

Evaluating the Social Science Textbook (1st grade of guidance school of Iran) in terms of Optimum Features and Criterion of Textbooks

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The main purpose of present study was evaluating the curriculum of social sciences textbook at the first grade of the guidance school of Iran in compliance with Optimum Criteria of a good textbook. The population of this study included 120 of social sciences teachers at the first grade of the guidance school in Kerman city, the sample was equal to Population. The tool of gathering the data was a questionnaire which was made according to the National criteria of the textbook in Iran. The results showed that the most of the 20-fold criteria were confirmed. The ranking of the criteria showed that, the criterion of "relevance of the presented contents with everyday life" was the most confirmed and the criterion of "providing the opportunities for extracurricular activities out of class" was the least confirmed in the social science textbook.

Introduction

Humans are evaluating themselves by using their common sense and their experiences and in principle, each selection requires evaluation. In the current situations in where the rapid development of sciences, researches and technologies changed the curriculum, considering the educational aims, tasks and policies is necessary. One of the ways for fulfilling these aims in each educational institute is educational evaluations which are being done for promoting the quality of education and achieving the national and international standards (*Moosa poor and Behzad poor, 2005; p. 73-74*).

In general, providing the curriculum is a human activity which has an especial complexity. Therefore, it could not be effective without qualitative study and improvement. Creating or making the most effective curriculums is one of the desires of each educational system and increasing its quality requires continuance evaluations; certainly, evaluation must be done accurately and based on the logical principles and criterion if it is so responsive (*FathiVajargah, 2002*).

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The domain of curriculum due to its importance for fulfilling the educational aims, it is accounted as the core of educational system (based on the view of educational and training authorities). Based on this view, curriculum was introduced as one of the independent and especial domains in the first of 20th century (*FathiVajargah, 1997*).

The final aim of all curriculums developers is compiling the codified curriculum. Curriculum is accounted as a design for providing a set of learning opportunities for people who are under the education for effective and relative stable changes in different dimensions from the emotional, social and cognitive views (*Saylor, Alexander and Lewis, 1981*).

It is necessary to mention that curriculum not only limited to a class but also involves all departments of an institute. Furthermore, it includes the evaluation of educational experiences.

In addition, organizing the curriculum is being done by educational philosophy of the institute and also this philosophy has a direct role in determining the structure, content knowledge and educational atmosphere (*Gaff and et al, 1996; p. 5-8*).

Therefore, by considering the sources of determining curriculums, evaluating its different elements is important, this evaluation is being done for determining the efficiency of curriculums or educational materials which contains of evaluating the factors such as educational methods, curriculums, textbooks, visual and audio materials and the facilities in the schools (*Saif, 2004, referred to Gay, 1991*).

So, curriculum's evaluation may be contain of all elements of curriculums or one element of each curriculum such as using educational films. The role of curriculum's evaluation is determining the value of curriculums. Whether the curriculum achieved the targets which were designed for them or not? Whether these targets have validity? Whether the curriculum which was used for the students was appropriate or not? Whether the educational selection methods are the best choices or not? Whether the recommended educational materials have the required features for achieving the educational targets or not? In the other words, reviewing the curriculum is accounted as a continuous actions.

As mentioned, content curriculum must be evaluated as one of the most important elements of permanent curriculum. In the countries with concentrated educational system as our country, Iran, curriculum is being done as a concentrated plan and the textbooks are as the most important source of educational content. And usually in compiling each textbook, the defined criterion and standards which were obtained after many years' experience and evaluations are used. Therefore, one of the ways for evaluating the textbook is to study the multiple criterion based on one or several views.

The lesson of social sciences in the 1st grade of guidance school is very important in recognizing the society by students and their role in the society. Educational and training system is so important and significance for preparing the youth for having a good life, doing their tasks and also their role in the job – markets and society and also in educational guide and providing the other needs that fulfilling all needs and expectations, observing values, society's norms, scientific, technical and artistic achievements, the spatial and temporal conditions make the change and improvement necessary (*Ministry of Education, 2001*).

In this regard, based on the *UNESCO* study; "all countries have tried hardly for training the youth and preparing them for professional life and they did not ignore these responsibilities"

(Tomas, 1975; p. 34).

The aim of social studies for the youth, in all range age, is to enable them in participating in the world surrounding them. These studies show the relationship of the youth with people, institutes and their environment. And also it helps these people (the youth) to increase knowledge about past, present and planning for future, skill in problem – solving and decision making. And these studies complete these skills and knowledge inside a framework from citizen's participation, whether be in groups of game, school, society or the world.

By considering the significance of this lesson, the aim of this study is to evaluate the content of curriculum of social sciences, in the 1st grade of guidance school, based on the optimum features and criterion of textbooks. One of the best ways for measuring this point is teachers; whether these features were observed in these books or not? Because they, based on their previous experiences, are informed the advantages and disadvantages of this book and they are effective in evaluating the content of these books.

Method

In this study, it has been tried to measure the view of teachers of Kerman toward role of suggested criterion from Educational Research and Renovation Organization (1980) in compiling the textbook of social science in the 1st grade of guidance school so the Survey method was used.

Participants:

The considered society in this study was all teachers (120) of this lesson in Kerman and their view toward this issue was studied and finally 105 questionnaires were gathered and completed by them.

Questions:

- Whether the content of this book was compiled for fulfilling the educational aims which were determined for this book or not?
- Whether the principles of curriculum were observed in providing the content of this book or not?
- Whether the principles of learning – psychology were observed in providing the content of this book or not?
- What was the view of teachers toward ranking the optimum criterion of this textbook in compiling this book?

Instrument:

For studying the aims of this study and also responding the questions of this study, the questionnaire was used which was based on 20 criterions of textbooks. These criterions were suggested from Educational Research and Renovation Organization (1980) in three dimensions; goals or aims, observing the principles of curriculum and the principles of learning – psychology.

The questions no.: 1-7-8-11, 2-3-9-10-12-13-14-16-17-19 and 4-5-6-15-18-20 were assigned to these categories (content's book with the aims of lesson, observing the principles of curriculum and observing the principles of psychology), respectively. The validity of this questionnaire was determined as an apparent one; therefore, the judgment of experts and

professors of educational sciences were used for determining the validity of these questions. For measuring the reliability of questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha was used, $\alpha = .91$.

For analyzing data, the statistical test of one sample T-Test, and rank test of W Condell were used for studying the different view of teachers about criterion and for ranking, respectively.

Findings

In the section, the findings of research are presented.

1st question: Whether the content of this book was compiled for fulfilling the educational aims which were determined for this lesson or not?

Table 1: the extent of proportion in the content with educational aims from the view of teachers

Sig	T	SD	Mean	F	Variable
0.05	-0.159	2.46	12.96	105	Educational Aims
Test value: 13					

Table 1 shows the results of proportion in the content with educational aims from the view of teachers by one– sample T-test. By considering that the variable of educational aims in the measuring level was interval, then for measuring its extent, the mean value (13) was considered as test –value and the average score of observing the educational aims was compared with it.

The obtained mean value(12.96) shows that this value is lower than the assumed value of test (13) and this difference due to the significant level (0.874) is not significant. Therefore, but it can be said that the value of observing the educational aims in this textbook, from the view of teachers in Kerman, was in the middle level, approximately.

2nd question: Whether the principles of curriculum were observed in providing the content of this book or not?

Table 2: the extent of observing the principles of curriculum in providing the content of these books

Sig	t	SD	Average	F	Variable
0.05	2.134	5.99	30.25	105	Principles of Curricilim
Test value: 29					

Table 2 shows the results of observing the principles of curriculum in providing the content of these books from the view of teachers by one –sample T-test. By considering that the variable of principles of curriculum in the measuring level was interval, then for measuring its extent, the mean value (29) was considered as test –value and the average score of observing the principles of curriculum was compared with it.

The obtained average (30.25) shows that this value is higher than the assumed / given value of test (29),this difference due to the significant level (0.035) is significant. Therefore, it can be said that the value of observing the principles of curriculum in providing the content of this book, from the view of teachers in Kerman, was in the high level.

3rd question: Whether the principles of learning – psychology were observed in providing the content of this book or not?

Table 3: the extent of observing the principles of learning – psychology in providing the content of this book

Sig	T	SD	Mean	F	Variable
0.001	3.437	3.98	18.33	105	Learning Psychology
<i>Test value: 17</i>					

Table 3 shows the results of observing the principles of learning – psychology in providing the content of these books from the view of teachers by single – sample t-test. By considering that the variable of principles of learning – psychology in the measuring level was interval, then for measuring its extent, the mean value (17) was considered as test –value and the average score of observing the principles of learning – psychology was compared with it.

The obtained average (18.33) shows that this value is higher than the assumed / given value of test (17) but this difference due to the significant level (0.001) is significant. Therefore, it can be said that the value of observing the principles of learning – psychology in providing the content of this book, from the view of teachers in Kerman, was in the higher level than in the middle one.

4th question: What was the view of teachers toward ranking the observation of each optimum criterion of this textbook (social science for the 1st grade of guidance school)?

Table 4: the significance test of average difference of observing each criterion

Sample	105
W Condell	0.105
X ²	209.078
df	19
Sig	0.000

Table 4 shows the results of difference (average difference) of observing each criterion. By considering the data of this table and that the value of W–Condell test (0.105) and X² (209.078) in the error level (lower than 0.01), it must be said that observing each of these criterion in this textbook is different.

Table 5: the average of arranged rank of each optimum criterion in this textbook

Rank average	Criterion
13.22	9- the relationship of presented subjects with daily life and social environment
12.57	6- the focus of this textbooks issues or the design of lesson on the direct challenge of students in the learning experiences and activate them
12.05	1- determining or being definite the materials of this book and recommended activities in these types of books based on the determined curriculum or plan and educational aims
11.98	2- to be logical the sequence of this books materials by considering the previous learning (s) of students
11.90	3- the focus of author on how to breed the basic principles and methods not to transfer the scientific facts
11.75	7- providing the suitable fields for breeding the criterion and optimum approaches of human in the recommended activities and issues
11.73	8- for evaluating the several levels of human thoughts and the values, approaches and practical skills of questions and answers

11.50	4- the conformity of presented subjects with the age group and the potential of understanding and the perception of students (in the middle level) and providing the opportunities for students with different abilities
11.42	12- for achieving the new concepts not confirming the previous issues or subjects of book
11.20	11- achieving the practical activities with simple tools, easily
10.60	15- observing the emotional and spiritual health of students in the recommended subjects and activities
10.29	10- having the presented subjects from practical activities
10.04	5- the focus of recommended subjects and activities on the motives and provoking the curiosity sense
9.93	14- the focus of textbook on the required time for learning this book, completely
9.45	13- for breeding some practical skills not reviewing the skills of others or the presented activities
9.23	19- attracting the students to the importance of quantitative studies and accessibility to the several reasons and sources in the content of this book
8.73	18- the responsibility of book to the needs of different groups of people in the various regions of the country
7.96	16- being new, modern and developed subjects or issues of the book and the presented methods
7.90	20- being appropriate (the physical conditions) to the age of students
6.56	17- providing the opportunities for extracurricular activities in the outside the class

Table 5 shows the results of how to prioritize the optimum criteria and features of this textbook based on the observation of these (criterion) in the social science book of 1st grade of guidance school from the view of teachers in Kerman. Based on the results of this table, among 20 criterions, the highest value was assigned to no. 9 (the relationship of presented subjects with daily life and social environment) which its average rank equals to 13.22 and the lowest value was assigned to no.7 (Providing the opportunities for extracurricular activities in the outside the class) that its average rank was 6.56.

Discussion and Conclusion

The general aim of this study was to evaluate the curriculum of social sciences book, in the 1st grade of guidance school, based on the observation of optimum features and criterion of these textbooks (20 criterions) from the view of related teachers in Kerman. For this reason, four questions were presented:

- In the 1st question, the appropriate extent in content of these books with the educational aims was studied in compiling these books. The related findings were shown that the educational aims were considered in these books (in the middle level).
- In the 2nd question, the observation of curriculum principles was studied in compiling these books. The related findings were shown that this issue (observation of curriculum principles) was considered in these books in the high level.
- In the 3rd question, the observation of learning – psychology principles was studied in compiling these books. The related findings were shown that this issue (observation of learning – psychology principles) was considered in these books in the high level.
- In the 4th question, the ranking of observing each optimum criterion of these kinds of books was studied. The results of this study show the significant difference in the average rank of each criterion.

Also its findings show that these criterions such as the relationship of presented subjects with daily life and social environment, the focus of this textbooks issues or the design of lesson on the direct challenge of students in the learning experiences and activate them, determining or being definite the materials of this book and recommended activities in these types of books

based on the determined curriculum or plan and educational aims and to be logical the sequence of these books' materials by considering the previous learning (s) of students have the highest effect on compiling this book meanwhile the other criterions such as providing the opportunities for extracurricular activities in the outside the class, being appropriate (the physical conditions) to the age of students, being new, modern and developed subjects or issues of the book and the presented methods, the responsibility of the book to the needs of different groups of people in the various regions of the country and also attracting the students to the importance of quantitative studies and accessibility to the several reasons and sources in the content of this book have the less effect on compiling these kinds of books.

Based on these findings, several recommendations were presented:

- Curriculum developers focus on the criterions that teachers mentions they aren't respect in develop of the curriculum.
- Prioritization on the criterions for compensating the inattention to them based on the lowest average of obtained rank.
- Studying the view of students toward observing criterions and optimum features of textbooks and conform it with the related findings to the view of teachers.

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