Research Paper

Content Analysis of Fourth Grade Textbooks Based on the Components of Philosophy for Children Curriculum and Spiritual Intelligence

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Abstract

Aim: This study seeks to analyze the content of the fourth-grade textbooks based on the components of the philosophy for children curriculum and spiritual intelligence. Descriptive research methods of library document analysis and content analysis were used. To this end, the text of library documents and all fourth-grade textbooks were analyzed to identify the components. Research tools included a checklist and a researcher-made content analysis list. The research tools were validated and confirmed by experts in research, philosophy for children and curriculum development. The reliability of the tools was evaluated and confirmed by Cronbach's alpha of 93%. Shannon's entropy was used for content analysis, which revealed the personal outcomes of philosophical thinking with the highest coefficient of significance (0.597) and the nature of philosophy with the lowest coefficient of significance (0.052).

Introduction

Philosophy for children (P4C) is an approach conducive to cultivating thinking skills in learners (Rajabi Hamedani et al., 2018). P4C promotes the development of reasoning, creativity, critical thinking, moral understanding,

artistic values, citizenship, interpersonal and personal development, and conceptualization of experiences (Worley, 2016). According to Cecero and Prout (2011), in recent years, educational systems have concentrated on academic achievement, mastery of subjects, and teaching the necessary skills for participating in exams, while neglecting the learners' social, emotional, and spiritual development (Ghasempour Dehaghani & Nasr Isfahani, 2011). Recently, however, the significance of the transcendental human dimension has dawned on the West; the World Health Organization (WHO) has put forward a new definition of health by expanding and developing the dimensions of human existence and recognizing the dimension of spirituality. As such, this dimension of human existence has entered anthropology and psychology, leading to the emergence of spiritual intelligence (Sajjadinejad and Akbari Charmahini, 2016). Spiritual intelligence includes a sense of meaning and mission in life, a balanced understanding of material values, and a belief in the betterment of the world (Amram, 2005:15).

Elementary school books are extremely important in the formation of childhood beliefs, habits, and decision-making in adulthood (Azimi, 2020). To date, no research has been conducted on the P4C curriculum and spiritual intelligence. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the current status of the content of textbooks, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and provide appropriate content to meet children's cognitive, emotional, and social needs. The present study, therefore, aimed to answer the following question: To what extent have spiritual intelligence-based P4C components been considered in fourth-grade textbooks in Iran?

Methodology

Seven fourth-grade textbooks were analyzed in this applied study. The research method was descriptive for extracting the components and involved document analysis. Moreover, the textbooks were reviewed and analyzed by content analysis. Library documents and seven fourth-grade textbooks, therefore, constituted the sources analyzed to identify the dimensions and components. Measurement instruments included a researcher-made note-taking form and a content analysis checklist to record the number of sentences, pictures, questions, and exercises. Experts in P4C and curriculum development evaluated and confirmed the extracted components, thereby approving the content and face validities of the research tools. The reliability of the tools was also confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 93%. To identify the components of the spiritual intelligence-based P4C curriculum, first, the theoretical foundations of such a curriculum were collected from books, papers, websites, relevant materials, domestic and foreign research literature. The theoretical framework was then developed using document analysis and

the descriptive-analytical method. Library documents were examined by the descriptive-analytical-inferential method. Through repeated reading, the texts were analyzed by open, axial, and selective coding, which yielded four main components and 49 subcomponents. The codes were tabulated and, using descriptive statistics in SPSS, the frequency and percentage of axial codes were calculated.

Results

After extracting the components by the secondary research method and starting the content analysis process, the frequencies of each component were calculated and transformed into normalized data based on the first step of Shannon's entropy method. The uncertainty of the data obtained from these tables was listed according to the second step of the entropy method. Finally, based on the third step of the entropy method, the significance coefficient was obtained to determine which component has received the greatest attention and importance. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The results of the ANOVA on the mean scores of the research variables in the two groups

Components		Textbooks								Frequency	
Index	Sub-index	Quran	Heavenly gifts	Persian reading	Persian writing	Social studies	Math	Science	The sum of each sub-frequency	Total frequency of the index
Nature of philosophy	Surprise	13	25	60	0	36	10	61	205	
	Curiosity	35	78	106	10	63	34	159	485	
	Discovery	1	3	27	2	7	0	27	67	809
	Asking	3	2	21	3	12	0	11	52	
	Relativism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Personal outcomes of philosophical thinking	Self-correction	0	11	11	0	6	0	0	28	
	Self-knowledge	0	6	9	5	0	0	0	20	
	Interpreting and seeking meaning	25	79	190	31	35	103	1	464	
	Inner communication	3	2	16	7	2	0	0	30	2805
	The power of reasoning	6	48	139	17	62	103	126	501	
	Creativity	0	28	22	17	18	62	21	168	
	Caring	2	64	61	2	9	0	0	138	

	thinking								
	Alertness and awareness	23	0	11	4	0	0	0	38
	Rational judgment	1	4	24	3	7	0	5	44
	Thinking	10	103	156	37	1	52	148	577
	Inner unity and integrity	0	16	7	0	33	0	0	26
	Insight	4	4	24	0	5	0	0	37
	Transcendence	1	0	9	0	0	0	0	10
	Cognitive flexibility	0	6	12	0	0	0	0	18
	Holism	0	7	6	0	5	3	2	23
	Transcending oneself	0	1	16	3	0	0	0	20
	Internal monitoring	0	7	7	5	5	0	0	24
	Transcendental perception and transcendence	110	59	51	17	19	1	3	260
	Acceptance	0	2	19	1	2	0	0	24
	Contemplation	2	3	36	31	2	199	3	276
	Comprehensive look	0	4	6	0	3	2	0	15
	Self-thinking	0	8	16	7	5	0	1	37
	Knowledge building	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	5
	Self-assessment	0	9		0	5	0	0	22
Social outcomes of philosophical thinking	Interaction	43	65	38	17	55	35	31	284
	Communication with the outside	8	95	89	11	73	3	9	288
	Collaboration	25	42	28	6	56	42	32	231
	Fostering moral values	141	241	149	45	102	22	28	728
	Fostering a desirable citizen	5	90	100	5	7	6	54	347
	Accountability	1	33	41	0	9	2	27	133	2440
	Exchanging experiences	46	18	22	9	3	8	6	142
	Compatibility	0	0	5	1	2	0	0	8
	Adaptability	0	0	6	1	2	0	0	9
	Unity with the world	0	3	5	1	0	0	0	9
	Independence	0	10	5	6	9	0	0	30
	Democracy	0	6	11	1	0	3	0	41
	Problem Solving	1	31	33	7	8	29	41	190

4

Educational strategies for teaching philosophy	Growth of the inner aspect	2	14	23	0	4	0	0	43	
	Questioning	8	14	26	2	0	5	10	85	
	Exploring	7	21	12	3	9	1	19	72	
	Research	16	21	6	2	9	1	13	78	
	Gathering and group formation	46	65	55	14	105	43	90	418	897
	Suspecting principles	0	3	18	0	0	0	5	26	
	Practicalizing content	0	10	4	1	0	135	25	175	
	Total	588	1361	1759	334	1047	904	958	6951	6951

The component of personal outcomes of philosophical thinking (frequency: 2805) had the highest, while the nature of philosophy (frequency: 809) had the lowest frequency in the seven fourth-grade textbooks. Out of a total of 6951 frequencies of the optimal components of the spiritual intelligence-based P4C in the textbooks, 809 belonged to the nature of philosophy, 2805 to personal outcomes of philosophical thinking, 2440 to social outcomes of philosophical thinking, and 897 to educational strategies for teaching philosophy. The highest significance coefficients among the spiritual intelligence-based P4C components in the textbooks belonged to personal outcomes of philosophical thinking (0.597), whereas the lowest coefficient belonged to the nature of philosophy (0.052).

Discussion and conclusion

The research findings indicate that the level of attention differs across components, and the status of thinking, philosophizing, and teamwork is ambiguous in these textbooks. Little attention has been paid to the nature of philosophy and components such as surprise, curiosity, discovery, and questioning, which form the basis of P4C. Moreover, little attention has been paid to social dimensions, while the role of individuality has been prominent. This study was limited by restrictions on comparing the research findings with the results of other studies due to the difference in the spiritual intelligence variable and the choice of the fourth-grade textbooks. In addition to rich domestic resources, it is suggested that credible foreign philosophical stories be rewritten according to the rules of the Iranian education system and the religious and national identity of the country.

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