

## The Status of National Values in the Books of Social Studies for the Grades of the Upper Primary Stage in Jordan

Dr. Eid H. Subheyin<sup>1</sup> Dr. Baker S. Mawajdeh<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mansour H. Talhouni<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mohammad O. Rfou<sup>2</sup>

1.Faculty of Educational Sciences, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University

2.Ministry of Education, JORDAN

Ma'an

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

### Abstract:

This study aimed at determining the most important national values that should be included in the textbooks of social studies for the upper-primary stage grades in Jordan; and then identifying the degree of their inclusion in those books. The study used a descriptive-analytical approach. A study tool which includes twelve national values was prepared to analyze the data. Data were collected from educational literature as well as related researches and studies. To determine the validity of the study tool, it was presented to a group of expert, specialized evaluators. The reliability of the study tool was determined by using the appropriate statistical methods. The results showed that the total number of the national values contained in the books of social studies for the upper-primary stage grades in Jordan was (319). The most frequently used national value was (national pride) which appeared (66) times. The results also showed that some national values were repeated in the content of these books for a reasonable number of times, while other national values were repeated from (0 – 2) times only. In the light of those results, the study recommends paying attention to the national values that were not available; benefiting from the national values enclosed in the study tool; and conducting further studies on this topic for other stages and subjects.

**Keywords:** National values, citizenship, social studies textbooks, upper-primary stage

### 1. Introduction

The human being is a social entity that in need of others in various aspects of life. This need stems from the human being's association with the family, friends, tribe, community, state, and the nation. The community is an interacting group of people living in the same place; having the same values, culture, interests and objectives; which make them feel they are part of each other. Al-Agha (2010) indicates the importance of values in the life of communities, groups and individuals. He argues that values are the essence of the human being and the basis for his existence. They protect the individual from deviation and being dragged into negative desires; and they satisfy the needs of the individual that are appropriate for his beliefs and thoughts. Moreover, they maintain the community's existence, continuity, identity and distinctiveness, and protect it from deviant behaviors.

National values are exemplified in the feeling of mutual love and acceptance; and a strong attachment to the group which fulfills the human's need to be associated with others. They are also exemplified in the strong attachment to a certain group; and the sense of responsibility towards this group and defending it (Zahran, 2004).

Citizenship is the all-embracing framework for the interaction of citizens with their homeland and among themselves within the state's political, social, geographic, legal and economic dimensions. Values of citizenship are no longer just an emotional loyalty and formal belonging to homeland, but also a general compliance with the law that has its political, social, moral, economic, and religious values and dimensions (Hussein, 2013).

Al-Amer (2005) argues that the national belonging values are composed of many dimensions, such as the dimension of identity which is manifested by the human's beliefs, history, and values; and the dimension of group which refers to cooperation and solidarity between individuals in the same society; and the dimension of loyalty which is the essence of supporting the national identity, and joint action among members of society; and the dimension of commitment which is manifested by adhering to the social systems and standards.

Many researchers point out that the Arab and Muslim world is witnessing a critical period on intellectual, political, economic and cultural levels. This is clearly evident in many aspects, such as the deviation from the values and principles of Islam which calls for unity, tolerance, love, and good values. They also indicate that the Arab and Islamic societies suffer from a disturbance in the system of values and personal identity; and that the educational systems in the Arab countries are unable to face that (Al-Jerjawi, 2007).

In order to build an appropriate and correct system of values, it must be done on intellectual and educational foundations through which the learner is provided with many concepts and human values. The role of the school comes as a social institution representing the community tool for achieving the philosophy of education. Schools build a system of national, humanitarian, social, economic, and religious values and beliefs for the learners. They also formulate positive attitudes toward these values, and develop the learner's cognitive,

emotional, and spiritual personality (Ayori, 2005).

The relationship between values and education is reciprocal. Education is primarily concerned with the construction of the system of values. The importance of the educational institution stems from the long period that the learner spends at the educational institution. This stresses the importance and the nature of the values that we want to develop through the curriculum (Ashour, 2004).

Moreover, Al-Kandari (2008) pointed out that there are many institutions that contribute to the formation of the system of values for the members of the community such as the family, the religious institutions, the school, and the educational curricula. The most prominent of all is the school due to its big role in developing the national values and shaping the national character of the learner.

As the school curricula are of the most prominent educational elements, they must be enriched with the values necessary to the community. The curriculum of social studies is one of the most school curricula concerned with this matter. They are designed to achieve good citizenship through the set of national, social, moral, religious and economic values (Mary, 2007).

Tsai (1990) points out that the social studies curriculum contributes to the examination of the general values in the society by studying and analyzing the facts that are gathered. The curriculum aims at helping the learner to think and develop human relationships in order to create an effective good citizen who contributes to the promotion of economic, social and scientific development in his homeland.

Due to the importance of the availability of a system values in curricula in general and the curriculum of social studies in particular; many local, Arab, and foreign studies were conducted on values in general and on national values in particular enclosed in the curriculum and the textbooks. Al-Kasasbeh (2012) conducted a study aiming to recognize the values contained in Islamic Education textbooks for primary stage in Jordan. The study used the descriptive-analytical approach and found that the total number of the values contained in these books reached (671). The worships field ranked first with (375) values; followed by the morals field in second place with (223) values; and in third place came the doctrinal field with (73) values. The study revealed a list of values that should be included in the textbooks of Islamic Education as proposed by the specialists.

Al-Rashdan (2010) conducted a study aimed to determine the values that ought to be included in the textbooks of social education in Jordan in order to develop national belonging among primary school students. The study used the descriptive-analytical approach and found that the objectives and content of the social education textbooks have low rate in the aspects related to national loyalty and belonging. The study recommended the need to include national loyalty values in the books of social education.

Hamtu (2009) conducted a study aimed at examining the values of loyalty and belonging included in the national education textbooks of the lower primary stage in Palestine. The study used the descriptive-analytical approach and found that there are nine dimensions for the values of loyalty and belonging. The cultural values had the highest number (200) values with a percentage (19.1%) of the total values; family values had the lowest number (22) values with a percentage (2.1%). The study recommended enriching the textbooks with the values of belonging and loyalty.

Al-Otaibi (2009) study aimed to detect the effectiveness of the content of the National Education course in promoting the values of citizenship among primary school students in Saudi Arabia. The study found that the values of citizenship for the fourth grade were the achievement of familial awareness and the development of healthy habits. While citizenship values for the fifth grade were the promotion of positive values and social customs such as the etiquette of dialogue; respecting others' opinions and participating in discussion. National values for the sixth grade were manifested by introducing the students to the touristic and historical. The study recommended the enhancement and development of the values of cooperation, teamwork, sense of responsibility, moral commitment, citizenship, humanity, honoring parents and maintaining the national gains and wealth.

Hughes et al. (2007) conducted a study aimed at identifying the differences between the educational systems of Poland and Canada in the primary and secondary stages in terms of educational systems in both countries, and the content of the educational curricula. The study was based on interviews with the stakeholders of the learning processes. Some of the main results of the study were that the curricula of National Education and Civic Education constitute a basic requirement for both countries, and that one of the main objectives of both countries is to support the practice of democracy and to acquire the values of true citizenship.

Homana et al. (2006) aimed at assessing the school environment suitable for Citizenship Education. The study used the descriptive-analytical approach. The study reached a number of results, the most important of which is that the education of sound citizenship requires the awareness of all members of the school community with the philosophy and objectives of the curricula of National Education and Civic Education; the promotion of collaborative experiences among teachers within a supportive environment helps them achieve the desired goals, and increases the cognitive outcomes of students; confidence and positive interaction between teachers is very necessary for supportive educational environment of Citizenship Education; teamwork among teachers contributes effectively to the development of planning skills and decision-making capacity; and that citizenship education is based on positive interaction between the school and the local community.

Losito (2003) conducted a study entitled "Civic Education in Italy" aimed at identifying the efficiency of Civic Education curricula and the efficiency of students' participation in national activities and events in the development of the values of citizenship. The study showed that the development of national values is a main goal of the Italian education system. It focused on political and national concepts and perspectives that promote the values of citizenship such as respecting the constitution and respecting the rights of other citizens. The study found that there is a gap between intended and implemented curriculum; such gap was represented by the teachers' practices and the inability to achieve curriculum goals. It also found that the time spent by teachers in teaching the course is less than the allotted plan time; and that there is a lack of students' comprehension of the concepts of National Education.

Al-Eseri (2001) conducted a study aimed at identifying the national values contained in the books of Social Studies for the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman. The study used the descriptive-analytical approach and found that the national values in the political field were the most contained then came the national values in the economic field followed by the values in the cultural field. The study recommended that balance and inclusion should be taken into consideration in including the national values in the textbooks of Social Studies for the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman, and that the values should be more clear.

In Mimkler study (1998), which aimed to identify the role of Social Studies in the development of the values of democracy, respect for law, religious freedom, equality and joint work. The study found that these values were deficient in the first basic stage. The study prepared a guide for teachers to include values of citizenship, service-based learning, volunteering, democratic principles, and many national values.

A review of the results of the previous studies shows that there are scientific efforts exerted by researchers to study the values. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of values in the life of the individual and society and their positive impact on the behavior of the learners in order to ensure the success and progress of the educational process. The present study is distinguished from previous studies in its main objective of revealing the national values contained in the books of social studies of the higher elementary stage in Jordan. It is consistent with many previous studies in its study of national values, such as Al-Rashdan (2010), Homana et al. (2006) and Al-Eseri (2001).

Some studies have found that the percentage of values in the textbooks is low, such as: Al-Rashdan (2010), while some other studies have found that different values are generally available in the textbooks such as Hamtu (2009), Al-Otaibi (2009), Al-Eseri (2001), and Al-Kasasbeh (2012). Moreover, some previous studies have examined and stressed the importance of the school environment and the teachers in the development of national values among learners, such as Hughes et al. (2007) and Homana et al (2006).

## **2. The Study Problem and Questions:**

The researchers observed a lot of negative phenomena in the Jordanian society concerning national values and associated values such as violence, intolerance and extremism, and the lack of respect for the law, corruption and weakness in the public function, and damage to the environment; as well as weakness in the national belonging values among students in schools and universities. Therefore, the content of Social Studies curriculum, their objectives and their role in building the society should be considered in depth since they are linked to the lives of learners; their national and social values and standards. Thus, the researchers realized that there is a need to study the status of national values in the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper primary stage in Jordan due to their role in strengthening and maintaining the security, stability and progress of the society. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following two questions:

1. What national values should be available in the textbooks of Social Studies for the grades of the upper primary stage in Jordan?
2. What is the status of the national values in the textbooks of Social Studies for the grades of the upper primary stage in Jordan?

## **3. The Importance of the Study:**

The importance of the study lies in the following:

- Highlighting the position of national values in the educational process and its role in raising generations and building societies.
- Assisting officials, decision-makers, and authors of curricula and textbooks.
- Research and educational studies are useful as a reference in determining the value system.

## **4. Objectives of the study:**

1. Determining the national values that should be available in the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper-primary stage grades in Jordan.
2. Identifying the status of the availability of national values in the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper-primary stage grades in Jordan.

## 5. The Study limits:

- This study was conducted in the academic year 2016/2017.
- This study was conducted in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
- This study was limited to determining the national values that should be available in the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper-primary stage in Jordan, which the researchers reached and included in the study tool.

## 6. The Study Terms:

The procedural definitions for the main terms of the study:

- Values: the beliefs, judgments, and human fundamentals that emerge through behavior, which guide human behavior and determine what behaviors are accepted and which are not.
- The homeland: a land, a people and an authority with common social, humanitarian, historical, religious, political, economic and cultural factors.
- National values: the human's fundamentals that appear through the attachment of the individual to his nation and homeland. These are being expressed by word and deed, and refer to the behaviors of integrity, honesty, order, responsibility, respect for others, conservation of the environment and other values that crystallize in the study tool.
- Upper Primary Stage: The last three grades of the primary educational stage in Jordan which includes the eighth, ninth and tenth grades.

## 7. Methodology and Procedures:

The study adopted the descriptive-analytical approach in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data; which is appropriate for this type of studies.

### 7.1 The study Population and Sample:

The study population and sample consist of the three textbooks of the Social Studies for the upper primary grades in Jordan, for the academic year 2016/2017, as follows:

- National and Civic Education textbook for the eighth grade.
- National and Civic Education textbook for the ninth grade.
- National and Civic Education textbook for the tenth grade.

### 7.2 The Study Tool:

The researchers reviewed the educational literature, and previous researches and studies. They came up with a list of some of the most important national values that ought to be available in the textbooks of the Social Studies of the upper primary grades in Jordan. The list included twelve national values (as shown in the study tool).

### 7.3 The Validity of the Study Tool:

To determine the validity of the study tool, it was presented to (15) specialized, expert evaluators in the field of Social Studies curricula and to journalists and writers who are interested in the national issues; as well as to teachers and educational supervisors. In light of the observations and recommendations of the evaluators, some amendments were made by deleting and inserting some values to the study tool.

### 7.4 The Reliability of the Study Tool:

The reliability of the tool was examined in two ways:

1. **Stability over time:** the researchers analyzed the textbook of National and Civic Education for the eighth grade according to the analysis tool of the study. Then re-analyzed the same textbook after three weeks. The ratio of agreement between the two analyses was calculated using the Holsti formula. The reliability coefficient between the first and the second analysis was (93.2%) which is a high stability coefficient that can be adopted for study purposes.
2. **Stability across individuals:** the ratio of agreement between the analysis carried out by the researchers and the analysis carried out by another specialist. The second analysis was carried out by a National and Civic Education teacher after being trained on the analysis process. The reliability coefficient between the two analyzes was (90.4%) which is suitable for study purposes.

### 7.5 Analysis Unit:

The *word* and the *sentence* were adopted in analyzing the content of these textbooks to determine the national

values available in them.

## 8. The Study Results and Discussion:

*8.1 The results related to the first question and their interpretation: What national values should be available in the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper primary stage grades in Jordan?*

In order to answer this question, the researchers reviewed the educational literature, previous researches and studies. They consulted experts and specialists in this field, and came up with a list of the most important national values that must be available in the textbooks of Social Studies for the grades of the upper primary stage in Jordan. The list included (12) national values of great importance for this stage (as shown in the study tool).

Researchers believe it is important that the national dimension should include the national belonging values that help the learner to understand himself and his identity; ensure national unity and strengthen the sense of belonging and loyalty to the homeland. Moreover, these national values help create a law-abiding learner who is proud of his identity; committed to respect others no matter how they differ in belief, race or culture; rejects chaos and strife and terrorism. All these values contribute to the development of sound national identity; especially as we witness nowadays some aspects of insecurity, intolerance, lack of law respect and other negative behaviors in Jordan and in other Arab countries.

*8.2 The results related to the second question and their interpretation: What is the status of the national values in the textbooks of Social Studies for the grades of the upper primary stage in Jordan?*

In order to answer this question, the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper primary grades in Jordan were analyzed. Table (1) illustrates this:

**Table (1)**  
**Repetition and percentages of national values in the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper primary stage in Jordan**

The Value	Repetition 8 <sup>th</sup> . grade	Repetition 9 <sup>th</sup> . grade	Repetition 10 <sup>th</sup> . grade	Total of frequencies	Percentage
Maintaining the unity of the society	24	11	6	41	12.8
Respecting the leadership and the royal family	23	11	8	42	13.1
Appreciating the role of security services	4	6	8	18	5.6
Pride in national identity and culture	36	24	6	66	20.6
Care for rights and duties	10	2	9	21	6.5
Respect for the law	16	6	15	37	11.5
Respect for the principle of justice	9	6	14	29	9.0
Respect for pluralism and accepting others.	4	3	4	11	3.4
Giving priority to the public interest over private.	9	0	3	12	3.7
Rejection of chaos and sedition.	1	4	1	6	1.8
Preservation of cultural heritage.	16	19	0	35	11.0
Appreciating the importance of party work.	1	0	0	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>319</b>	

It is noted from Table (1) that the majority of the national values have been well-provided in the textbooks of Social Studies for the upper primary stage in Jordan. The total number of values reached (319). The researchers attribute this to the attention and care given by curriculum and textbooks planners to the importance of national values and their role in preparing the learner to be a good citizen, proud of his identity and homeland.

The researchers also believe that these national values have been addressed in the new curricula of Social Studies (National and Civic education) which were implemented in the academic year (2016/2017). Such values are important and may be suitable for this stage of study and acquiring them at this stage is more appropriate to build national awareness among this age group. The books of Social Studies for this stage tackle crucial social issues; thus they are the most relevant curriculum to the lives of the learners and their national culture. Furthermore, the purpose of teaching National and Civic Education textbooks in Jordan is enhancing and developing the national values among the learners and this fits with the general framework of the Social Studies curriculum in Jordan.

The repetition of the national values in the textbook of National and Civic education for the eighth grade came in first place (153) repetitions with a percentage of (48%). The textbook of National and Civic education for the ninth grade came second (92) repetitions with a percentage of (29%). The textbook of National and Civic education for the tenth grade came third (74) repetitions with a percentage of (23%). The researchers believe that most of the national values are included appropriately in these books except for a few of them. This can be attributed to the importance of this age group and their willingness to acquire this type of national values which, in turn, may be the reason for the textbook planners to focus on them in this stage.

The value of “pride in national identity and culture” got the highest repetition (66) with a percentage of (20.6%). The value of “respecting the leadership and the royal family” came second, (42) repetitions with a percentage of (13.1%). The value of “maintaining the unity of the society” was in third place, (41) repetitions with a percentage of (12.8%). The values of “respect for the law” (37) repetitions, and “preservation of cultural heritage” (35) repetitions, came in fourth and fifth places respectively.

This result can be attributed to the nature of the textbooks of National and Civic education at this stage, which focuses on the national aspects more than the other textbooks. Those national aspects include national unity and its role in the stability and security of societies; the role of His Majesty King Abdullah II in leading the country and his quest to make in the ranks of the developed world; and the role of the Hashemite family in building Jordan since its foundation. Moreover, this result may indicate the awareness of the authors of these textbooks regarding the need to educate the learners to adhere to the system, respect the law, and maintain the heritage of the country and its institutions; especially in this age group which is very important in the formation of the learners’ personalities.

The results also indicate that the values of “rejection of chaos and sedition” and “appreciation of the importance of party work” have been less frequent in the content of the textbooks of National and Civic education for the upper primary grades in Jordan. This can be explained by the prevalence of security and stability in Jordan; the high awareness of the Jordanian people in rejecting sedition and chaos; and the nature of the Jordanian tolerant society. The experience of party work in Jordan did not succeed due to various internal and external factors. The researchers believe that there is a need to enrich the textbooks of National and Civic education for these grades with these values because of the situations of chaos, sedition and unrest in the Arab region.

## 9. Recommendations

In light of the study results, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Including the national values contained in the study tool into the content of the textbooks of Social Studies at all stages of study.
2. Conducting more similar studies on the national values in the content of other textbooks.
3. Conducting comparative studies with some Arab and international countries in terms of addressing national values.
4. Activating the role of the national, social, religious and media institutions as the integrating link to the school role in building the system of national values and other important values.

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