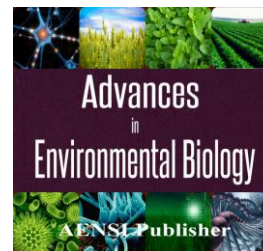




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Studying the Amount of Attention to Health Education in Science, Persian Language Literature and Civics Textbooks in the Sixth Grade of Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Background: This study aims to determine the amount of attention to health education in science, Persian Language literature, and civics textbooks in the sixth grade of elementary school. The method of study is content analysis. **Objective:** The study population consists of the science, Persian Language literature, and civics textbooks in the sixth grade of elementary school. The content of each book is considered as the sample size and therefore the purposive sampling method was used. In content analysis, ten categories (public sanitation, nutritional health, object, environment, ecology, psychology, exercise, disease prevention, family and disability) of health education were used, and units of analysis included the underlying themes in the texts and pictures. **Results:** To collect the data, a check list and the content analysis form, adjusted according to the health education components, were used. For data analysis, descriptive statistics were used. **Conclusion:** The results show that in the science textbook, there has been more attention to environmental health (29.33) and physical health (20.00), respectively; In the Persian Language literature textbook, the highest attention (85.18) has been paid to the mental health; in the social science textbook, the most attention has been paid to mental health (42.85) and the environmental health (31.42). In general, it can be concluded that in science, the Persian Language literature, and social civics textbooks in the sixth grade of elementary school, there has been low or no attention to the health education components.

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INTRODUCTION

Health, as an individual and social value, according to the Constitution of the World Health Organization and the views of all nations and schools, is considered as one of the most important and basic human rights and needs. Achieving its highest level is the social and national aim of all governments [4]. School because of having a greater role in public education and ensuring the growth and education of a community and facilitating the socialization of children, has always been focused by the social reformers. Undoubtedly, education is a powerful instrument in guiding the human societies and leading them towards a brighter future and a better life. The content and quality of education programs should be organized so clearly that they can prepare the younger generation to a healthy and agile life along with accepting the social responsibility (Office of Health and Nutrition, 2002). Providing, maintaining and improving the students' health need a developed health education system to empower the individuals to manage their personal and social well-being [12].

In recent years, there has been an alarming statistics about the plethora of mental health problems in the community. Drug abuse and the spread of diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis proposed a lot of people's health at risk. Given one of the most important features of a balanced person is having the physical and mental health, health education includes some concepts that affect the physical and mental health issues [6]. Health promotion involves three factors: Health education, health protection and disease prevention. Without a balanced, harmonious, and simultaneous for each of these three factors, we cannot improve the people's health. The main goal of any health strategy is to promote and improve the health and also the people's quality of life. Emphasis on the development of health education is essential for the realization of the ultimate goal [9]. In other words, the education and health sectors are considered as non-manufacturing sectors by the planners and economists.

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According to this idea, reduction in the cost and investment are simply applied. In the health sector, there has been spending too much on health care to treat diseases in hospitals and medical centers, while in the health education and other prevention and promotion sectors, the story is different. It is essential to make this view common that the good education leads to the health promotion and the health ensures the high production. In fact, education and health are development supplementary [10].

World Health Organization defines the health education in schools with some items such as interpersonal communication, training AIDS, mental health, drug prevention education, decision-making, the ability to say no, problem solving skill and courage. According to the World Health Organization, the health education components includes nutrition, safe drinking water, having a healthy relationship with others, AIDS prevention by providing sex education (reproduction, identifying people, protecting against disease) [14].

Arabaci (2009) in his study titled "Health Care Management in Primary Schools" concluded that primary school students have little resistance to disease so that they must be equipped with the health skills. The school can offer effective primary health care services and also a healthy environment in schools and communities in collaboration with parties[1]. The results showed that the participants had a positive perception of school health services and there was no significant difference in their perception. Thus, based on the importance and the role of health in our lives as an important source of economical, social and individual development, attention to this fundamental element is the most important task of any government [2].

Roth (1996) argues that the development of environmental literacy is a key task of all humans as members of society. Many sectors of society, such as home, family, school, community, workplace, interest groups, and the media can play a major role in the issue. Achieving the required environmental literacy is the main task of our schools. To achieve the health, some training is required that schools and the course can serve as the best tools. Tonz and his colleagues suggest that schools are considered as the main context for the transfer of health education on a large scale [11].

Based on the views of Burn (2002), health education programs are not organized by adding one or two lessons in the school curriculum, but more importantly, the perspective of curriculum planners should be seriously changed. As Rafii Far and his colleagues suggested, health education gives useful and effective information for the present and future. On the other hand, school plays an important role in health education and its promotion in the childhood and higher stages. It can improve their character, attitude, skills and knowledge [10]. In other words, the most important course in the entire education system in the world is the elementary school because the characters and all-round development are formed at this stage. This period is the continuity of cognitive, social and physiological development in which there is a lot of opportunity for education, training and learning the correct way to communicate with others [5]. Therefore, given the importance of this issue, early critical period of health, lack of health education and Inclusion of this education in the training curriculum, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. In the science textbook of the sixth grade of elementary school, how much attention has been paid to the health education components?
2. In the Persian Language literature textbook of the sixth grade of elementary school, how much attention has been paid to the health education components?
3. In the civics textbook of the sixth grade of elementary school, how much attention has been paid to the health education components?

Methodology:

The aim of choosing a research method is to use a technique which helps researcher answer the research questions as soon as possible. Given the purpose of this study, it includes the content analysis of the science, Persian Language literature and the social science textbooks in the sixth grade of elementary school in terms of paying attention to the health components. The analysis unit includes the embedded themes, and pictures in the text. The population of study includes the science, Persian Language literature, and civics textbooks in the sixth grade of elementary school in the current system curriculum printed by the Ministry of Education 2013-2014. The content of all three books considered as the sample. The data collection tools were a checklist and form of content analysis, which was set based on the health education component.

In this study, content analysis includes the ten components of health education as follows: 1. Physical health 2. Disabilities at 3. Nutrition health 4. Public health and school 5. Environment health 6. Surrounding health 7. family health of 8. Exercise and the physical education 9. Mental health 10. Disease prevention. To analyze the questions, descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage, etc.) were used[7].

Results:

Question 1: how much attention is paid to health education components in the science textbook in the sixth grade of elementary school?

Table 1: Results of content analysis on the science textbook in the sixth-grade.

| Health education components | Science | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Physical health | 15 | 20.00 |
| Nutrition | 8 | 10.66 |
| Disabilities | 0 | 0.00 |
| School and the public hygiene | 5 | 6.66 |
| Environmental Health | 22 | 29.33 |
| Surrounding Health | 3 | 4.00 |
| Family health | 0 | 0.00 |
| Exercise and physical education | 7 | 9.33 |
| Mental health | 3 | 4.00 |
| Disease prevention | 12 | 6.00 |
| Total | 75 | 0.100 |

Based on the data listed in Table 1, in the science textbook of the sixth-grade, the environment health (29.33) and physical health (20.00) have been more attention than the other components, while there has been less attention to disabilities (0.00) and the family health (0.00). Other components were in moderate level.

Question 2: how much attention is paid to health education components in the Persian Language literature textbook in the sixth grade of elementary school?

Table 2: Results of content analysis on the Persian Language literature textbook in the sixth grade of elementary school.

| Health education components | Persian Language literature | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Physical health | 1 | 3.70 |
| Nutrition | 1 | 3.70 |
| Disabilities | 0 | 0.00 |
| School and the public hygiene | 0 | 0.00 |
| Environmental Health | 0 | 0.00 |
| Surrounding Health | 0 | 0.00 |
| Family health | 1 | 3.70 |
| Exercise and physical education | 1 | 3.70 |
| Mental health | 23 | 85.18 |
| Disease prevention | 0 | 0.00 |
| Total | 27 | 0.100 |

Based on the data in Table 2, in the Persian Language literature textbook of the sixth grade of elementary school, the most attention has been paid to mental health (85.18) while the other components including disabilities (0.00), public health and school (0.00), environmental health (0.00) and disease prevention (0.00) are neglected.

Question 3: how much attention is paid to health education components in the civics textbook in the sixth grade of elementary school?

Table 3: Results of the content analysis on the civics textbook in the sixth grade of elementary school.

| Health education components | Social education | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Physical health | 3 | 8.57 |
| Nutrition | 0 | 0.00 |
| Disabilities | 0 | 0.00 |
| School and the public hygiene | 0 | 0.00 |
| Environmental Health | 11 | 31.42 |
| Surrounding Health | 1 | 2.85 |
| Family health | 1 | 2.85 |
| Exercise and physical education | 4 | 11.42 |
| Mental health | 15 | 42.85 |
| Disease prevention | 0 | 0.00 |
| Total | 35 | 0.100 |

Based on the data listed in Table 3, in the civics textbook of sixth grade of elementary school, the highest attention is paid to the mental health component (42.85) and environmental health (31.42), while other components, including nutrition (0.00), disabilities (0.00), School and Public Health (0.00) and disease prevention (0.00) are also neglected. Other components were in the moderate level[5].

Discussion and Conclusion:

Providing, maintaining and improving the health of students requires health education development to empower individuals to manage their personal and social health. Planning the public health issues and the students' health aims to increase the health knowledge and culture of this group. According to Blessing (2011),

in order to become aware of the educational content quality, they must inevitably be analyzed. Controlling the information and ideas presented in textbooks and other content for students is very important. It is quite clear that the textbooks, magazines and other media should be analyzed in details to identify the outdated, inappropriate or irrelevant parts[2].

Some educational content may be inappropriate for national development. Therefore, the basic logic of content analysis of textbooks is to improve the content transmitted by the school. The results of the content analysis show that in a science textbook, the environmental health with 29.23% frequency was the highest and disability and family health with 0.00% frequency include lower rate of attention[2].

In the Persian Language literature textbook, the most attention has been paid to the mental health with 85.15 frequencies, while the disabilities, public health, the environment and Disease prevention had 0.00% frequency and no attention paid to them. In the civics textbook, mental health component with 42.85% frequency had the highest rate while other components like nutrition, disabilities, public health and disease prevention with 0.00% frequency were ignored. Thus, we can conclude that the health education components in science, the Persian Language literature and civics textbooks were given less attention. On the whole, the results of the analysis show that the amount of attention to each component of health education varies. According to the findings, in general, we can conclude that some components of health education in the school textbooks are rarely considered and sometimes are ignored, while health is the most important factor in developing and guaranteeing the survival of a society [8]. Since the main course of the entire education system is elementary one, this is the primary basis of the higher courses and experiences for students [5]. The important question in this regard is health education. To do this, Rafii Far and his colleagues believe that health education, as part of the health care, relies on behavioral factors that can improve students' character [10]. Here, the textbook, as one of the major approaches, is considered an essential step to improve the population's health.

Thus, these findings are somewhat consistent with the results of [10,9,8,1,5,4,6,11,7]. In their research they concluded that in these textbooks the health education is less discussed. Their results are consistent with the findings of [7]. They conclude that textbooks should emphasize on training and promoting the health education. Unfortunately, there has not been enough attention to any components of health in the textbooks. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- Given that the health concepts' reflection in the elementary school textbooks is low, there is a need to teach concepts related to health. It should be done according to their interests and needs of students
- It is suggested that a separate curriculum for health education is considered in the educational system.
- Due to the increasing rate of pollution and disease in the world, and lack of attention to health, it is suggested to use extracurricular programs in schools to inform parents and students of the importance of health and hygiene hazards.
- In courses such as the Persian Language literature, there can be applied some stories associated with the health. Then ask students to play those skills and fix it in their minds[4].
- Since the elementary school textbooks harmony in considering the components of health education is low, it is recommended to pay much more attention to this issue in preparation of school textbooks.

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