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Political Concepts in Jordanian Schools Curricula of the Scientific and Literary Streams (Grades 11th and 12th)

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Abstract

The study aims at identifying political concepts in Jordanian schools curricula for grades 11th and 12th in the scientific and literary streams .Books were analyzed according to the content analysis approach. The results showed that political concepts were more obvious in the 12th grade of the literary stream if compared to the 11th grade. It was concluded that more attention to political concepts should be given in the scientific stream in order to contribute to developing students' political understanding, so as to be able to deal with global issues, in addition to teaching concepts renouncing ideological extremism. The study recommends that more quality political concepts should be introduced in the scientific stream curricula.

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Keywords: Political concepts, School curricula , Content analysis,Scientific stream, Literary stream, Education in Jordan.

1. Introduction

Political education is considered as one of the branches of social sciences, if thinking of it as a process of political knowledge development of the learner, it is concerned with matters related to political concepts such as freedom, democracy and pluralism, it seeks to develop aspects of young people's personality in a social context of meaningful education, so everyone has the right to play a responsible social and political role, in the framework of social education, which is the context that takes care of individuals and groups in terms of intellectual concepts to be raised political parties, security, economic and cultural concepts. Therefore political education enables learners to acquire political and responsibility

2. Theoretical background & Literature:

The importance of social education increased accordingly too many variables: local, regional and global, where it became necessary for the learner to be aware of what is going on around in order to understand the changes that can make the learner a good participant in the political life. So that some educators don't believe in teaching political science as a separate topic in early school stages, but it can be included as concepts in the social studies curriculum in order to provide an opportunity for teachers in the classroom to be able to teach students the political concepts, such as state, power, legitimacy, and political education. So that Dynneson (1992), pointed out that social studies and teachers in this field can play an important role in making learners able to understand the policy part of the daily lives of individuals, and this can provide them with knowledge requirements of practicing good citizenship. Other

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researchers believe that political knowledge and political participation are important and considered as the criteria for development and civilization. (Nasser, 1993).
However, Nakayame (1989) said that the main objectives of the social studies is the development of political education and global thinking for learners as future citizens of the world, so that social education can help students to understand the other opinions and make them better practice democratic behaviour for being aware of the relations that exist between countries in this world. Took also believes in the responsibility for social studies teachers to help students learn how to focus on the political dimension in researches and decision-making, and to enable them to be aware of global developments. (Took, 1988).

2.1. Problem of the study and questions:

The problem of the study emerged because of the developments that have taken place in the Arab States and the world, where conceptual changes should be tackled in the books of history, geography and general education. One can see that such concepts have become very rare in the books of history and general education, especially in the basic stages of school. Political concepts were lacking in our educational curricula especially in high Jordanian schools.
More focus should be given to the study of political thought, especially concepts related to governments, history, and heritage of political thought, the constitution, international law, public administration, ethics, and the philosophy of politics. Hence, the main problem appears in the school curricula that should play a key important role in documenting these political concepts.
The study attempts to analyze the content of education books, history, geography and general education, trying to assess the higher stage curricula, especially for grades (11^{th} and 12^{th}) in Jordanian schools system, trying to identify the political concepts by answering the following questions:

- The first question: How frequent are political concepts introduced in the books of history, geography and general education for grades (11^{th} and 12^{th}) in Jordanian schools in both scientific and literary streams?

- The second question: How frequent are political concepts introduced in history books for grades (11^{th} and 12^{th}) in Jordanian schools?

- The third question: Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the frequencies of the political concepts raised in the books of history, geography and general education for grades (seventh to tenth) in Jordanian schools, due to the variable of the grade?

2.2. Importance of the study:

The study highlights the importance of teaching political concepts, teachers of social studies, students, and its curricula. Its importance is derived from the necessity of teaching political concepts, to enable students take their role in the political process, aiming at making them politically democratic, and making them able to deal with political hot issues. This requires that teachers of social studies empower their students to deal with issues and political events carefully in accordance with the political system, taking into their consideration the objectives of social studies and the nature of its curricula. Teachers should be capable of developing political knowledge and political awareness among students through the channels of education, and training them on the process of reconciliation between political ideologies, to make them able to face the political internal and external changes, and participate responsibly towards the world. The study also realizes the significant impact of politics in the everyday affairs of life of individuals and groups, in addition to its the importance of teaching social studies for national security , knowing that political education ,given through the social studies and general education curriculum, is the first step in this direction in the Jordanian school curricula system.

2.3. Objectives of the study:

The aim of this study is to determine the extent of assimilation of political concepts in social education books in Jordanian schools curricula, based on actual assessments for the basic stage for grades (11^{th} and 12^{th}). Another objective is to undertake curricula developments in accordance with the Jordanian society's need to consolidate the political base concept.

3. Previous Studies:

As a result of surveys in social and political education studies conducted on political concepts in social studies, Shlool (1997) conducted a study aimed at identifying the degree of prevalence of political concepts in the books of social and civic education in the higher basic stage in Jordan. The researcher analyzes the content of education books; he selected social and civic education teachers taken as a sample consisting of (67) teachers who were selected randomly. The results showed that the history books were on top in ranks compared to three grades in the main stage .History ranked first in containing political concepts, and then came civic education books ranking the second, and as results showed no statistically significant differences appeared concerning the prevalence of political concepts in the books of social and civic education in the higher basic stage due to specialization or academic qualification or experience of the teacher .There was also some lack of consensus between the results of books content analysis, and teacher's points of view in terms of the prevalence of political concepts in social and civic education books.

Omari (1997) conducted a study that aimed at identifying the contribution of social and civic education curriculum in the foundation of political knowledge and national affiliation and belongingness among students in the first four grades from the perspective of supervisors and teachers.The study population consisted of (33) supervisors and (707) teachers, using a questionnaire for the purposes of study ,and the results showed no statistically significant differences in estimations of the supervisors in terms of variables of experience and academic specialization; results also showed no statistically significant differences in estimations of the teachers in terms of gender, experience and specialization. Freha (2002) also conducted a field study aiming at identifying the effectiveness of the school on civic education and the availability of the basic elements and concepts of civic education among students in third secondary grade in Lebanese schools. Students differ in positions to national, social, and political issues. The study also focussed on the impact of variables such as race, religion, type of school and the culture of the father and mother.Students were selected a randomly, making a sample of (1511) students. The study results showed the presence of statistical significance between the students' political knowledge and civic education, in addition to independent variables, such as gender, school, religion, and culture of parents and school type. There was also some kind of correlation between what students already know in the area of law and societal issues and their political positions, so that they confirmed positive attitudes to national and civic education, while the study showed students' weakness in terms of the historical knowledge.

Alzyadat and Alqutawi (2010) investigated the level of political knowledge in social studies teachers in Jordan and its relationship to variables of experience, specialization and gender.The study sample consisted of (80) teachers, the test consisted of (44) paragraphs of multiple-choice type, distributed on four areas: political systems, political participation, political theory and international relations. The results showed that there were significant differences in the level of political knowledge of social studies teachers on the total test and subtests and as for the acceptable educational level, and there were statistically significant differences in the level of political knowledge of social studies teachers due to the gender variable and in favour of males, and there were statistical significant differences attributed to specialization and particularly in favour of history teachers, and there were no statistically significant differences due to the experience variable.

Obeidat, and Altarawneh (2004) identified the degree of interest in political concepts in books of civic and social education in the sixth-grade in Jordan .The researchers used a tool consisted of (94) political concepts; they analyzed the educational textbooks, using the word unit for analysis. The results of content analysis pointed out the existence of variation in the degree of interest in political concepts from one book to another.

In respect to political areas, the field of political theory came first in three books of social studies (geography, history, and civics), while the field of international relations came the second place in books of history and geography, and the book of civics came in third place, whereas the comparative politics field came in the last place in books of history and geography.

Hahn (1999) conducted a study that aimed at making a comparison about the reality of national education in Britain e United States, Germany, Denmark, Netherlands and Australia, in terms of policies and practices, through the response of students in age of (14-19 years), using certain paragraphs in the questionnaire to reveal that, in addition to the interviews with their teachers. The research found that Britain, Australia, and Netherlands do not have specific policies within the curriculum concerning civic education, while in Denmark, Germany and United States; they have specific policies aiming at creating students to be good citizens. The research concluded results relating to each country, so that in Denmark there is a school day where students engage in dialogues, debates and exchange of opinion about the issues and problems. Students also study a specific course in social sciences that include knowledge and information about the political system, social, economic, and international relations. In addition to that all students of various ages in Denmark study topics in politics, whereas the Danish schools care deeply about the councils of students and give them the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making, and discussions of democracy, along with the presence of government funding for these councils to decide councils aspects upon which these funds can be spent. The research found that the curricula designed for civic education in Germany and the United States vary in focus on issues that are related to political controversy in the community, and these are not given great opportunities for debate, and opinion. The research also found through interviews and observations that if the curriculum included political education, students will be more interested in issues of public and national interest. It was clear that educators have a responsibility to political education of the younger generations, so as to be more motivated, and likely to participate in public life.

Crick (2000) conducted a study that aimed at integrating the curriculum of national education in Britain. The study concluded the need for a platform for a comprehensive and holistic knowledge and information to be included in the curricula about legal and human rights and responsibilities, such as the judicial system, and its association with people's lives, including knowledge and information about national and geographical diversity, religious and ethnic diversity in Britain, and to the need for respect and understanding by the students. The curriculum should also include knowledge and information about central and local governments, and public services they provide, in addition to the provisions of knowledge and information about the parliamentary system, forms of governments, and the system of election, the importance of voting, and how to resolve conflicts and disputes in a fair manner, and the importance of media in society. The study also concluded that this curriculum should include knowledge about the world as a community, with variant political, economic, environmental and social aspects, including knowledge about the role of the European Union, the Commonwealth, and the United Nations.

Starkey and Osler (2001) identified the documents relating to the policy of national education in France and Britain compared the contribution of this policy in promoting the concepts of national identity, national education and development. The study found that the documents related to these policies were formulated within a dissatisfying manner that lacks the attention to issues of policy. And it was clear that although the curriculum of national education is traditionally designed to prepare community members to take their place in the community of adults, the subject of national identity, was highly questionable. The research analyzed the national education programs in both countries, and concluded that the program in France, announces the handling of the principles of freedom, justice and solidarity, equality and human rights in a manner suggesting that there is a problem in the application of these principles and that there should be hard work. Whereas in Britain, the program does not explicitly address the national identity, saying that the concept of national education must develop through creating better awareness, not through pressure or hard work , through participation in demonstrations and rallies calling for change, but by volunteering in the public action. The research found that both programs do not have interest in minorities' rights, in spite of announcing the need to move away from racial discrimination.

Murgescu (2002) conducted a study that highlighted the role of the textbook as a tool for understanding and stability in East Asia Communism, by re-writing this such books within a different construction, as compared to what it used to be during the communist era. The search concluded that the school book should be an effective tool in the consolidation of stability and mutual understanding and cooperation within countries, so that the textbooks must be formulated to make them free from hostility towards other peoples, nations and different ethnic groups. So that writing books of religion, geography and literature should including knowledge and information on human rights and duties in general, and this is the responsibility of managers and the educational administration as well.

3.1. Comments on Previous Studies:

The study goes in line with the following previous studies in terms of subject and analysis of curriculum and method .The study of Shlool (1996) analyzed the content of social and national education books, including the preparation of questionnaires in the same concepts. While the study of Omari (1997) identified the contribution of the social and national education curriculum as a foundation of knowledge affecting positively the affiliation of students in the first four classes from the perspective of supervisors and teachers. The study of Freha (2002) also identified the effectiveness of schools in the national education at third secondary grades in schools of Lebanon, where variables studied were gender, religion, and type of school and the culture of parents. Zyadat & Qatawi (2010) study aimed at investigating the level of political knowledge of Jordanian teachers of social studies and its relationship to variables of expertise, specialization, and gender. They used a questionnaire made up of (44) paragraphs of the multiple-choice type based on four areas of political systems, political participation, political theory and international relations. Obeidat & Tarawneh study (2004) aimed at identifying the degree of interest of social and national education books of the sixth-grade in political, introducing political concepts consisting of (94) political concepts. Drisko study (1999) also aimed at highlighting the role of schools in national education. Hahn conducted a study (1999) that aimed at comparing the reality of national education in Britain, the United States, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Australia, in order to see the political practices, through the answer of students in age (14-19 years) for paragraphs of a questionnaire built for this purpose, in addition to interviewing their teachers. Crick also conducted a study (2000) on the inclusion of national education curriculum in Britain as the rest of curricula of geography, history and English. Starkey and Osler study (2001) also aimed at identifying the documents related to the policy of national education in France and Britain, comparing the contribution of this policy in promoting the concepts of national identity and national education in both countries. Then Murgescu study (2002) aimed at highlighting the role of the textbook as a tool for understanding and stability in the communist countries of East Asia, trying to re-write such books constructing a new era of communism.

4. Method and Procedures:

The following is a presentation of the study sample, tools of the study, and methods of verification of the truthfulness and reliability, and procedures of the study, variables, and statistical treatments used by researcher.

4.1. Study Sample:

The study includes all the books of social and national education in the stage of secondary grades 11-12 in both literary and scientific streams in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the academic year (2011/2012).The books evaluated were books of history, geography, general education for grades 11th and 12th.

4.2. Instrument of the Study:

In order to implement the study and achieve its goals, the researcher worked on the following steps:-

1. Prepare a list of the political criteria by referring to a group of Arabic and foreign references related to the field, the researcher also tried to point out the political Standards contained in the relevant studies, and the educational literature to rely on theoretically.

2. Taking the views of a list of researchers in the political education area from different university professors and others interested in the field of social studies in Jordan.

3. The researcher adopted re-analysis to ascertain the stability of the analytical process by analyzing the content of education books in these stages, social and national, twice by the researcher in the period of time, then spaced three weeks, by another professor whose specialty is in the social studies curriculum and teaching methods, after giving an idea of the subject and analysis conducted, and to find out the stability analysis (Holsti) formula was used for reliability.
4. To achieve the objectives of the study the researcher analyzed the books (mentioned in the study sample), according to a paragraph, where each paragraph in each lesson presents a specific idea, and the researcher determines whether that paragraph carries with it a political concept or not, with the help of another researcher carrying a doctorate in social studies, according to the following steps:

    - Reviewing and using the general framework for social and national education in the basic stage.
    - Review the Jordanian Constitution.
    - Review the law of Ministry of Education No. (3) Of the Year (1994) and its amendments.
    - Revision of the National Charter.
    - Review and document Jordan First.
    - Review the Amman Message.

4.3. Viability of Study Instrument:

To ensure the authenticity of the study instrument, the researcher conducted gap analysis of the content of the books of history, geography and general Education in 11th grade literary stream & books of general education in 12th grade both literary and scientific streams with a time lag of one month, where the agreement correlation calculated reaches 81%, and this value is considered suitable for analysis.

4.4. The Stability of Content Analysis Process:

For the purpose of verifying the stability of the content analysis, the researcher analyzed the Education textbooks in both grades trying to point out political concepts available, and entrusted two other researchers for this task, those researchers were carrying a Ph.D. in Curriculum Social Studies with experience in books analysis, which reflects the stability, compatibility co-efficiency factor was calculated for the results of analyses of the three cases according to Holsti equation calculating the proportion of agreement among analysts, which represents the stability analysis.

5. Results:

After reviewing the previous curricula, the following tables present the distinction between grades 11th and 12th in both streams (scientific and literary):

- ***Grade 11th***

Literary Stream	History	Geography	Total
Book total number of pages	299	394	693
Allocated pages for political concepts	209	111	320
Percentage of politics pages to the total	69.8%	28%	46.1%

So that the percentage of political concepts pages in the literary stream is 46.1% as compared to the scientific stream as 0%.

- ***As for Grade 12th literary stream***

Literary Stream	History	Geography	Total
Book total number of pages	257	366	623
Allocated pages for political concepts	257	173	430
Percentage of politics pages to the total	100%	47.2%	69%

As for grade 12th, both students of scientific and literary streams take General Education curricula, as follows:

Literary Stream	General Education
Book total number of pages	210
Allocated pages for political concepts	165
Percentage of politics pages to the total	78.5%

So that the 12th grade literary stream takes the following pages in curricula:

- 430 (pages of history & geography) +165 (pages of General Education) = 595 (pages of political issues)

As for grade 11th literary stream, the allocated pages for politics in the history curricula reaches 209 pages of a percentage of 69.8%, presented in the following parts:

- (Jordanian participation in the rise, National Arab movement foundation of Jordanian states , constitution, Jordan and international relations, Palestinian, Saudi, Syria, Iraqi , Kings of Jordan and their political positions, economic planning , Palestinian issue, women in army).

As for the allocated pages for politics in the geography book in the 11th grade literary stream, they represent 111 pages making 28% of the total; these were distributed on topics as follows:

- (5 Pages on demographic policies, 90 pages on human resources of the state, 16 pages on globalization and sustainable development).

As for grade 12th literary stream, the allocated pages for politics in the history curricula is 257 presented in the previously mentioned 6 parts, with a percentage of 100%.
As for grade 12th literary stream the geography curricula presents 173 pages making 47% of the total pages , presenting the following parts : 68 pages in Geopolitics , and 91 pages on National resources & power of state , then 14 pages on efforts for environmental protection
As for the General education curricula of grade 12th literary and scientific streams, about 165 pages were allocated for political concepts with a percentage of 78.5% of the total pages of the book, presenting the following : 20 pages on Islamic ethics, good citizenship & benevolence, 40 pages on The Hashemites,15 pages on Amman message, 20 pages on Jordan civilization , 30 pages on World modern history, 40 pages on Modern Jordan .

So that a little comparison could be done between that portion of pages that students of the 12th grade read, for example students of the scientific stream read only 165 pages as total and that is only in General Education, while students of the same grade of the literary stream read 595 pages of General education, history and geography.

While in the 11th grade, when students of the scientific stream read nothing on political concepts , we realize that same students of the literary stream read 320 pages on pure politics, Which means 46.1% of the total pages of history and geography books.

Such results compare what students of the scientific stream read to those of the literary stream, as follows:

Grade/Streams	Scientific	Literary
12th Grade	165 pages	595 pages
11th Grade	0	320 pages
Total	165 pages	915 pages

Which means that students of scientific streams read only a percentage of 18% compared to those of the literary stream? And that is a very weak percentage that entails the importance of reconsidering the content of curricula in terms of quantity and quality as well, which interprets making students of the scientific streams unaware of political concepts and issues.

6. Recommendations:

After reviewing the discussion and results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Developing the curricula of the 11th and 12th grades of the scientific stream, so as to increase the amount of pages dedicated for political concepts, so that students of the scientific stream may take a similar overview of political concepts as those introduced to students in the literary stream, but with a different way of evaluation.
- The deployment of more political concepts to be transformed into practice focusing on high school stages in order to develop the value system (loyalty, national identity, and the practice of democracy)
- Developing the existing curriculum selecting those concepts of political orientation and employing them in practical life.
- Developing the spirit of political participation among the students of high schools and developing training programs that aim at raising the awareness of democracy.
- To provide political training programs for high schools students to develop their personal philosophy , enabling them to deal with many political dilemmas serving the national interests .

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