cannot be used in a culturally, socially and economically-retarded society to modify its education and training principles drastically (Maksakovsky, 2006).

Researchers have made a thorough examination regarding the education of citizens and the necessity of corresponding with the principles of such education to the universal criteria, including those in Iran: As a previous study done by Sheikhzadeh, (2008) under the title of Content Analysis of Textbooks on Theology, Civil Laws, and Persian in Grade 4 at Elementary Level with Due Consideration to the Concept of Globalization. The research proves that Persian literature, as a concept of citizenship, encourages students to thinking and meditation, more than theology and civil laws. The topic of assuming social and individual responsibility is taught in the book Civil Laws more than the two other books. Concepts of inter-cultural education are less emphasized in the textbooks of grade 4 elementary level, so it is necessary for the textbook authors to pay special attention to the foregoing concepts.

- Karamkhani, (2007&2008) made a research under the title of Content Analysis of Elementary Level Textbooks regarding the reinforcement of critical thinking as a necessity of globalization. In this research the contents of the questions in the books, Persian literature and social studies have been analyzed based on critical thinking at three grades of (3, 4, and 5) in primary schools. Unlike the students of four at elementary level who paid more attention to this skill, students of grade three were not so much interested in this regard. Generally speaking, all books in these three grades pay less attention to the training of this skill as is expected to be.
- Shahseni, (2007) analyzed the textbooks on humanities in elementary period using dialogue critical analysis technique. He presented it in form of his PhD dissertation entitled Clarification of Components of Sociability in the textbooks of Humanities in Elementary

Period in the Framework of Dialogue Critical Analysis. According to the results, religious and moral values in all books have the maximum of abundance, and that the values of globalization have been omitted from the content of the textbooks.

The components scrutinized in this research are as follows: Wisdom-basis component, loving one's country, law-basis component, assuming responsibility, commitment, participation, and criticism.

2. Material and Methods

The present research is in form of research field paying attention to the ideas of experts in lesson

planning, principals and teachers already working in elementary schools. In this study, 27 experts of lesson planning, 37 principals, and 363 teachers are involved. The sample size is calculated based on Morgan table, and is chosen according to the hierarchical random sampling. The researcher's questionnaire is used for data collection. Therefore, a questionnaire containing 26 questions is provided by the researcher, arranged based on Likert's 5 degree scale.

3. Results

3.1. The Information related to the concept of 'wisdom' are summarized in Table 1

Table 1: The range of sample selection based on job in the 'wisdom-basis' component, divided into 5 levels

		Teacher	Principal	Expert
Too many	%	1.4	2.7	0
Too many	abundance	5	1	0
Many	%	20.1	21.6	11.1
Many	abundance	73	8	3
Average	%	42.4	40.5	48.1
Average	abundance	154	15	13
Few	%	34.4	35.1	33.3
Few	abundance	125	13	9
Very few	%	1.7	0	7.4
Very few	abundance	6	0	2

Degree of freedom = 8 Chie square = 7.387 Risk of error vulnerability at level 0.05 = 0.495

Considering the fact that calculated chie square, having degree of freedom 8, at the error vulnerability level of %5 is less than chie square of the table, it can be inferred that there is no meaningful difference among the three occupational groups. According to the contents of table no. 1, approximately more than %50 of groups believe that paying heed to the 'wisdom-basis' component in social studies, as a lesson in primary school, is average and higher. On the other hand, based on the obtained results approximately 50% of the research participants also believe that enough heed to this matter is less than the average level. The finding verifies Shahseni's views upon which he believes globalization values have been omitted from the discourse of the primary school textbooks. According to the obtained average results in Table 1, additional research needs to be conducted for further significant results.

3.2 The information related to the concept of 'responsibility & commitment' are summarized in Table 2.

Considering the fact that calculated chie square, having degree of freedom 8, at the error vulnerability level of %5 is less than chie square of the table, it can be inferred that there is no meaningful difference among the three occupational groups. According to the contents of table no. 2, approximately more than %80 of groups believe that paying heed to 'assuming responsibility & commitment' in social studies, as a lesson in primary school, is average and higher.

As the findings indicate in this table, a significant number of the research participants believe that the matter has not received enough heed among the school textbooks. Unlike to Shahseni's views who believes that globalization values have been omitted from the discourse of the primary school books, the finding verifies Sheikhzadeh's views who believes that the subject of assuming individual and social responsibility in civil study textbook at primary level has received more heed compared to other books.

3.3. The Information related to the concept of 'criticism' are summarized in Table 3

Table 2: The range of sample selection based on job division in the component of 'assuming responsibility & commitment', classified into 5 levels ranging from 'very few' to 'too many'

		Teacher	Principal	Expert
Too many	%	7.4	13.5	0
Too many	abundance	27	5	0
Many	%	36.6	37.8	25.9
Many	abundance	133	14	7
Average	%	41.3	43.2	55.5
Average	abundance	150	16	15
Few	%	13.2	5.4	14.8
Few	abundance	48	2	4
Very few	%	1.4	0	3.7
Very few	abundance	5	0	1

Degree of freedom = 8 Chie square = 9.124 Risk of error vulnerability at level 0.05 = 0.332

Table 3: The range of sample selection based on job division in the component of 'criticism' classified into 5 levels ranging from 'very few' to 'too many'

		Teacher	Principal	Expert
Too many	%	5.2	2.7	0
Too many	abundance	19	1	0
Many	%	25.9	37.8	18.5
Many	abundance	94	14	5
Average	%	41.4	35.1	48.1
Average	abundance	153	13	13
Few	%	20.7	24.3	14.8
Few	abundance	75	9	4
Very few	%	6.7	0	14.8
Very few	abundance	22	0	4

Degree of freedom = 8 Chie square = 11.452 Risk of error vulnerability at level 0.05 = 0.177

Considering the fact that calculated chie square, having degree of freedom 8, at the error vulnerability level of %5 is less than chie square of the table, it can be inferred that there is no meaningful difference among the three occupational groups.

According to the contents of table no. 3, approximately more than %75 of groups believe that paying heed to the component of 'criticism' in social studies, as a lesson in primary school, is average and higher.

As the findings indicate a significant number of the research participants believe that the matter has received enough heed among social study textbooks at primary level. This is unlike to Karamkhani's views that has analyzed the findings of the study and concluded that training the critical thinking skill has received little attention in the third grade of primary school while it has received an average attention in the fourth and fifth grades. However, the entire textbooks among all three grades have paid less attention to the training of the skill than the average level.

According to the findings indicated in these three tables it seems that further related complementary

studies are required to make a more significant difference among the findings of the study.

4. Discussion

The findings of research indicate that the research participants believe that textbooks of social studies in grade 3, 4, and 5 at elementary level have had the following different attention regarding the topics on training global citizens:

1. The topic of wisdom is paid less than the average attention
2. Topics such as 'loving one's country' and flexibility to 'criticism' are paid attention at an average level
3. Topics such as, 'commitment to law', 'assuming responsibility' and 'participation' are paid attention more than the average level.

These findings, unlike Shahseni's belief, prove that universal values of dialogue have not been omitted from the textbooks in primary schools. On the other hand, identical to Karamkhani's findings, this research also verifies that concepts as 'criticism' has been paid attention at an average level in such books. Moreover, the present research

substantiates and confirms Shaikhzadeh's ideas concerning responsibility and commitment who believes these two concepts have been emphasized in civil study textbooks in grade 4 elementary schools more than the other grades.

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