



Research Paper

A Comparative Analysis on Peace Education in Social Sciences Textbooks before and after Implementing Fundamental Reform Document of Education

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Abstract

Aim: The main purpose of the present study was to compare elementary school social sciences textbooks before and after implementing the Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE) according to seven components of peace education in UNESCO (1999). This applied qualitative-quantitative research used Mayring's qualitative content analysis. Context unit included texts and educational activities in social sciences textbooks of elementary school before and after implementing FRDE. Analysis unit was the themes taken from UNESCO peace education components. The findings of the study showed that the UNESCO peace components were not equally distributed in the third-, fourth- and fifth-grade social sciences textbooks before and after implementing FRDE. The components of internationalism, democracy and preservation of cultures received more attention than other components before implementing FRDE, but the component of self and others received the least emphasis, while this component became the most prominent in the textbooks after implementing FRDE. Generally, the component of self and others, spirituality and protection of the environment received more attention in comparison to other components in the textbooks after implementing FRDE, which is among the strong suits of the textbooks after implementing FRDE; however, the component of preservation of cultures received less attention after implementing FRDE.

Keywords: *Peace Education, Elementary School, Document of Change, Peace, Social Sciences Textbook*

Introduction

Peace education currently plays a really important role besides sustainable growth and development, equality, human rights and the objectives related to peace. In fact, people should consider themselves a part of a peaceful and pacifist human society and address participation and cooperation through discourse and negotiation, all of which are realized through systematic peace education. Hence, in order for the children to be prepared for a peaceful life, schools should raise social and cultural awareness and self-awareness through various nurturing plans, law enforcement, teaching methods, communications at school (especially at elementary schools which are well prepared for sociability), and following peace education via implementing these plans (Fathi and Eslami, 2008, cited in Mc Farland, 1999). Therefore, the unique role of peace education highlights the need to revise the curriculum especially at elementary schools where the first steps of education are taken, and an appropriate educational content is needed to facilitate a balanced life, consistent with peace and sensitive to global challenges. It is therefore necessary for the education community to be aware of its role and responsibilities in guiding the new generation to solve the problems of a world full of violence (Tigh Bakhs and Saadatmand, 2017) and administer the concepts of social justice which are required to make peace in the world through teaching knowledge, values, views, and abilities and daily practices (UNESCO, 2010). Various organizations and institutions are currently attempting to provide and maintain peace across the world through empowering individuals and groups, and changing their values and behaviors through holding seminars, conferences and national and international gatherings. Among these organizations, UNESCO has introduced a variety of techniques to face challenges, gain access to peace, social justice and security, create collaboration among nations to globally respect justice, law, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all regardless of race, gender, language or religion via educating sciences and culture (UNESCO, 2008). UNESCO has introduced seven components of peace education as: 1. democracy and human rights, 2. preservation of cultures, 3. cooperation and solidarity, 4.

self and others, 5. internationalism, 6. protection of the environment and 7. spirituality. According to what has been mentioned regarding peace education and UNESCO's peace statement, peace education can be suggested as an independent subject in the curricula or along with other subject matters besides ethical and social aspects. The "social studies" book is one of textbooks through which peace can be taught. Therefore, the main objective of the present study is to answer the following question:

"How much have peace education and its components been addressed in social sciences textbooks of elementary schools before and after implementing FRDE?"

Method

This applied qualitative-quantitative research applied Mayring's qualitative content analysis. Context unit included texts and educational activities in elementary school social sciences textbooks before implementing FRDE (370 pages) in the academic year 2012-13 and social sciences textbooks after implementing FRDE (336 pages) from 2017 to 2020. The analysis unit was the themes taken from UNESCO peace education components. The validity of the identified categories related to the seven components was confirmed after frequent investigations by the experts and their reliability was assessed and confirmed with Scott coefficient of 0.855. Then, Shannon's entropy method was used for data analysis.

Results

The findings of the study showed that the UNESCO peace components were not equally distributed in the third-, fourth- and fifth-grade social sciences textbooks before and after implementing FRDE. Of the 1323 themes taken from social sciences textbooks before implementing FRDE and 1478 themes taken after implementing FRDE, the component of solidarity and cooperation had the highest frequency in both sets and the component of self and others had the lowest frequency before implementing FRDE and the component of internationalism had the lowest frequency after implementing FRDE. Although the component of cooperation and solidarity had the highest frequency both before and after implementing FRDE, it was not proportionately distributed among educational grades in both sets. That is, it was addressed at a medium level with an importance coefficient of 0.1433 before and 0.1460 after implementing FRDE. The component of internationalism had the highest frequency among the grades and received

the greatest attention with an importance coefficient of 0.1593 in the textbooks before implementing FRDE. Generally, the components of internationalism, democracy (human rights) and preservation of cultures drew more attention than others in textbooks before implementing FRDE. The component of self and others received the lowest importance with an importance coefficient of 0.1066, while it received the greatest attention in the textbooks after implementing FRDE with an importance coefficient of 0.1503. Generally, the component of self and others, spirituality and protection of the environment drew more attention in comparison to other components in the textbooks after implementing FRDE. It is considered among the strong suits of the textbooks after implementing FRDE; however, the component of preservation of cultures drew less attention after implementing FRDE with an importance coefficient of 0.1238.

Discussion and conclusion

The present study is a reminder for education authorities to make stronger efforts to increase the frequency of UNESCO peace components in the content of these textbooks and equally distribute each of the components among the grades according to Brantmeier River model in order for the learners to communicate with others effectively and constructively through knowing themselves, having empathy and respecting one another and observing equality and justice and expressing their opinions.

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