

Evaluation of the Content of Life Skills Book (1) and (2) in Secondary School Based on Merrill instructional theory

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ABSTRACT: The main objective of this study is evaluation of content of textbooks and life skills in secondary school in Iran based on Merrill instructional theory in educational goals and cognitive concepts. This study is descriptive and research content analysis method is used to accurately, systematically and scientifically estimate educational messages in textbooks content. Research conceptual model is to evaluate the books and check list content, education theory combined with the framework of Merrill - content. statistical population and samples are books of etiquette and life skills (1) and (2) in the second and third years of high school. In this study, the sample is equal to population. In data analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and Shannon entropy are used to determine the importance of each component in the content and also the ranking of each component was determined by Friedman method. Goals part puts more emphasis on reminding (in the Book of Life Skills 1 and 2). In the cognitive issues of component, "method" and "principles" have been observed in most of the books. Friedman tests showed the highest mean scores on reminding and application components in part of the educational goals. In issues part, the highest ranks were emphasized in the subject of methods and principles in both books.

Key Words: Curriculum, Book Evaluation, Content Analysis, Life Skills, Textbook, Merrill's Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on education have shown that human beings nature are such that they eager to improvement, freedom, knowledge in life direction. Human being train is affected by innovative and creative activities of teachers in classrooms and Way of writing textbooks. Therefore, in order to get a dynamic and creative person who can think, compare and evaluate and make decision, a learning environment that is rich in cultural and scientific development and deployment of a comprehensive planning process is required to guide the process of learning, writing and organization of the textbook (Soleimanpour, 2007,p 13).

World Health Organization formulated a program as life skills training in 1996 in to prevent and increase levels of mental health individuals and society. The goal of this program is to increase the mental-social abilities of kids to be able to deal with the problems and difficulties of life. Life Skills program is based on children needs to be able to defend themselves and wishes to live in difficult situations. One of the resources that help to accomplish this goal is the content of textbooks in high school. Therefore, in recent years, book of manners and life skills (1) and (2) for first to third level of high school students has been compiled by education of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This study focuses on evaluation of the content of these books and the result would be apply to improve Curriculum concepts in these books to provide life skills and education of high school students. Increasing speed of social changes resulted from rapid transformation of knowledge needs continuous matching of adult with children and changes in patterns work, living and leisure. The effects and results of changes on life patterns and ways to prepare and make strengthen their ability to deal with these changes has provided a commitment for individuals education (Aghazadeh, 2003).

Developing learners' ability to solve personal and social problems and equip them with skills for life and livelihood are the important goals in secondary schools (Sabaghian, 1994). Because people who have not

earned a knowledge and skills necessary for living not only help to improve society but It may be conceived as a hindrance to the development of society (Sabaghian, 1992).

Various studies show that, despite changes in culture and lifestyles, many people don't have necessary abilities to deal with life issues and they may be vulnerable when facing daily life problems. Therefore, it is required to develop these abilities for dealing with various situations and struggles of life (World Health Organization, 1998). Thus, life skills training to adapt better and more effectively with life challenges and issues has been highly considered by education systems around the world. To promote and encourage citizen participation, active citizens to live in the present century, the best way is to develop the skills and habits of life through books. Violent conflict is replaced with dialogue and peace based on justice by life skills training and the development of citizenship (Fathi and Ejargah, 2010).

There are many goals for secondary education that have been raised by experts and scholars. According to Kelin Ball's theory (2002) desired objectives of secondary education are introduced as following:

- a) Academic ability: Secondary education should familiarize individuals with a collection of human knowledge. Academic ability is provided clearly and comprehensively. . Illiterates of the future world are those who fail to find jobs and housing from electronic information service.
- b) Job ability: due to the need of society to skilled employment, limited resources and limited capacity of individuals, communities should be able to live in a useful manner and have a healthy life and a good work for a living subsistence. Job is a kind of admission of social responsibility that leads to self-confidence and self-esteem.
- c) Citizenship ability: Living in a community requires skills and capabilities that have not been given to people naturally, but they gained through experience. Topics such as preparing for marriage, participating in elections, raising children, communication with others and collaboration are necessary in social life.
- d) Tact ability: is a strategy to find a solution, thinking about the consequences, to provide, consideration for finding reasonable solution for various issues of life (Moosapour, 2007).

Contents of the book: Life skills in secondary school are a proactive leadership that prevents the occurrence of risk behaviors in youth. Life skills training are effective in preventing sexual deviations (Olise, 1990) and HIV (World Health Organization, 1998). Resistance to the social pressures of drug use, social skills and self-control skills will be developed by life skills training. Moreover, it prevents people from addiction, HIV and the social damage caused by them (Botovin, 2000). Results of Vartanine *et al.* (1986) and Capalan *et al.* (1992) also emphasized on courses of life skills in schools. Life skills training effects on self-sufficiency, enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem and also has an important role in mental health. In addition, their motivation in caring of self and others increases by improving mental health.

Considering changes in the political system, attention to civil rights and law would be necessary. Realization of national and international understanding and relaxation training requires educated citizens that have the knowledge and abilities to live peacefully in society (Fathi and ejargah, 2010).

(Freedman, 2003) in an article entitled "Life Skills Curriculum in public schools," concluded that changes in educational programs and school Curriculum is needed for life skills, functional associations, career guidance, academic achievement, human interaction, social awareness, and relationships.

(Byrnes,1983) studied about "learning in silence with concentration" and indicated that silence provides a good environment for learning and thinking. They provided activities to familiarize children with the advantage of silence in learning.

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal with the difficulties and challenges of daily life (World Health Organization, 1996). Generally, life skills include the abilities to improve the mental health of people, the richness of human relations and health in the community. Life skills can be used as a strategy for mental health promotion and also as a tool in preventing from psychological and social deviance in community such as substance abuse, domestic violence, social and child abuse, suicide, HIV (Wholl, 1994).

Dimensions of life skills can be organized in the textbook of secondary school. Cognitive dimensions of life skills are decision making, problem solving, critical thinking and thinking. Social dimensions of life skills consist of empathy, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, responsible citizenship, conflict resolution, emotional skills, self-awareness and handling emotions and stress.

About citizenship skills has been done research as "the study of citizenship training policies" at the university of Minnesota of the united states and with sponsored peace institute of Sasakovay Tokyo in 1997. in this study were asked from experts in various fields to challenges and issues that citizens should be able to afford it in first two decades of the 21st century, described and identify characteristics of good citizenship. Based on the results of this study, an effective solution for achieving good citizenship education has been suggested (Kagan,1997 Quoted by Fathi Vajargah,2003).

In Iran, study of Rezanejad (2008), in study to investigate life skills in high school Curriculum from the perspectives of teachers and students, it has been suggested that teachers and students in Isfahan, Iran have been emphasize and confirmed on problem-solving skills, coping with difficulties, planning knowledge and methods of studying and learning, creativity and innovation, self-awareness and self-esteem.

In Iran, research of Fathi and Vajargah (2010) evaluation and prioritization of life skills in the content of school curricula, It is include that 6 groups of mental skills, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, biological, interpersonal communication, career, family, and citizenship skills were evaluated and analyzed and expert opinion in high school Curriculum was evaluated that citizenship and life skills and personal skills have allocated the highest priority to itself.

In Iran, research of Kordnoghani and Pasha Sharifi (2010) with title preparing life skills Curriculum for high school learners, the results show that twelve skills should be included in textbooks and educational book of high school, from views of experts, teachers and students in high school, skills of self-awareness, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, confront with stress, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, creative thinking have been high priority.

Collins et al (2010) in article with title "content and conceptual training with real-life guidelines for high school students along peace and lack of strictness" have emphasize; many students have found their identity with the peace and lack of strictness.

Coleman, Mick; Walling, Charlotte; Tledo, Carlos (1999) in article with title "life skills with support programs in school children", have been achieved life skills tests is background of school and school children care plan in two states of the southeast, repeat this particular life skills in programs, many gaps related training to security, personal development, social relationships has revealed.

Hodson (1990) in research about the role of practical activity in high school science education found that necessary doing practical activities in schools are required to provide important goals. These objectives are: to enhance motivation methods, skills training, promotion to learning methods of concepts, method development and scientific attitudes such as free-thinking, transparent, consciously, oriented –future and strengthening rational judgments capacity in various subjects.

Therefore, considering the purpose of research and research theoretical and the variables studied specific questions were formulated:

- 1- How much is Book content of customs and life skills (1) with Merrill instructional theory in dimension of educational purposes and subjects consistent?
- 2- How much is Book content of customs and life skills (2) with Merrill instructional theory in dimension of educational purposes and subjects consistent?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a) firstly present study explores to investigate and describe and explain what it is (without additional subjects) (Naderi and Seifi Naraghi,2006). Secondly research method of content analysis deals to careful study, systematic and comprehensive and objective and scientific and educational messages in overt and latent content of textbooks (Soleymanpour,2009). B) research Conceptual model of content analysis is Merrill instructional theory with integrated framework purpose – content, in order to evaluation of life skills books in secondary school (Fardanesh,2009). C) Therefore, data collection, checking checklist of content is derived from Merrill instructional theory d) Statistical population is books of etiquette and life skills (1) in first year of high school and life skills (2) in second and third years of high school in Iran.

Statistical population of research in the book of life skills (1) consists of six chapters have been written in 106 pages and life skills (2) consists of six chapters have been written in 160 pages that in totaling has been studied and analyzed in twelve chapters in 266 pages.

In this study, in order to perform a detailed study of the content of the books and proper judgments content analysis for coding is used from expert idea of teacher this lesson in education department and researcher and professor of advisor and consultant . Therefore all chapters and all the lessons and concepts and images of mentioned books as examples and " Registration Unit " have been used in coding course concepts.

therefore population is equal to sample because achieved a more comprehensive and practical result. E) data analysis method based on presuppositions of content analysis and having a nominal scale and lack of random sampling is used from descriptive statistics method such as frequencies and percentages and Shannon Entropy for determining the importance of each component in content and to determine the ranking of each of the components separately textbooks has made use Friedman ranking method.

Table 1. Checklist content analysis based on Merrill's approach (performance levels)

Row	Reminding
1	The content of course encourages students to memorize concepts and definitions.
2	Concept of course emphasizes outline of textbook and list of concepts.
3	Contents focus on the description of scientific conceptions.
Row	Application
4	Contents will direct student learning into accounting new rules.
5	Content has tends to manipulate, change to practice according to concepts and new rules.
6	students are encouraged towards problem solving and application of rules and Formulation in new position.
Row	Innovation
7	Student learning to identify components of the general concepts and the different of every detail are forwarded on other components.
8	Students in the process of problem solving gain to a new formula or new inferences.
9	In the process of study is known structural relationship concepts for each of the concepts and principles related to each other.
10	Students based on new learned concepts gain new conceptual designs and new strategies in their next experience.

Table 2. Checklist content analysis based on Merrill's approach (subjects levels) is following

Row	(facts)
11	Specific information that has not generalized and include specific names, events dates, names, signs and conventional signs. Concepts that are related to words and verbal information.
12	
Row)concepts(
13	in course content refers to the concept that covers the common characteristics from a class or a general concepts. (Mammal)
14	Considering words that they represent a particular concept. (Chair)
Row)Method(
15	in course content clearly systematic set of activities that (mind - hand) has pointed out that to achieve the goal or solve a problem is used.
16	in course content refers to the strategies that lead to generation and discovery of a new product or concept (in current student experience).
Row)Principles(
17	in content clearly refers to significant relationship two or more new concepts.
18	in course content is paid to the causal relations between phenomena or the main concepts of the lesson so that help to the student in interpreting, explaining and solve problems. (Such as formulas of mathematical and physics).

Research Findings

In this section while presenting results of their data analysis and analytical consistent with specific questions, are reported findings article:

- 1- Analysis of specific question: How much is book content of customs and life skills (1) with Merrill instructional theory in dimension of educational purposes and subjects consistent?

in these section, based on statistical pre-assumption of content analysis methods such as nominal and the lack a random sample and qualitative of the study from descriptive statistics and then Shannon entropy method to determine important of components used in the content and rankings of the components used in this book has been investigated.

Table 3. Descriptive data of customs and life skills (1) Based on the sum total units of all chapter

Goal	Reminding		Application		Innovation		Principles		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
subjects	355	45/02	74	15/64	44	9/3			473
	Facts		Concepts		Method		Principles		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
	4	4/76	10	11/9	45	53/57	25	29/76	84
Total									557

Table 4. the final Content analysis of every component from Merrill model in Book of Life Skills (1)

Educational goals	Reminding			Application			Innovation			Cognitive issues		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Frequency	Percent	Facts	Concepts	Method	Principles
Chapter I	31/77		55/14		13/08		7/69		19/23		42/30	30/76
Chapter II	83/78		36/03		12/61		8/69		17/39		43/47	30/43
Chapter III	87/09		6/45		6/45		0		0		66/66	33/33
Chapter IV	83/33		5/55		11/11		0		7/69		84/53	38/46
Chapter V	89/47		2/26		2/26		0		0		8/75	12/5
Chapter VI	97/43		2/1		3/15		0		0		80	20

Table 5. Results of educational goals entropy in life skills book (1)

Component	Innovation	Application	Reminding
Weight	0/06	0/75	0/19

According to Shannon's entropy weighting method at section of educational goals in life skills book (1) Minimum Weight obtained is related to Innovation features, Highest rate is application components (0/75) and then Reminding.

Table 6. Rankings Mean among educational goals of life skills book (1)

Components	Rankings Mean	Rank
Reminding	1/67	1
Application	1/508	2
Innovation	0/83	3

Considering result of ranking in educational goals of life skills book (1) through (Friedman), It has been noted that the highest ranking is Reminding and then Application.

Table 7. The results of the weighting cognitive subjects in life skills book (1)

Components	Principles	Method	Concepts	Facts
Weight	0/51	0/49	-	-

Entropy weights of cognitive subjects in life skills book (1) show that the maximum weight is in principles component in all the resulting book chapters and then method component in cognitive subjects of Mentioned book has determine weight of these issues.

Table 8. Rankings Mean among cognitive subjects of life skills book (1)

Components	Rankings Mean	Rank
Facts	1/30	4
Concepts	2/10	3
Method	3/80	1
Principles	2/80	2

Result obtained from ranking of cognitive subjects of life skills book (1) by Friedman method show that methods subject in Course content is 3/80 Relative to other components and Then were obtained the components of principles and then concepts and facts.

Analysis of the third and fourth research questions

How much is content of life skills book(2) with Merrill instructional theory in dimension of educational goals consistent?

3- How much is content of life skills book(2) with Merrill instructional theory in dimension of cognitive subjects consistent?

Table 9. Descriptive data of customs and life skills (2) Based on the sum total units of all chapter

Goal	Reminding		Application		Innovation		Principles		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Subjects	438	99/38	26	5/34	24	4/52	18	36/83	486
	facts		Concept		Method		Principles		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
	2	4/08	4	8/16	29	59/18	18	36/83	49
Total									535

Table 10. the final Content analysis of every component from Merrill model in Book of Life Skills (2)

Educational goals	Cognitive issues			
	Reminding	Application	Innovation	Principles
Chapter I	87/5	6/25	6/25	16/66
Chapter II	89/7	5/14	5/14	38/46
Chapter III	93/1	2/06	4/82	53/8
Chapter IV	89/8	4/04	6/06	36/36
Chapter V	81/81	9/09	9/09	25
Chapter VI	66/66	14/28	19/04	14/28

In the section of the educational goals reminding is allocated the highest frequency amount 438 and 99/38 percent. Then the educational goals of application is 26 frequency and 5/34 percent and the educational goals of Innovation is 24 frequency and 4/52. These conditions indicate that content of the book emphasize on educational goal of reminding, other goals have used also relatively.

In the section of cognitive subjects methods is allocated the highest frequency amount 29 and 59/18 percent. then cognitive subjects of principals is 18 frequency and 36/83 percent and concepts is 4 frequency and 8/16 and facts is 2 frequency and 4/08 . These conditions indicate that content of the book emphasize on cognitive subjects of methods, other subjects have used also relatively.

Table 11. Results of educational goals entropy in life skills book (2)

Component	Innovation	Application	Reminding
Weight	0/03	0/12	0/13

In view of the entropy method in weighting of training goals, the lowest weight refers innovation components and the highest level the relevant Reminding component (0/13).

Table 12. Rankings Mean among educational goals of life skills book (2)

Components	Rankings Mean	Rank
Reminding	3	1
Application	1.25	3
Innovation	1.75	2

Considering result of ranking in educational goals of life skills book (2) through (Friedman), It has been noted that the highest ranking is reminding and then innovation and application in course content .

Table 13. The results of the weighting cognitive subjects in life skills book (2)

Components	Principles	Method	Concept	facts
Weight	0/52	0/48	-	-

Obtained weight by entropy method in life skills book (2) indicated that obtained weight in principals component is 0/52 and then method component is 0/48.

Table 14. Rankings Mean in cognitive subjects of the of life skills book (2)

Components	Rankings Mean	Rank
facts	1/50	4
concepts	1/58	3
method	3/87	1
Principles	3/08	2

Result obtained from ranking of cognitive subjects of life skills book (2) by Friedman method show that highest ranking is related to methods in course content (3/87) relative to other components and then were obtained the components of principles and then concepts and facts.

CONCLUSION

Highest emphasis in all chapters of the book of life skills (1) was on " Reminding" component and 355 units in all chapters of book were active (45/02), but in the six chapters of the book, chapter six has been observed components compared to other aspects (43/97). Other targets such as application and invention were in the later ranks. " Reminding" was highest in weighting procedure and also Friedman test (67/1) compared to other components.

According to the results, highest amounts in the subject part were obtained in component of procedure with 45 units and 53/57 % and component of principle with 25 units and 29/76 %.

Meanwhile in all of the six chapters of this book in the highest level, respect of the components, method subject is 84/53 percent in Chapter IV has been 38/46 percent in Chapter IV. In Shannon entropy weighting scale methods and principals have the highest level (0/51 and 0/49). in Friedman rank test, respectively the resulting components from cognitive subjects of this book includes first : methods(3/80),second principals(2/80), third concepts (2/10), fourth facts (1/30).

The highest amount correspond of life skills book contents (2) in section is reminding 438 and 99/38 percent and then application and innovation. among The six chapters of this book, chapter III 93/1 percent of Educational goal Reminding and Chapter VI, Application 14/28 percent and innovation 19/04 Is dedicated, but in total of weighting method of Shannon entropy In data collection of the six chapters of this book has gained reminding 0/13 and application 0/12 and innovation 0/03 and on ranking scale of Friedman reminding has highest ranking with mean 3and then innovation (1/7) and application (1/25)

Result of data in book (2) in section of cognitive subjects, show that component of method has most frequency 29 (59/18 percent) and then principal 18 (36/83 percent). But in separation of the various chapters of this book, chapter I 83/33 percent and then chapter VI (71/42 percent) The highest levels were obtained in related to observance of methods, amount of principal observance in cognitive subjects of chapter III 53/8 percent and then chapter II 38/46 percent is allocated higher percentage compared to other parts. In method of Shannon entropy, The most important result in mentioned course content is related to the method and principle component weighting of 0/52 and 0/48. on

Ranking scale of Friedman and the results ranking include respectively: first rank method(3/87) ,second principal (3/08) ,third concepts (1/58) and fourth facts (1/50).

Present study is consistent with research of Rezanejad (2008) based on attention fundamental on skills and customs of life in statistical population a Isfahan city in Iran and research of Salehi in Needs assessment of life skills and prioritization skills of self-awareness, good communication, decision making and also present study alignment with research Fathi Vajargah and Arezi (2010) and extraction of six groups of life skills and citizenship system and with research of Kordnooghani and Pashasharifi (2010) about necessary developing life skills Curriculum and research of Davari (2004) and Fardanesh (2003) and Ramzan Khani (2000) is very clear.

Same results were observed in the results of similar studies about the customs and life skills by Pavz and Kokaska Burton Lewis (2001) and Nolt and Madeleine (2002) that had an emphasis on social, professional and civic functions. Collins' study (2010) on the customs and life skills training Curriculum and Coleman, Vaynga, Toledo (1999), Hudson (1990), Freeman (1980) and Bayrnz (1983) about the skills and practices in all aspects of life through comprehensive school Curriculum and textbooks with study resources match and various research and studies alongside other Curriculum resources were considered on Curriculum content with life skills, and habits fundamentally.

Recommendations and suggestions will be provided to teachers and especially textbook authors is important in this study.

In first part according pattern of extraction framework life skills based on the pattern of purpose - content Merrill theory that on growth of academic ability, to grow tact ability and thinking and Self-awareness and develop sufficient citizens and planning and decision making is desirable; moreover recommendations of authoring books, the following are suggested:

All suggested activities must be based on the textbook program, comprehensive training purposes and society needs for life skills.

Author and teacher should have a strong emphasis on fostering basic concepts and principles of life, not transferring of the scientific realities.

Materials presented must be matched with power of understanding of secondary age students and provide many opportunities for students who have different capabilities.

All suggested activities should be more emphasis on motivation to stimulate curiosity.

Contents of life skills book should emphasize on direct conflict of student in real learning experiences of life and activate them.

All suggested activities would provide excellent background scenes to foster human scale and good views.

Practices and questions should be to evaluate jurisdictions and various levels of human thought, as well as values, attitudes and skills.

Materials presented in rituals of life could be associated with everyday life and social environment.

The presentations should be sufficiently matched with scientific activities.

Scientific activities should be easy to achieve goals by simple tools.

Scientific activities should be in order to achieve new concepts, not in order to confirm previous notes of book.

Time required to complete the training of textbook should be pay attention.

All suggested activities should comply with students' mental health and well-being.

Textbook should be such that provide the needs of different groups of people in different parts of the country.

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8 Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes - Evaluation Summary. © UNICEF/NYHQ2007-0974_OlivierAsselin.

Based on evaluators’ assessments during the case study research, rankings are an absolute assessment of LSE programmes examined in case studies against qualitative criteria outlined in the evaluation framework.