



Perspectives and Challenges of Global Citizenship Education in the Iran Primary School Curriculum: Analysis Based on an Islamic Republic Context

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 11 September 2021 Revised: 05 November 2021 Accepted: 04 December 2021 Online: 24 February 2022</p>	<p>The purpose of study was to survey the perspectives and challenges of global citizen education in Iran primary school curriculum with emphasis on the context of the Islamic Republic. The research method was mixed and the research sample includes the social studies textbook of Grades 4-6. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources and Fairclough discourse analysis method was used to analyze them. The first finding showed that national preferences have mainly influenced the interpretation of policymakers and curriculum planners about global citizenship education. The second finding is that the level of primary school textbook authors' attention to the components of global citizenship is very less and partial. The third finding is that the authors selective discourse, on the one hand does not consider a quota for teaching the components of global citizenship, and on the other hand, teaches concepts that are in clear contradiction with this idea. While the young generation of Iran seems to need to understand the discourse of issues such as environmental pollution, civil rights, job opportunities and challenges, human equality, technological advances, social tolerance and life skills in the 21st century, the structure of the educational system is mainly influenced by the discourse of the colonial period and the Cold War era. Therefore, it is suggested that the content of the primary school textbook of Iran to be revised according to the realities and necessities of life in the new millennium.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>Curriculum Discourse analysis Global citizen Islamic Context Primary school</p>	

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1. Introduction

Understanding the concept, dimensions, and programs of global citizenship education requires knowledge of the procedures and discourses that began after World War II. Indeed, the concept of "global citizenship education" can be regarded as the last idea influenced by the role of politics in educational policies, especially curriculum (Heater, 2004; Grossman, Lee & Kennedy, 2008; Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation, 2015). The previous ideas and discourses included education for international understanding, education for development, education for development, multicultural education, education for peace, and global education. With the end of World War II, the idea of "education for international understanding" was first proposed by organizations such as UNESCO (UNESCO, 1974). According to UNESCO, the member countries should include the following subjects in the curriculum: information about countries and cultures to increase friendly relationships; knowledge of human rights to promote human ethics, and introducing the United Nations Organization (Power, 2011). The idea, influenced by the beginning of the Cold War, did not receive enough attention from countries. By the end of the 1950s, major issues in the political space of many countries had shifted to the issue of "global inequalities". Therefore, international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNICEF developed the idea of "education for development" in the 1970s in educational systems, intending to help the poor countries and promote the role of education. This discourse was also opposed by the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. They claimed that this idea sought to promote the dependence of poor countries on rich countries by promoting the concepts of development and underdevelopment (Lewin, 1993; Green, Little, Gamut, Oakage & Vickers, 2007). The next idea was multicultural education, which received the attention of policymakers in developed countries, who faced an influx of immigrants from other countries (Slater & Grant, 1987; Banks, 1995; Helm & Zilcus, 2009). Multicultural education aimed to develop cultural tolerance to live in multiracial, multilingual, and multicultural societies. The idea was emphasized by the European Commission in the 1980s, but the idea of "education for peace" directed the educational policies to newer directions (Lin, 2007; Danesh, 2008; Kester & Cremin, 2017). Indeed, in the previously-proposed ideas and discourses, education, for educational policy-makers, was a means to develop peace and friendship. However, the emphasis of organizations such as UNESCO, and the end of the Cold War in the 1990s provided the grounds to represent the idea of "education for peace". Although the idea has never been obsolete and is still emphasized in international documents, the beginning of the new millennium and regarding the planet as a "global village" along with the idea of globalization made the "global education" discourse very fascinating

to educational policy-makers and curriculum planners (Rapoport, 2015; Mikander, 2016; Torres & Bosio, 2020). The discourse focused on concepts such as nation-government, international system, global network, and conversation. In this gradual and developmental process, the idea of "global citizenship education" was proposed as an integral part of global education. According to the discourse, the micro-power of citizens can become a major power in various issues such as the environment, human rights, women's rights, and civil rights (Badar, 2004; Gaudelli & Fernekes, 2004; Parmenter, 2011). Due to communication and information technologies, nations-governments are not the only players and thus the formation of a global government through the development of "global citizenship conscience" can better and more contribute to the well-being of human beings (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). In this process, global citizenship education can be one of the first effective steps. Now, a question raises: to some extent have educational policy-makers accepted the idea? To answer the question, first, the previous studies should be studies:

Analyzing the previous actions, Pais & Costa (2020) found that although over the past two decades, global citizenship education has become a key term for international and national educational agencies, the critical democratic discourse that emphasizes moral values, social responsibility, active citizenship, and neoliberal discourse, as well as the market logic, personal investment, and profit growth has caused a confusing effect. Pashby (2015) used critical discourse analysis and investigated the curricula in Alberta, Canada. According to him, though it seems that Canada is an ideal setting for global citizenship education, a combination of different versions of liberalism often leads to misconceptions from multiple perspectives and deprivation of the existing capacities use. Therefore, in global citizenship education, the use of inherent problems caused by diversity is preferred over the extreme emphasis on obscure theoretical universal ideas. Engel (2014) indicated that simultaneously with other European countries, the education system in Spain began the process of reforming the curriculum related to citizenship education. This program included education of issues such as national and global citizenship, cultural diversity, immigration, human rights, and student-centered coexistence. Gardner-McTaggart & Palmer (2018) argued that despite the widespread promotion of global education, it is still unknown how to develop the concept of global citizenship education. Indeed, the common intellectual methods of the concept are mostly rooted in theories such as post-colonialism, critical perspectives, and post-modernism. Mannion, Biesta, Priestley, and Ross (2011) reported that curriculum policy-makers in Britain invited schools and higher education centers to formulate the global citizenship curricula to prepare students for living and working in the global society and economy. According to researchers, such an invitation as a nodal point can provide the grounds for different

interpretations of education. Rapoport (2009) reported that American teachers, unlike their peers in Europe and Asia, have not been so interested in teaching the concept of global citizenship and its dimensions in the course of social studies. A brief interpretation of the studies reveals the following notes: first, even though more than two decades have passed since the introduction of the concept of "global citizenship education" in national and international documents, there are still contradictory opinions about its definition, dimensions, and methods. Second, educational policy-makers and planners of different countries have proposed diverse interpretations for the concept. Third, such diversity is mostly influenced by the difference in social, cultural, and political systems that affect the methods of global citizenship education. Based on these interpretations, the present study aimed to investigate the perspective and challenges of global citizenship education in the of the primary school curriculum, regarding social, cultural, and political contexts of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The research literature showed that several studies have been conducted in Iran to investigate global citizenship education over the past two decades. For example, Poursalim, Arefi & Fathi vajargah (2019a) conducted a qualitative study on the elements of global citizenship education curriculum in primary schools and emphasized the fact that curriculum planners must pay special attention to the education of universal values while preserving indigenous traditions. In another study, they found that there is a kind of tacit comparison with the global citizenship education in the structure of the Iranian curriculum (Poursalim, Arefi & Fathi vajargah, 2019b). Keshavarz, Amin Beidokhti & Mohammadifar (2019) revealed that the upstream documents of Iranian education have paid little attention to many components of global citizenship education and the main focus is on Islamic and national discourse and identity. Rashidi (2017a) found that the content of general courses in Iranian universities has a neutral view towards the concepts such as global education and citizenship. Conceptualizing global citizenship from the perspective of high education scholars, he argued that even universities fail to institutionalize global citizenship discourse due to some reasons such as the culture governing higher education, political structure, and poor curriculum (Rashidi, 2017b). Aghili, Yadollahi & Ghasemi (2016) found that the content of social studies courses in the second-high schools does not have the potential to institutionalize global citizenship behavior in students. Fozuni Sharejini, Piri & Asadiyan (2016) investigated the challenges of social studies courses of primary schools in citizenship education and indicated that teachers could not create active and participatory opportunities for students to learn the concept of citizenship education and its different dimensions. The study of Mohammadjani (2016) on the

position of global citizenship in social studies course of the 6th grade of the primary school revealed insufficient attention to its variables in cognitive, attitude, and skill areas.

The findings of Shoja al-Dini Bazanjani (2015) showed that the authors of textbooks pay more attention to the structures of the government and its functions, and had little attention to international organizations and their role in promoting the global citizenship discourse. The results of Hazari & Khalili (2014) indicated that in primary school textbooks, children are taught the roles and responsibilities of social organizations and the duties of citizenship rather than the elements of global citizenship. Jamali Tazeh Kand, Talebzadeh Nobarian & Abolghasemieh (2013) emphasized that the authors of high school social studies textbooks have not paid balanced attention to the elements of citizenship education. Qaltash, Salehi & Mirzaei (2012) analyzed primary school textbooks and found that the characteristics of global citizenship have received insufficient attention in terms of cognitive, functional, and attitudinal aspects. Qaltash, Yarmohammadian, Foroughi Abri & MirShahejafari (2010) indicated that the consistency between the goals of primary school textbooks and those of global citizenship education is less than 5%. Hashemi (2010) showed that the authors of textbooks authors, by emphasizing similarities such as national unity, the Shiite religion, and the national language, have deliberately ignored the cultural diversity of Iranian society. Moreover, concepts such as identifying the enemy, the need for knowing the colonial policies of western countries, political and economic imbalances between countries, and the need to fight the sedition and invasion of enemies have left little room for global citizenship education and discourse. Gavazi (2008) compared primary education in Iran and Sweden and emphasized that not only has no effective action been taken to join the global trend of citizenship education discourse but in practice, this gap has widened day by day. Hakimzadeh, Kiamanesh & Attaran (2007) revealed that issues such as equality, peace, and human rights are less taught to students, and finally Ashtiani, Fathi vajargah & Yemeni douzi Sorkhabi (2006) focused on the need for adding subjects such as global identity, cultural identity, and national identity in textbooks, although the subsequent research findings showed that there has been no attention to the suggestion.

The brief review of these findings indicates some notes: first, no official document or program about global citizenship education has been formulated, enacted, or implemented. Second, there is scattered information about citizenship rights and education in primary school and high school textbooks (especially social studies). Third, most researchers have confirmed that the authors of textbooks in Iran have not paid enough attention to the discourse and global citizenship and educating its elements to the young generation. Fourth, most previous studies provided no

detailed interpretation and explanation why not the authors of textbooks ignored global citizenship discourse. Based on these inferences, the present study aimed to provide new findings of the current perspective and challenges of global citizenship education in the Iranian primary school curriculum using Fairclough (1989)'s discourse analysis method. According to this general goal, the secondary goals include:

- Identifying and describing current perspectives and challenges of global citizenship education in the Iran primary school curriculum
- Interpreting the current perspectives and challenges of global citizenship education in the Iran primary school curriculum
- Explaining the current perspective of global citizenship education in the Iran primary school curriculum

2. Research Method

In this study, a qualitative method of discourse analysis with Fairclough approach was used. In this approach, the main assumption of the researcher is that the texts have an ideological burden and no text is neutral (Fairclough, 1989). The research population consisted social studies textbooks of grade 4 to grade 6 of primary schools and primary and secondary resources. The method of data collection was documentary and included the primary sources (social studies books) and secondary sources (articles, books, national documents, reports of national and international organizations and institutions) collected through national databases (website of Ministry of Education and other Iranian databases) and international databases (such as Google Scholar, Eric, and Academia). According to the research purpose, the content of the selected books were analyzed at three levels of description, interpretation, and explanation. At the first level, a specific discourse was described. At the second level (interpretation), the meaning of the text in the specific discourse was considered, and at the level of explanation, the reason for the social discourse was examined (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2016). The analysis unit was sentences, paragraphs, questions, and figures related to the research subject.

3. Findings

The findings were presented in three parts of description, interpretation, and explanation. In the description part, the features of global citizenship education and its aspects were briefly described so that the readers can understand to what extent the Iranian authors of textbooks have paid attention to the concept of global citizenship. Then, the social background of the education

system was explained in the context of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the interpretation part dealing with finding the meaning of the text in a specific context, the formal and content features of social studies textbooks were presented. The third part allocated to the secondary goals of the research was involved with the current perspectives and challenges of global citizenship education in Iran.

First) Description

1. Elements of global citizenship education

Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all (Maastricht Global Education Declaration, 2002). According to this definition by UNESCO, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is a framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable (Wintersteiner, Grobbauer, Diendorfer & Reitmair-Juárez, 2015: 7). Therefore, a global citizen is an individual aware of the wider world, with a strong feeling about her/his role as a "global citizen" (Oxfam, 2006: 3). Dimensions or concepts hidden in the global citizen means belief in:

- "democracy" (no oppression of the weak by the strong)
- human rights (as an internationally accepted standard)
- nonviolence (i.e. use of violence only as ultima ratio according to UN rules for the protection of civil society)
- global concepts of justice (political measures in order to curtail economic injustice)
- transnational citizenship (political rights beyond citizenship that is restricted to the nation state) (Wintersteiner, Grobbauer, Diendorfer & Reitmair-Juárez, 2015: 12).

Several studies have been conducted on the components of global citizenship education (Caruana, 2014; Hanson, 2010; Horey, Fortune, Nicolacopoulos, Kashima & Mathisen, 2018; Navarro & Fernandez, 2015; Takkac & Akdemir, 2012). For example, based on the definition proposed by Oxfam, a global citizen is a person who:

- is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen
- respects and values diversity
- has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally

- is outraged by social injustice
- participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from the local to the global
- is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place N takes responsibility for their actions (Oxfam, 1997).

UNESCO has guided the definitions provided for global citizenship education. According to the documents of this international organization, global citizenship education mainly encompasses concepts such as human rights, democracy, critical knowledge and practice, civic education, and political socialization (UNESCO, 2014). Also, the dimensions of global citizenship education, which should receive the curriculum planners' attention, include cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral dimensions.

Table 1. Dimensions of global citizenship education in terms of UNESCO criteria

Domains of learning		
Cognitive	Socio-emotional	Behavioral
Key learning outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations • Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights • Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world • Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions
Key learner attributes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed and critically literate • Know about local, national and global issues, governance systems and structures • Understand the interdependence and connections of global and local concerns • Develop skills for critical inquiry and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially connected and respectful of diversity • Cultivate and manage identities, relationships and feeling of belongingness • Share values and responsibilities based on human rights • Develop attitudes to appreciate and respect differences and diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethically responsible and engaged • Enact appropriate skills, values, beliefs and attitudes • Demonstrate personal and social responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable world • Develop motivation and willingness to care for the common good
Topics		
1. Local, national, and global systems and structures 2. Issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels 3. Underlying assumptions and power dynamics	4. Different levels of identity 5. Different communities people belong to and how these are connected 6. Difference and respect for Diversity	7. Actions that can be taken individually and collectively 8. Ethically responsible behavior 9. Getting engaged and taking action

Source: UNESCO, 2015 as cited in Chung & Park, 2016

In the present study, the components listed in Table 1 were the criteria and guidelines for the researchers.

2. Social context of education system in the context of Islamic Republic of Iran

To get aware of the current status of global citizenship education in Iranian school textbooks, it is also required to get a relative knowledge about the social context affecting the education system, according to Fairclough's approach. Lack of knowledge about the role of social systems prevents us from reaching a deep and precise explanation and interpretation of the current and future perspectives and the challenges of global citizenship education in Iran. The social context is mainly influenced by the role of geographical-political, religious, ethnic, and linguistic systems. Regarding the geopolitical structure, Iran has 13 neighbors (Hunter, 2003). Considering the Kurdistan region of Iraq as a semi-independent state, Iran has 14 neighbors. The neighbors have ethnic, linguistic, racial, political, and religious similarities and differences with Iran (Barzegar, 2010; Ehteshami, 2003; Wastnidge, 2017). In the south of Iran, the southern countries of the Persian Gulf have a relative religious unity (Sunni Islam) with other people in Iran, but their language, ethnicity, political structure, and traditions are significantly different. In terms of political relations, the atmosphere governing most of these countries with Iran is not very warm and friendly (Bahgat, Ehteshami & Quilliam, 2017; Henner, 2007). In the north and northwest of Iran, the people of Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey are Turk while the people in Armenia are Christian neighbors of the Shiite government of Iran. Currently, political tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia are at their peak, while Turkey and Iran implicitly support one of the parties of such conflicts (Cookman, 2021; German, 2012). On the west and east of Iran, Iran's relations with the new Afghan government (Taliban) are conservative and pessimistic, and with Iraq and its Kurdistan region have other special challenges (Akbarzade & Ibrahim, 2020; Farzinrad, Forouzan, Alishahi & Majidinejad, 2019). In terms of ethnicity, Iran's neighbors are Arab, Turk, Kurd, Baluch, and Armani. Inside the country, these ethnicities comprise a large part of the country's population. Ethnic, language, cultural, and religious diversities can greatly influence issues such as national unity and national identity (Akbarzade, Shahab Ahmad, Laoutides & Gourlay, 2019; Boroujerdi, 1998). From a religious perspective, most of Iran's neighbors are Sunni; in terms of political structure, there is a big difference between Iran, Pakistan, and the Taliban-dominated Afghanistan's interpretations of "Islamic Republic". At the international level, relations between the Iranian political system and Western countries have been extremely tense over the past four decades (Menashri, 2001; Tarock, 2006). Influenced by the tense relations as well as

different religious and ideological structures, the global perspectives and those of Iranian politicians have been contradictory in many issues. The contradictions were well manifested in conventions of international organizations such as the UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Labor Organization, and World Health Organization (Ghaffarzadeh, 2016; Mehran, 1990). Some of the conflicting issues are Iran's different interpretations of human rights, democracy, religious equality, gender equality, inheritance, retaliation, right to work, and right to education. Naturally, different interpretations of the Islamic Republic of Iran from these concepts affect the process of the young generation education and the functions of the education system in two dimensions: first, lack of teaching these concepts under the accepted interpretations of the international community (elimination approach) and second, presenting and teaching the concepts based on their accepted interpretation (substitution approach).

Having presented a brief description of the global citizenship education components and the social context of Iran, a question arises: to what extent and how do these components are taught to learners in textbooks, according to the social context of the Islamic Republic of Iran? As mentioned, the need for answering this question requires findings the meaning in the specific context. The specific context in the present study is determined through content analysis of social studies textbooks of the 4th, 5th, and 6th primary school grades.

Second) Interpretation

Iran's official public education system is managed by the centralized structure of the Ministry of Education. The structure of the education system follows the pattern of 3+3+3+3 for the two primary school levels and the two high school levels. The schools are segregated by gender (girls and boys) and textbooks are written for all grades by the authors selected by the Ministry of Education and are distributed at a very low price by the Ministry in the country and among more than 15 million students. Parents, teachers, and managers of schools, parties, non-governmental organizations, private institutions and companies, and universities have no role in formulating textbooks content. And the content of textbooks, especially the humanities-related textbooks, may be changed and reformulated due to a change of government (the election of a new president and a change of minister of education) or teachers' scientific-educational objections to parts of a book. Given these issues, the formal and content features of Social Studies textbooks under study are as follows, in terms of each grade:

1. Grade 4

Social Studies textbook has been arranged in 6 chapters, 22 lessons, and 95 pages by two authors selected by the Ministry of Education. The chapters' headings are: Our Neighborhood, My city, My Village; Formation of Cities and Villages, Travelling to Ancient Cities; My beautiful City; and We are Iranian. The pupils learn about types of climate, geographical directions, flora and fauna, some ancient Iranian artifacts, the formation of villages and cities, and the calendar. On the first page of the book, there is a short text entitled "A word with dear teachers" about content of textbook. For example:

For the integrated organization of the content of the Social Studies curriculum, five thematic areas have been selected: space and place; time, durability, and change; culture and identity; social system; and economic resources and activities. Given the general perspective of the national curriculum based on monotheistic naturalism and efforts for its development, the Social Studies curriculum seeks to provide grounds for children and adolescents' individual and social education. Therefore, the final goal of Social Studies is to educate faithful, responsible, aware, and empowered people in individual and social life, adhere to ethics and religious values, and be interested in Iran and Islamic-Iranian identity (Ministry of Education, 2021a).

As the authors explicitly have pointed out, the general approach of the national curriculum in Iran is based on "monotheism naturalism" to educate faithful, adhered to religious values, and be interested in Islamic-Iranian identity; therefore, the content of this textbook has been prepared on this basis. This short text implies some important notes: First, the main goal is to educate religious students. Second, the main identity of students is a two-dimensional identity (Islamic and Iranian), and; Third, there is no reference to human (or global) identity. Based on the research purpose, the textbook content analysis shows that the authors have tried to increase active and interactive participation between teachers and students by using texts, different types of colorful and beautiful pictures, maps, tables, and questions. The thematic structure of the chapters also shows that students learn first the concept of neighborhood and then are explained about the features of bigger environments such as village, city, province, and country. Other concepts that are directly or indirectly related to the concept of global citizenship education and thought to students are ancient civilizations and cities, government, familiarity with the museum, relations of dynasties of pre-Islam Iran with Rome, and environmental care. Throughout the book, there is only one positive example of a relationship with foreigners; a Dutch tourist named "Thomas" who traveled to Iran to

visit the "Persepolis" and an Iranian student talking to him in English. In other examples, most paragraphs, sentences, and pictures contain negative historical messages about Iran's relations with foreigners, e.g., Alexander's invasion of Iran or the Parthian war with the Roman in which the image of a slain soldier is shown (fig 1) or the surrender of one of the Roman emperors and kneeling before Shapur I.



Fig 1. Parthian war with Romans

Source: Ministry of Education, 2021a, (Grade 4, Social Studies textbook, p. 58)

2. Grade 5

Social Studies textbook of the 5th grade is also written by the authors of the 4th-grade textbooks in 109 pages, 5 chapters, and 22 lessons. Without any changes with the fourth grade book, "A word with the dear teacher" has been repeated in the first pages of the fifth grade book. The chapters' headings are Living with others; Our Land; Living in other parts of the world; Pilgrimage to the holy shrines; and Pre-Islam Iran. The first chapter includes topics such as empathy with others, respect for privacy, types of communication and group membership, and the introduction of the Red Crescent and Blood Transfusion Organization, by which students can learn, to some extent, about the primary concepts of global citizenship. In the second chapter, students are provided with a brief introduction to the structure of government in Iran and its three branches: the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. The third chapter, which is the most

related to the subject of the present study, includes topics such as Iran's neighbors, land movement, continents and oceans, and lifestyles in hot, dry, temperate, and cold regions. Except for a brief introduction with different features of various land areas, students learn nothing about other important components of global citizenship. The fourth chapter provides an introduction and information about Muslims' religious places in cities of Mecca (Saudi Arabia) and Karbala (Iraq), Qibla, Hajj, Caliphs after the death of the Prophet of Islam and the historical events of Ghadir Khum and the event of Ashura. There is no reference to religious places and events of other religions. In the last chapter, students learn about different dynasties in Iran after the advent of Islam, Iranian ministers, and Iran culture and civilization. In general, this chapter involves a negative introduction of the name of people who invaded Iran and established their empires, e.g., Arabs, Mongols, and Turks. For example, the authors have emphasized that the Umayyad caliphs considered the Arab race superior to other races. The Abbasid caliphs persecuted the Shiites (Ministry of Education, 2021b: 98). Also, the Turkish kings of Iran dwelt in deserts and did not have sufficient knowledge about how to govern a country, so they appointed smart and wise Iranian ministers to run the country (Ibid: 103), or Mongols dwelt in deserts and spent most of their lives plundering caravans or invading other lands (Ibid: 106). Then, the authors wrote that:

"Genghis Khan, Hulagu Khan, and Teimur inflicted heavy damages on Iran, but their successors did not follow their fathers' way. They were influenced by Iranians' beliefs and customs. Then, they gradually accepted Islam. They also tried to distance themselves from the violence and destruction made by their fathers and to encourage development in Iran" (Ibid: 110).

It should be noted that although the authors strongly condemn the invasion of Iran by others, they mention the invasion of India by Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi as one of his most important actions. They also use the term "idol temple" for Indian religious places, which contains a very negative connotation of religion in modern Iranian society.

"One of the important actions of Sultan Mahmood was the invasion of India. He invaded India several times, ruined the idol temples and plundered many treasures and then returned to Iran" (Ibid: 102).

3. Grade 6

With Social Studies textbook of 6th grade has been prepared by changing one of the previous authors in 119 pages, 12 chapters, and 24 lessons. Despite the increasing age of students, the number of pages in the textbook is only 10 pages more than that in the 4th grade, while its thematic

diversity has significantly increased. Chapters 1 and 2 are about friendship and decision making, chapters 3 and 4 are involved with agriculture and Iran's energy resources, chapters 5 and 6 discuss advances of sciences in the Islamic era and travel to Isfahan, chapters 7 and 8 are about leisure time and clothes, chapters 9 and 10 deal with Iran's seas and neighbors, and chapters 11 and 12 explains resistance to foreigners and the liberation of the city of Khorramshahr from the occupation of Iraq during the war between the two neighbors in the 1980s. The contents of chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, and 12 contain issues that are positively or negatively related to the research purpose, i.e., "global citizenship education". In chapters 1 and 2, the advantages of friendship and the importance of decision-making were explained but there is no reference to the extent of friendship or playing an active role in national or global decisions. The authors, indeed, have considered friendship or decision-making as an "individual action". In a small picture, there is only one short paragraph in Chapter 3, describing that children in Africa are hungry (fig 2).



Fig 2. Hungry children in Africa

Source: Ministry of Education, 2021c, (Grade 6, Social Studies textbook, p. 32)

Chapter 5 provides information about Muslims' scientific advances, components affecting science development in Islamic countries, Islamic civilization services in a variety of scientific areas. Parts of the chapter compare the situation of Muslim countries with Europe and called this period the "dark age of Europe". According to the authors, in this period, people in Europe lived in ignorance and darkness and looked at Muslims with regret (Ministry of Education, 2021c: 53). In chapter 8, the Iranian students learn about traditional Kurdish, Turkmen, and Baluch costumes through various pictures. Chapter 10 deals with the introduction of Iran's neighbors, the concept of border, relations with neighbors (only Iraq and Saudi Arabia due to pilgrimages to these countries for religious events) as well as common celebrities of Iran and neighboring countries. This chapter

also contains information about the US occupation of Afghanistan and the role of the Taliban. Chapter 11 under the heading "Resistance to Foreigners) contains information about the Iran-Russia war during the Qajar dynasty, the influence of colonialism, and the Iranians' struggle against it, as well as information about national political figures such as Amir Kabir, Sheikh Mohammad Khyabani, Chief Ali Delvaari, Mohammad Mosadegh, Modarres, and Imam Khomeini. the last chapter is about the Iran-Iraq war(Accompanied with some pictures of the war) and Introduces to students the meanings of words such as imposed war, holy defense, aggressors, the clutches of the enemy, the occupation of Khorramshahr, the martyr and the warriors of Islam (Fig 3).



Fig 3. Iranian soldiers fighting the enemies

Source: Ministry of Education, 2021c, (Grade 6 , Social Studies textbook, p. 116)

Third) Explanation

At the third level, Fairclough's discourse analysis, i.e., seeking the cause of the discourse in a special social context, was performed by the researchers. The findings of the two levels of description and interpretation provided the grounds to seek the cause and determine the current perspective (the present situation) and challenges of global citizenship education. The findings of the description level showed that the frequency of issues about global citizenship in the selected textbooks should be determined. An international organization such as UNESCO has asserted that in the process of global citizenship education, learners should acquire knowledge and appropriate understanding of local, national, and global issues, as well as interactions between countries and human societies. In addition, Iranian children need to experience a sense of belonging to common humanity, empathize with others, and respect human differences. Global citizenship education is

based on terms such as tolerance, peace, respect for human rights, democracy, equality of human beings, and citizenship rights. The analysis of the descriptive level also showed that first, Iran is a country with ethnical, racial, language, religious, and cultural varieties; second, Iran and its neighboring countries have similarities and differences in race, ethnicity, language, religion, and culture; third, exceptional political-religious structure of Iran (the Islamic Republic based on Imamiye jurisprudence) is the underlying cause of fundamental differences and conflicts between this country and the international system. Given these findings, the data of the interpretation level well reflected these differences in textbooks (diagram 1):

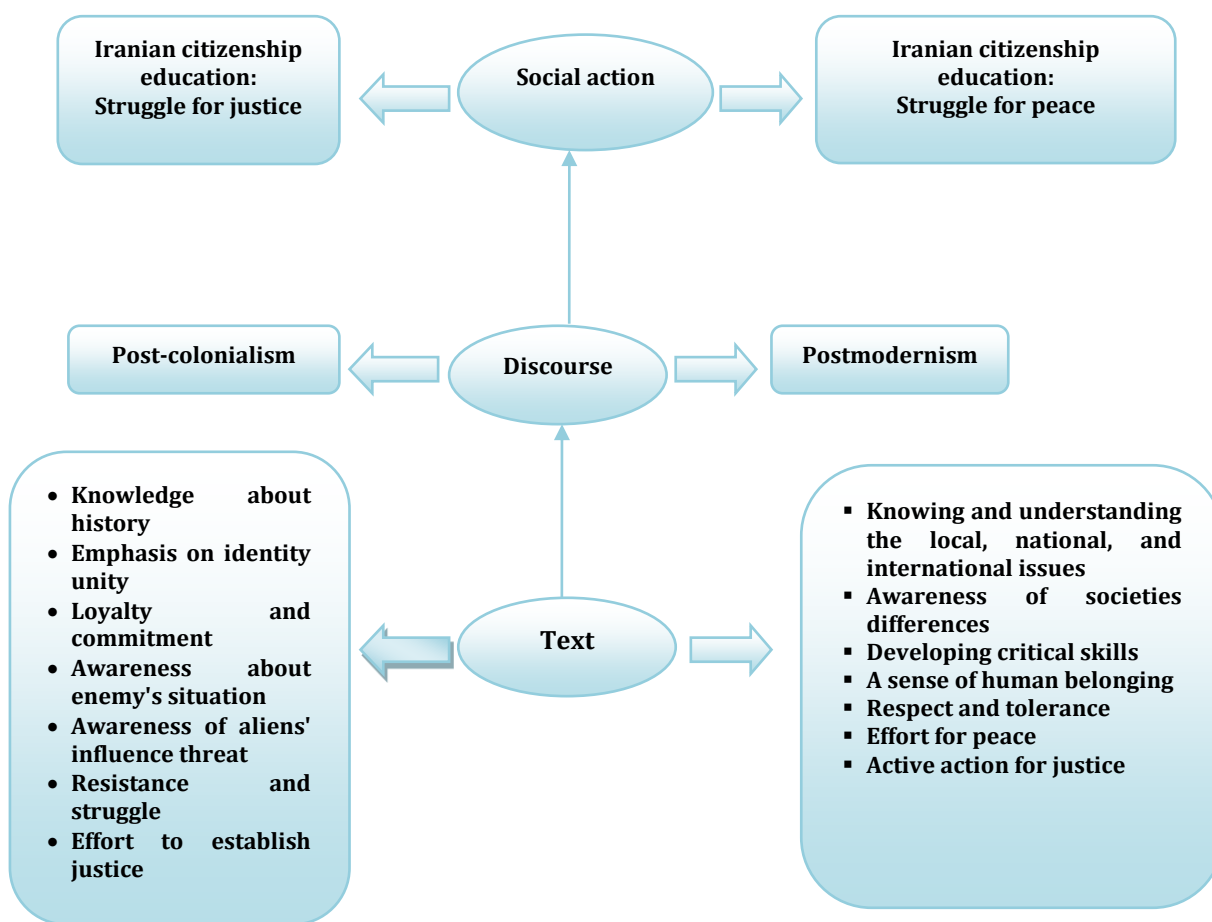


Diagram 1. Three levels of discourse analysis of global citizenship education and Iranian citizenship education

The first note is that the focus of global citizenship education is on educating "social alertness"; that is, the young generation should have a deep understanding and knowledge about the main issues and challenges of the present at local, national, and international levels. While the

content analysis of Social Studies textbooks of Iranian primary schools reveals the authors' tendency to focus on "historical alertness"; that is the young generation should learn from historical experiences to communicate with people in other societies and be aware of issues such as the preservation of social values and traditions and the influence of outsiders. Therefore, while the international documents focus on ignoring differences and mistakes of the past, the prevailing view in the Iranian textbooks is skeptical and pessimistic and exaggerates the differences between societies. The second note is about the different directions of internal and external emphasis on the international vs. Iranian documents: that is, Iranian textbooks authors try to emphasize similarities by ignoring the racial, ethnical, language, and cultural differences to strengthen national social cohesion and national identity (internal emphasis) while they simultaneously highlight racial, ethnical, language, religious, and cultural differences of the Iranian people with other nations (external emphasis).

The other note is the post-colonial discourse of the authors of primary school textbooks. The post-colonial discourse shows that throughout the history of Iran, foreigners who were generally desert-dwelling and uncivilized, either have developed due to contact and communication with civilized and knowledgeable Iranians or have tried to colonize Iran and exert social and cultural influence. While, the global citizenship discourse emphasizes postmodernism, attention to phenomena such as globalization, cultural pluralism, human rights, citizenship rights, and technological advances. According to the authors, the Iranians have only religious and national identities and ignore other forms of identity such as ethnical, cultural, language, and western identities. In this regard, global citizenship education aims to establish peace and understanding through educating the young generation who seek peace while the social context of Iranian textbooks considers it the responsibility of schools to make students aware of the threats and dangers of foreigners' influence. However, the transparent differences between the variables of global citizenship and the content of textbooks in Iran do not necessarily mean that there is a similarity between them. One of the most important similarities is an emphasis on the struggle against injustice. In both intellectual systems, a good citizen is a person who seeks justice. From this perspective, it can be said that the religious-political structure of Iran supports global citizenship because from the perspective of Islam, all people are equal and there is no difference between human beings but in science and piety. Despite this religious belief, what is more, emphasized by the Iranian education system is belief in global inequalities, the system of domination, colonialism, and the threats of foreigners' influence.

4. Conclusion

After the end of World War II, the international organizations set new missions and goals for educational systems, all of which had in common the human life elevation. One of these missions is increasing international peace and understanding through educating peace-seeking citizens who can serve humanity, regardless of ethnic, local, and national interests. Although the idea of global citizenship is an interesting idea of education instructors, individual, local, and national preferences cannot be easily ignored. That is why global citizenship education is involved with different interpretations, perspectives, and challenges. Being aware of challenges has directed the international organizations, including UNESCO, to consistently emphasize the application of a global-local strategy and the motto "Think Global, Act Local" to create a logical balance between individual, ethnic, local, and national requirements and human's global interests (Henriquis, 2017). However, the main problem is that first there are no specific and clear criteria to make the balance between global thinking and local action, and second global human interests are generally sacrificed to individual, ethnic, local, and national decisions and preferences. The present study aimed at investigating the perspectives and challenges of global citizenship education in the primary school curriculum in the context of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The first finding of the study was that the Iranian social system is very diverse. There are also large similarities and differences between Iran and the neighboring countries in terms of ethnic, racial, language, religious, and political aspects. Considering these two facts, Iranian politicians try to increase social cohesion by establishing a unified national identity. Therefore, ideas such as global citizenship can be potentially threatening for areas prone to social, religious, and political unrest-such as the Middle East. Thus, the lack of attention to the idea of global citizenship and its components by the authors of textbooks in Iran is understandable. On the other hand, the idea of global citizenship can increase understanding and peace in areas such as the Middle East by focusing on the commonalities of human beings rather than exaggerating ethnic, language, racial, cultural, religious, and political differences. It depends on politicians to select one of these perspectives. The Iranian politicians have adopted the first perspective and have reasons that may not be easily refuted. This finding is in line with those found by Angel 2014; Carona 2014; Micander 2016; Nauru & Fernandez 2015; Manion, Bista, Priestley & Ross 2011; Rappaport 2015; and Tax & Acdamir 2012. These researchers have indicated that national preferences have often influenced the interpretation of curriculum planners and policy-makers. The second finding of the present study was that the authors of primary school textbooks have paid insufficient attention to the components of global

citizenship, of which there is only a brief reference to human life in family, local, rural, urban, and national environments. In addition, there is also insufficient information about social life, councils, travel and clothing, geographical features of Iran's neighboring countries, environmental pollution, and services of Islamic civilization. Therefore, in these textbooks, there is no clue to concepts such as democracy, human rights, citizenship rights, global responsibility, equality, peace, and understanding. This finding is in line with the findings of Aghili et al (2016); Keshavarz et al (2019), Ghaltash et al (2012); Poursalim et al (2019 a, b); and Rashidi (2017a, b). The third finding indicated that the authors of Iranian textbooks have adopted the approach of ignoring and disregarding the concept of global citizenship, or the approach of providing education inconsistent with the idea of global citizenship. The authors of primary school textbooks have used both approaches. On the one hand, they have considered no place for educating the components of global citizenship, and on the other hand, they have included information that contrasts the idea of global citizenship. The textbooks selected in this study explicitly introduce students to terms such as infidels, torture, war, foreigners, surrender, Jihad, colonialism, oppression, plundering, influence, aggression, struggle, conspiracy, holy defense, resistance, enemy, and cruelty. In summary, it can be said that while the Iranian younger generation needs to find more and detailed information about issues such as environmental pollution, citizenship rights, job opportunities, and challenges, human equality, technological advances, social tolerance, and life skills in the 21st century, the textbooks authors' views are mainly influenced by the atmosphere of the colonial period and cold war. Therefore, the following suggestions are provided:

- Given the importance and role of citizenship education in Iran, an institution should have the authority to form, supervise, and guide citizenship education in the country, which can be the High Council of Education or the High Council of the Cultural Revolution.
- Reviewing the curriculum, holding global citizenship education courses, and adding global citizenship topics to the content of Iranian primary school textbooks and updating them.
- Emphasizing the role of formal education concerning global citizenship education and providing the curriculum objectives related to global citizenship in primary school textbooks
- Avoiding one-dimensional and mechanical perspectives to the global citizenship education and trying to develop citizenship issues in the Iranian education system
- Providing opportunities for the use of information technology in all schools to help students gain up-to-date information and knowledge

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