

Content Analysis and Study of the Image of Women in Elementary Persian Books

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ABSTRACT:

Today, education has been recognized as one of the most important social institutions. The present study aimed to examine the portrayal of women in elementary Persian textbooks through content analysis and a questionnaire. Of 13,500 elementary teachers, 120 were selected by simple random sampling using the Morgan table, and information was collected. The data collection tools were a content analysis and a questionnaire developed by the researcher, arranged on a Likert scale from very high to very low. The results indicate confirmation of hypotheses such as: the content of the curricula should be related to the needs and important issues of women's individual, family, and social lives, it should be the basis for continuous learning and subsequent education of women, it should provide appropriate opportunities for various learning activities, and the content of the curricula should include specific and clear goals related to women. But planners need to pay more attention to this issue and teach the role of women in the family and society in elementary Persian books.

Keywords: *Content analysis, Female image, Elementary Persian books.*

INTRODUCTION:

Written and oral literature can be a comprehensive mirror of the role and status of women in human society. In this regard, textbooks that illustrate the social system's approach to gender are particularly important. Education has two major tasks, namely transferring cultural heritage from the old generation to the new generation and replacing members of society, both men and women. Each cultural element plays a role in this transfer. One of these important cultural elements is textbooks, which have been developed in a coordinated manner within the educational system for learners' use. The content of textbooks comprises knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that learners must acquire in school or other educational environments; hence, the importance of textbooks in society is determined. Considering the role that can reflect the expectations that society has of individuals, it is expected that education, as one of its main goals, is to socialize individuals, and to be able to pay attention to the social role of women, who are half of the strength of human society, to be in line with the social, cultural reality, and the needs and desires of society. The literature of any country reflects the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions of that country. Persian-language textbooks in Iran also play this role, preserving the existing culture and literature and transmitting them to future generations worthily and acceptably. Persian for the first grade is the most important textbook for Iranians. No one doubts this, but the book has been outdated in every respect for years.

Today, there is almost no one in the textbook organization who can present profound theories about replacing what the Persian textbook for the primary school should not be and what it should be. Everyone says that the Persian textbook should change, but almost no one knows how. The present study examines the image of women in Persian primary school textbooks and provides a comprehensive analysis of this issue.

From childhood to youth, students are introduced to skills such as how people interact within families, how they participate in family affairs, and how to accept and become familiar with the diversity of social roles in families and schools. One way for individuals to become social is to teach these skills through textbooks. Among textbooks, Persian textbooks can be the best resource for understanding the role and social status of women, given their attention to ancient literature and the mandatory teaching of these books at all levels. As can be seen in elementary Persian books, one of the most important social roles of women is teaching, and in terms of valuing women, they have a special status and position only as mothers (Maleki, 2000).

However, in today's developed societies, we see women across various fields seeking to play significant roles and keep pace with men in the country's sustainable development. Because if people educated in schools are ready to accept social roles, they can work in the economic, political, cultural, specialized, scientific, etc. fields as citizens (both men and women). There is no doubt that by identifying and presenting the real roles, positions, and statuses of both sexes to learners, the

country can be provided with the grounds for all-around growth and development.

It is a necessity in today's society to examine the role of women in various matters, the image and position of women in elementary school textbooks, and to determine to what extent and how this issue has been addressed.

Theoretical Basis of the Research:

Textbook Content Analysis:

Textbooks are among the most important elements of the educational system and play a fundamental role in transmitting knowledge, values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns to students. Therefore, examining textbook content and assessing its compliance with educational and social goals are important issues in curriculum planning.

Educational objectives express the goals that planners and educators expect learners to achieve after completing their education. For this reason, it is particularly important to state educational objectives and expectations in textbooks. The expression of objectives in textbooks may be done in different ways depending on the type of course, educational level, and characteristics of the audience. In general, educational objectives can be presented as the book's general objectives in the main introduction, the general objectives of each learning unit, or the specific objectives of each lesson. Also, the degree of clarity or lack of clarity in the expression of objectives depends on the audience's perceptual characteristics and the nature of the lesson (Textbook Planning and Authoring Office, Educational Research and Planning Organization of the Ministry of Education).

One of the most important methods for examining textbooks is content analysis. Content analysis is one of the methods widely used in educational research and textbook studies. In this method, the textbook's content is examined objectively and systematically, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to determine its obvious and hidden characteristics. In addition to describing the educational media, content analysis provides the ability to recognize its impact on the teaching-learning process, its obvious and hidden effects on learners, and the representation of social realities (Barden, 1995).

Content analysis is divided into three main types: descriptive, communicative, and inferential. Each of these approaches examines different elements of textbooks with specific goals and methods and can be used to identify content structure, explicit and implicit messages, and patterns of representation of social concepts. In descriptive content analysis, the researcher describes and classifies the elements in the text. This method emphasizes the frequency, distribution, and presence of concepts, characters, images, and topics in educational content. In contrast, relational content analysis examines the relationships among different elements of the textbook, including text, images, educational goals, and learning activities. Inferential content analysis goes beyond superficial description

and seeks to uncover implicit meanings, values, attitudes, and messages hidden in educational texts (Fardanesh, 2003).

One important aspect of textbook analysis is the examination of educational images. Images, as an effective means of conveying educational concepts, play an important role in shaping students' perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, assessing their quality and educational function is of great importance. In the communicative content analysis of images, how the images relate to the written text, educational objectives, and lesson exercises is examined.

Effective educational images have characteristics, the most important of which are image validity, the use of appropriate signs and symbols to better understand the content, and the desired quality. An educational image will be effective when, in addition to its accuracy, it creates a clear impression in the student's mind. Also, the use of color, symbols, scale, and visual signs can facilitate a better understanding of concepts and the more effective transmission of the educational message (Lutfi and Zofan, 1999).

In addition to text and images, educational exercises and activities are an important part of textbook content. Exercises are usually presented at the end of each lesson with titles such as self-test, question, practice, or supplementary activities, and their goal is to deepen learning and increase student participation in the educational process. In some curricula, these activities are designed and compiled into independent books called "workbooks" (Kanaani, 2005).

As a complement to the textbook, the workbook provides a basis for conducting various educational activities and helps students apply the concepts learned in different situations. In this way, the possibility of expanding, generalizing, and consolidating learning is provided, and educational goals are achieved with higher quality (Shadravanzadeh, 2003).

Characteristics of Women from the Perspective of Scientists:

When commentators discuss women's position from his perspective, they present two distinct forms. The first and most common form, according to supporters of this theory, is that he was the first to call for women's freedom and equality with men, and to advocate paving the way for them to be worthy of commanding the army and heading the government, like men. The second view, according to the believers of this view, is that, contrary to the first view, they believe that Plato is the best preacher (patriarchy) of a male society whose absolute leadership is in the hands of men, and that his pride in the Republic, in the freedom of women, is not a cover-up to hide his disgust and dislike of women.

The truth is that he wanted to make women men, because in the communal and communist system of property, women (where individual property was not accepted and was not assigned to a specific man, but men jointly sought pleasure from her) and women had to leave the house and enter society to learn knowledge and become "manly". In fact, his thoughts were about 3

things: 1- equality of men and women, 2- sharing of property and women (not private property), 3- the rule of philosophers. In Plato's words, these 3 ideas raise waves of thought against him, which he had to face and defend. Whether in the Republic or in his philosophical school (Freedom), or wherever these ideas find their way, he must try to implement them or convince others to do so. Although in the political reality of his visits to Siraqoosa, he failed to implement these ideas, he was successful in the theoretical field and convinced others and his students, so that they would be the propagators of his ideas and always defend them. (Jafarpour, 2009)

The impact of women's work on family life:

Family relations are constantly changing in response to the dynamics of social institutions. With changes in living conditions and the consequent emergence of new needs, roles are constantly changing, so that the validity of traditional roles is increasingly diminished, and the grounds for their transformation are provided. Along with structural changes in society and changes in family life, homemakers, while fulfilling their normal responsibilities, are increasingly forced to work outside the home. At the same time, women's employment in the wider society, despite their dual obligations, does not necessarily mean their slavery and exploitation, and should not be considered. Such a change has been viewed with denial, because the positive material and spiritual effects of this employment often affect not only the woman herself, who gains greater independence and social prestige while earning an income, but also her husband and children. The main social impact of this change is the transformation of women's traditional roles and the division of labor within the family. However, despite the widespread acceptance of women's employment by different social classes in Iran, the cultural changes that require coordination between women's employment and the division of duties and responsibilities in the family have not yet fully occurred. An examination of family relationships shows that as traditional values and norms are questioned, the role of women has changed, leading to the expansion and development of their social activities. Women's turning to employment outside the family has had a significant impact on the dimensions of their social identity, and this, in turn, has increased women's self-confidence in society. Achieving a better social position affects personality and, to some extent, smooths out the problems caused by dual employment. Of course, this development is not only not smooth, but may also lead to role conflicts due to value differences. The risk of such a situation is greater when a woman's job activity or traditional pattern does not match. Especially since in traditional life, with work based on gender, managing household affairs is considered the responsibility of women, and based on these traditional values, her activity outside the home is considered to mean weakening the family. The separation of jobs by gender and the acceptance of differences in the abilities of men and women is a way of thinking that often

affects the mentality of women themselves and fuels existing conflicts. (Fattahi, 2007)

Method:

The present study is a survey type, and its method is content analysis. In survey research, questionnaires are widely used, and other techniques can also be used to collect information. A survey is a set of systematic, standardized methods used to collect information about individuals, families, or larger groups. It is also a method for obtaining information about the views, opinions, beliefs, behaviors, or personalities of members of a statistical population.

Statistical population: The statistical population is all real or hypothetical members to whom we intend to generalize the research findings. (Delavar, 2006) The statistical population of the present study is all individuals whose opinions we want to elicit, i.e., all elementary school teachers in Kerman, a total of 2,500 people.

Sample and sampling method: A sample is a selection of a percentage of a community that represents that community. When the desired community is large, sampling is attempted to save time and money. The present study sample consists of 120 people, selected by simple random sampling using the Morgan table.

Data collection tools: The data collection tools in the present study are content analysis and a researcher-developed Likert-scale questionnaire.

Questionnaire validity and reliability: Researchers and experts were used to determine the questionnaire's validity, and, according to them, it measures the components it should in terms of content and is valid. To determine the questionnaire's reliability, it was administered to small groups within the statistical population, and after data collection, its reliability was calculated at 71%.

Data analysis methods: Descriptive statistics are used to produce frequency distributions, percentages, and graphs; inferential statistics are used to test hypotheses and confirm or reject them.

RESULTS:

Hypothesis 1- It seems that the content of curricula should contain materials related to the cultural heritage of society about women.

H₀: There is no relationship between the content of textbooks and the cultural heritage of women.

H₁: There is a relationship between textbook content and women's cultural heritage.

Considering that the calculated value is 0.49, the correlation coefficient between these two variables is medium and direct, and given its significance level (0.982), which is greater than 0.05, this hypothesis is not acceptable.

Table 1: Summary of data processing

Variable	Total percentage	N	Missing percentage	Missing data (N)	Valid Percentage	Valid data (N)
Books content × Cultural heritage	100.0	127	5.5	7	94.5	120

Table 2: Chi-square test results

Statistical test	Value
Chi-square value	859.6
Significance level	0.982
Degrees of freedom	690
Valid numbers	120

Table 3: Correlation coefficients

Statistical test	Value
Pearson coefficient	0.498
Significance level	0.982
Spearman coefficient	0.461
Valid numbers	120

Hypothesis 2: The curricula seem to address the needs and important issues of women's individual, family, and social lives.

H₀: There is no relationship between the content of textbooks and important issues of women's family and social lives.

H₁: There is a relationship between the content of textbooks and important issues of women's family and social lives.

Given that the calculated value is 0.76, the correlation coefficient between these two variables is high and positive, and given its significance level (0.006), which is less than 0.05, this hypothesis is acceptable.

Table 4: Summary of data processing

Variable	Total percentage	N	Missing percentage	Missing data (N)	Valid Percentage	Valid data (N)
Books content × Needs	100.0	127	5.5	7	94.5	120

Table 5: Chi-square test results

Statistical test	Value
Chi-square value	967.5
Significance level	0.006
Degrees of freedom	736
Valid numbers	120

Table 6: Correlation coefficients

Statistical test	Value
Pearson coefficient	0.764
Significance level	0.006
Valid numbers	120

Hypothesis 3: The content of curricula should be related to the foundations for continuous learning and further education of women.

H₀: There is no relationship between the content of textbooks and the further education of women.

H₁: There is a relationship between the content of textbooks and the further education of women.

Considering that the calculated value is 0.66, the correlation coefficient between these two variables is medium and positive, and given its significance level of 0.021, which is less than 0.05, this hypothesis is acceptable.

Table 7: Summary of data processing

Variable	Total percentage	N	Missing percentage	Missing data (N)	Valid Percentage	Valid data (N)
Books content × Learning	100.0	127	5.5	7	94.5	120

Table 8: Chi-square Test Results

Statistical test	Value
Chi-square value	772.24
Significance level	0.021
Degrees of freedom	644
Valid numbers	120

Table 9: Correlation Coefficients

Statistical test	Value
Pearson coefficient	0.662
Significance level	0.021
Valid numbers	120

Hypothesis 4: The content of the curricula should be selected in such a way that they provide appropriate opportunities for women's learning activities.

H₀: There is no relationship between the content of textbooks and women's learning activities.

H₁: There is a relationship between the content of textbooks and women's learning activities.

Given that the calculated value is 0.85, the correlation coefficient between these two variables is high and positive, and given its significance level (0.006), which is less than 0.05, this hypothesis is acceptable.

Table 10: Summary of data processing

Variable	Total percentage	N	Missing percentage	Missing data (N)	Valid Percentage	Valid data (N)
Books content × Activities	100.0	127	5.5	7	94.5	120

Table 11: Chi-square Test Results

Statistical test	Value
Chi-square value	1089.77
Significance level	0.281
Degrees of freedom	828
Valid numbers	120

Table 12: Symmetrical Correlation Coefficients

Statistical test	Value
Pearson coefficient	0.822
Significance level	0.281
Valid numbers	120

Hypothesis 5: The content of the curricula should be related to specific, clear, and specific objectives.

H₀: There is no relationship between the content of textbooks and their specific objectives.

H₁: There is a relationship between the content of textbooks and their specific objectives.

Given that the calculated value is 0.72, the correlation coefficient between these two variables is high and positive. Given its significance level (0.000), which is greater than 0.05, this hypothesis is not acceptable.

Table 13: Summary of data processing

Variable	Total percentage	N	Missing percentage	Missing data (N)	Valid Percentage	Valid data (N)
Books content × Specific goal	100.0	127	5.5	7	94.5	120

Table 14: Chi-square test results

Statistical test	Value
Chi-square value	1241
Significance level	0.118
Degrees of freedom	8920
Valid numbers	120

Table 15: Correlation coefficients

Statistical test	Value
Pearson coefficient	0.724
Significance level	0.118
Valid numbers	120

Discussion and Conclusion:

Hypothesis 1: It seems that the content of the curricula should contain material related to the cultural heritage of the society about women.

The chi-square statistic is 0.982; since this value is greater than 0.5, the relationship is not significant, and the hypothesis is not accepted at the 99% confidence level.

Hypothesis 2: It seems that there is a relationship between the content of the curricula and the needs and important issues of women's individual, family, and social lives.

By calculating the chi-square and the corresponding significance level, the results for this hypothesis are 0.006. Since this value is less than 0.5, the relationship is significant. This hypothesis is also accepted with a confidence level of 99% and is in line with Dale's (1982) theories.

Hypothesis 3: There should be a relationship between the content of the curricula and the foundations for continuous learning and further education of women.

By calculating the chi-square and the significance level obtained for the third hypothesis (0.021), since this value is less than 0.5, it is acceptable.

Fourth hypothesis: The curricula should be designed to provide appropriate opportunities for various types of learning activities for women. By calculating the chi-square and the significance level obtained for this hypothesis (0.281), which is less than 0.5, the relationship is significant, and the hypothesis is accepted with a confidence level of 99%. This hypothesis aligns with the theories (Mojtahedi, 2002).

Fifth hypothesis: There appears to be a relationship between the content of curricula and specific, clear goals regarding women.

The chi-square statistic is 0.118; since this value is less than 0.5, the relationship is significant, and the hypothesis is accepted at the 99% confidence level. This hypothesis was consistent with the theories of Mojtahedi (2002), Hejazi (2000), and Sedaghat and Zahedi (2005).

General Conclusion:

In general, based on the research findings, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the representation of women in elementary school books, content analysis, and the study of women's images

among students in this period. This attitude towards women allows teachers to gain a broader perspective on their role. In the meantime, the role of female teachers can be considered effective in reducing social anomalies because when female teachers understand their historical mission in educating students with culture, they can better fulfill this important task by examining the image of women in elementary school textbooks and analyzing it in these books to understand the value of female teachers better. This is a very important task and is a necessity in the current world. Therefore, the results of the present study are consistent with Doll's (1982) definition.

Suggestions and solutions:

- 1- By increasing support for female teachers, we can change public attitudes towards our teaching profession. Therefore, to increase the popularity of women's content in our elementary school textbooks, we should institutionalize it within the curriculum so students can better understand the role of their teachers.
- 2- Given that 70% of teachers work 6 to 8 hours, reducing working hours can improve the efficiency of women in schools.
- 3- Presenting a better image of women in elementary school textbooks in a way that helps change the position of women in society.

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