The Amount of Attention Paid to The Components of Assertiveness in Social Studies Textbooks of Elementary School

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of the present study was to investigate the components of assertiveness in elementary school social studies textbooks. The statistical population comprised all the social studies textbooks of the elementary school, in which all the sentences, pictures and worksheets were analyzed. We used a researcher-made checklist based on content analysis to collect the data. The Shannon Entropy and TOPSIS methods were used to analyze the data. The results showed that the highest coefficient of importance was related to the sub-component of "ability to say no" and the lowest coefficient of importance was related to the sub-component of "criticism and evaluation". According to the score obtained through TOPSIS the 6th grade textbook ranked 1st and the 4th grade textbook ranked last. Therefore, there is no balance in the content of elementary social studies textbooks.

Keywords: Social studies, Assertiveness skills, Content analysis, Textbook, Elementary course

Introduction

Assertiveness, as a basic phenomenon in everyday life (Binuja & Nagarajaiah, 2020, p. 832), is one of the goals of educational programs (Azadandish et al., 2019, p. 3). Assertiveness skills increase assertiveness behaviors (Larsen & Jordan, 2017, p. 99), which is noticed by increasing communication-based functions (Omura et al., 2019, pp. 9-10). Also, by improving knowledge, beliefs, self-esteem and self-efficacy, it enables people to change their negative attitudes and form valuable interpersonal relationships (Boket et al., 2016, p. 692) and has an impact on the quality of interpersonal relationships (Chadijah et al., 2024) The flow of assertive behavior starts from childhood and continues throughout life, but some children do not learn assertive behavior and do not have the power to "say no" and therefore, their level of self-acceptance and self-respect is low (khodabakhshi kolaee et al., 2014, p. 78).

Considering the impact of education in strengthening social skills in general and assertiveness skills in particular, it is necessary to analyze and examine the content of textbooks as an important tool in the education of students.

The role of textbooks is to appropriately facilitate creating desirable changes in students' behaviors and to help realize cognitive, emotional, psychomotor and functional goals through the teaching and learning process (Mirzaei, 2021, p. 152). As the main and the most reliable scientific reference for guiding the activities of teachers and students, textbooks receive much attention from policymakers and educational planners (Hassan Moradi, 2020, p. 135). Therefore, it is necessary that effective textbooks be developed in accordance with the set goals, and educational activities and learning experiences reinforce each other and be consistent with the

abilities of the students so that the desired behavior pattern is created in the learner (Poor Ehsan et al., 2020, p. 142)

Methodology

The present research is based on content analysis. The statistical population of this research is all the social studies textbooks of the elementary school in the academic year 2021-2022. According to the nature and logic of the research, all the sentences, pictures and worksheets of these books were analyzed. The data collection tool was a researcher-made content analysis checklist for the textbooks. Relevant literature was examined thoroughly to make a list of the most important concepts of assertiveness which was issued to experts in the field of curriculum planning and psychology. In order to analyze the data, frequency index in descriptive statistics and Shannon's entropy method, derived from systems theory, were used. Also, in order to rank the textbooks in terms of how much they address the components of assertiveness, the TOPSIS multi-criteria decision-making method was used.

Results

The results indicated that the sixth grade social studies textbook ranked first in terms of the amount of addressing the assertiveness component (0.941), and the fourth grade social studies textbook ranked last (0.160).
Furthermore, examining the amount of dealing with the sub-components of assertiveness in the content of the mentioned textbooks revealed that the sub-component of "argument" had the highest frequency (1864) and the sub-component of "the ability to say no" had the lowest frequency (225). Analyzing the data and calculating the importance coefficient using Shannon's method revealed that the sub-component of "ability to say no" the highest importance coefficient (0.335) and the sub-component of "criticism and evaluation" had the lowest importance coefficient (0.074).
Also, in the third grade, the lowest coefficient of importance pertained to the subcomponent of "ability to say no" (0.043). In the fourth and fifth grades, the lowest coefficient of importance pertained to the sub-component of "criticizing and evaluating" (0.113 and 0.143, respectively). In the sixth grade, the lowest coefficient of importance pertained to the sub-component of "reasoning" (0.048).

Discussion and conclusion

Since the main goal of education is to help students adapt to different life conditions, it is necessary to include practical social skills in the curriculum for all students (Zahiri Niya et al., 2015, p. 185). Teaching assertiveness skills is considered one of the important social skills (Yaghoobi et al., 2022, p. 328) because courage and training courage create positive individual and interpersonal outcomes (Speed et al., 2018, p. 5). With the help of assertiveness skills, students can express their thoughts, feelings and opinions appropriately (Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 2018, p. 62). Moreover, the attitudes and habits formed in childhood are important in decision-making during adulthood. Hence, the elementary education course is the basis of higher courses and students' relevant experiences will be beneficial to them and will be associated with constant learning (Soltani et al., 2020, p. 163). Therefore, it is better to consider assertiveness training more seriously because school is one of the most important institutions that can instill normal behaviors and skills in children, and that most of this content is taught to students through textbooks in Iran. The most effective book in this regard is the textbook of social studies (Safariyeh & Rezaei, 2020, p. 73), therefore, need to pay more attention to the components of assertiveness in the preparation of these textbooks.

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