



Research Paper

The Status of Moral Intelligence in Elementary School Reading Textbooks

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of the present study was to investigate the components of Borba's Moral Intelligence Scale in elementary school reading textbooks. This descriptive content analysis study analyzed five reading textbooks of elementary school in the academic year 2020-2021 using a content analysis checklist based on the components of Moral Intelligence. After identifying the desired components as criteria for analysis and determining the paragraphs, questions and images of each lesson as units of analysis, the content of the mentioned books was analyzed using William Rumi technique. The results revealed that the content involvement coefficient of the mentioned books in terms of dealing with the components of Borba's Moral Intelligence Scale was semi-active and it was at a relatively desirable level.

Keywords: *Content Analysis, Borba's Moral Intelligence Scale, Reading books, Elementary Schools.*

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed an increasing global interest in moral intelligence as an effective tool for the management of social behaviors and a determining factor in the level of moral behaviors and the degree individuals are ready for an ethical life (Borba, 2011). Therefore, facilitating the conditions for cultivating moral characteristics and evaluating its status at schools has become one of the most significant concerns of educational agents in educational systems (Giordmaina & Zammit, 2019).

In this regard, reading textbooks are one of the basic books at elementary schools, which a of science, faith, ethics, practice and thinking and prepare students for a transcendent life as well as achieving the goals of language learning. Accordingly, each lesson, with its stories and poems, introduces concepts that implicitly inform students with various issues of social, moral, political, religious, national and artistic life. However, although some research has been done on moral intelligence, no research was found to have examined the components of moral intelligence in textbooks, especially reading books. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the extent to which elementary school reading textbooks have the components of moral intelligence by content analysis method to answer the following question:

- To what extent do the contents of reading textbooks (text, questions and pictures) of the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades of elementary school involve students with the components of moral intelligence?

Methodology

The aim of this study was to describe the status of elementary school reading textbooks and to address the components of moral intelligence using the review of the literature and content analysis. In order to study the content of elementary school reading text books, we used William Rumi's model (1986) for processing units of analysis and determining the coefficient of students' involvement with these books in terms of the components of moral intelligence. Accordingly, the coefficient of involvement is obtained by dividing the total frequency of units related to moral intelligence by the total frequency of units not related to moral intelligence. A coefficient of conflict of more than .5 indicates the semi-active involvement coefficient and the relatively desirable status of the textbooks in terms of addressing the components of moral intelligence. An involvement coefficient of 1 indicates the active involvement coefficient and the desirable status of the textbooks in terms of having the components of moral intelligence (Amir Teymouri, Zare, Sarikhani & Salari, 2013).

Results

According to the results, the total coefficients of students' involvement with the content of elementary school reading textbooks were .69 for the second grade .75 for the third grade, .81 for the fourth grade, .90 for the fifth grade, and .93 for the sixth grade. We observed that the involvement coefficient of all five textbooks was greater than .5, which indicates that more than 25% of the analysis units of these books dealt with the components of moral intelligence. Therefore, the involvement coefficient of elementary school reading textbooks was semi-active in terms of dealing with moral intelligence, which is relatively desirable. Among the elementary reading textbooks, the sixth-grade reading textbook had the highest coefficient of involvement. Out of a total of 3032 units of content (text, questions and images), 1375 units of analysis included the components of moral intelligence, which is equal to 45.34% of the total content of the books. Furthermore, out of the seven components of moral intelligence examined, the component of respect had the highest frequency (8.48%) and the component of conscience had the lowest frequency (5.24%).

Table 1: Frequency of moral intelligence components in the content of elementary school reading textbooks

| Components | Empathy | Conscience | Self-control | Respect | Kindness | Tolerance | Fairness | Related units | Unrelated units | Analysis units | Involvement (ISI) |
|--------------|---------|------------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Second grade | 29 | 18 | 34 | 33 | 38 | 21 | 26 | 199 | 287 | 486 | .69 |
| Percentage | 6.07 | 3.77 | 7.12 | 6.91 | 7.96 | 4.40 | 5.45 | 41.71 | 60.16 | 100 | .69 |
| Third grade | 32 | 29 | 20 | 45 | 40 | 30 | 36 | 332 | 308 | 540 | .75 |
| Percentage | 6.02 | 5.46 | 3.76 | 8.47 | 7.53 | 5.64 | 6.77 | 41.99 | 58 | 100 | .75 |
| Fourth grade | 47 | 19 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 39 | 43 | 268 | 329 | 597 | .81 |
| Percentage | 7.74 | 3.13 | 5.76 | 6.58 | 7.41 | 6.42 | 7.08 | 45.79 | 54.20 | 100 | .81 |
| Fifth grade | 40 | 49 | 44 | 55 | 50 | 48 | 40 | 326 | 360 | 686 | .90 |
| Percentage | 5.83 | 7.14 | 6.41 | 8.01 | 7.28 | 6.99 | 5.83 | 47.52 | 52.47 | 100 | .90 |
| Sixth Grade | 46 | 44 | 61 | 55 | 38 | 53 | 53 | 350 | 373 | 723 | .93 |
| Percentage | 6.36 | 6.08 | 8.43 | 7.60 | 5.25 | 7.33 | 7.33 | 48.40 | 51.59 | 100 | .93 |
| Total | 194 | 159 | 194 | 228 | 211 | 191 | 198 | 1375 | 1657 | 3032 | .82 |
| Percentage | 6.39 | 5.24 | 6.39 | 7.51 | 6.59 | 6.29 | 6.53 | 45.34 | 54.65 | 100 | .82 |

Discussion and conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, students' coefficient of involvement with the content of elementary school reading textbooks was semi-active in terms of moral intelligence components and at a relatively desirable level. Furthermore, the coefficients of involvement had an increasing trend from the second grade to the sixth grade. Accordingly, the sixth-grade reading textbook had the highest involvement coefficient and the second-grade reading book had the lowest involvement coefficient. Therefore, the content of the textbooks follows a special order in terms of sequencing and presenting materials related to moral intelligence and they are enriched and developed from the second grade to the sixth grade.

According to the findings of the present study, the textbooks require revisions in terms of dealing with the components of moral intelligence. Since children are the agents of the future, and moral intelligence is a fundamental part of education, it is necessary that educational authorities play their role in guiding the new generation to solve the world's moral problems at present and in the future.

Reference

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