

**Research Paper****A Content Analysis of the Concepts and Images of the Physical Aging Primary School Textbooks in Iran**Zahra Eftekhari<sup>1</sup>, \*Farhad Nosrati Nejad<sup>2</sup>, Robab Sahhaf<sup>3</sup>, Nosaybeh Zanjari<sup>3</sup>

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objectives** This study has two purposes. The first purpose is to analyze the concept of old age in the textbooks of the primary schools after the Islamic Revolution (1979). The second purpose is to study the type of images used in these textbooks to depict the elderly people in physical terms.

**Methods & Materials** This research is a descriptive Research to analyze the content of the books. The data is collected from a statistical population of all the primary schools' textbooks used after the Islamic Revolution. Of them, the ones which were taught in 1979, 1996, 2006, and 2015 were selected as the samples because these books were subject to change in those years. The context units were Lessens and of analysis was the contents and pictures in which the concept of old age is presented.

**Results** The findings of this research show that the textbooks depict aged people as those with wrinkles (52.1%), grey or white hair (44.4%), upright stature (57%), and maintain good physical health (43%). These older adults are healthy (73.2%) and independents (72.5%). Most of them (64.1) never used any health-care aids, and in case of health care tools, only spectacles are depicted.

**Conclusion** The results showed that the textbooks depict a positive image of the physical health of the older people. The picture in the textbooks shows elders' natural status and their physical conditions in the old age. It is interesting to mention that during the first year post the Islamic Revolution, the illustrations showed the older adults as young. It's natural considering the rise of maximum life expectancy in the recent decades, and it also reflects the realities of old age.

**Key words:**

Old age, Textbooks, Content, Concept and image analysis, Elementary school, Iran

**Extended Abstract****1. Objectives**

**T**he purpose of this study was to analyze concepts and images depicting elderly in the textbooks during the initial period of post-Islamic Revolution - from 1979 to 2015. Identifying the positive and negative impact of images showing

elderly from a physical point of view in the elementary school textbooks was also taken into account. It was predicted that the elderly population will increase at an ever-increasing rate. Therefore, planning for the aging population was important before the situation becomes critical. In the study by Sanagoo et al. [1], identification of the physical status of the elderly has been the most important tools to realize goals and the missions of society, and the educational system by correcting textbooks and curriculum. Hence, this was

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important to set goals and missions of the society to support the elderly.

## 2. Methods and Materials

This is a descriptive research study; therefore, it has been conducted using content analysis method. The statistical population included all elementary textbooks such as Persian, Religious Education, Math, Art, Social Education, Quran, Science, Gifts of Heaven, and Thinking as well as the research from 1978 to 2015.

Among the textbooks, those published in the years 1979, 1996, 2006, and 2015 were selected because in those years textbooks were changed. In this study, the subject was texts of the books; therefore, each lesson has been a subject. In other words, the theme was subject analysis and images related to old age. To measure the physical dimensions of aging, variables referring to the physical appearance of the elderly such as their face, hair, facial hair, stature and stance's fitness, cleanliness of their wardrobe, and clothing preferences were included. Physical appearance in terms of face implied wrinkles and folds; hair focused on the extent of the graying of hair; facial hair meant the general condition of the face, which included the degree of hair graying instances such as white or gray, salt and pepper'; and the black or blond facial hair of the elderly; stature (height): straight or curved (humpy); height comparison referred to features such as being taller, having the same height, or short height; physical ability meant level of physical strengths such as high, moderate, or poor. Type of physical dependence referred to features such as being dependent or independent. Health condition meant healthy or diseased. Assistive Equipment meant relying on health tools such as spectacles, hearing aids, canes, or walker.

Data were collected using a researcher-made checklist and Jessica L. Danowski's [2] checklist. Meanwhile, this article has been confirmed by the Ethics Committee of the University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences.

## 3. Results

The results of this study showed that aging concepts were used maximum in third and fifth-grade textbooks and minimum in the sixth and fourth-grade books. Most of the concepts were included in the Persian Book and Social Education and the least in Art and Science books. The textbooks analyzed mostly depict-

ed the elderly as those with wrinkles (52.1%), gray or white hair (44.4%), straight posture (57%), and high physical strength (43%). In other words, elderly people were defined as healthy and physically independent (72.5%) (73.2%). These textbooks generally (64.1%) depicted elderly who did not use any health tools and in cases of those who used it, they only used spectacles (14.1%).

It is worth mentioning that facial appearance of the elderly is shown with wrinkles and creases. The highest percentage of wrinkles has been observed in the textbooks used in 2015. Also, the hair and facial hair of most elderly are shown as white, and this feature is frequently repeated in the textbooks of 2015. But despite the head and face status, the stature of about 57 percent elderly people is shown as straight and the highest degree of elderly people with straight posture has been shown in the textbooks of 1996. As we move closer to 2015, stature straightness lessens. In terms of physical strength, most of the elderly are physically strong and independent. The textbooks of 2015 showed elderly population with the highest percentage of physical strength, while 2006 textbooks had the highest percentage of independent ones. From the health perspective, most of the elderly population is shown as healthy in the textbooks of 2006 and as we move closer to 2015, the percentage of healthy elderly people plummets. Noticeably, most of the elderly people had not used any health tool and those who were dependent on such tools they were mostly using glasses and canes, respectively.

## 4. Conclusion

The finding of this study is that the textbooks published in the early post-revolution years used natural images and portrayed elderly people in a positive light. It is worth mentioning here that images of the aging population in the early years are different from the recent ones, in the sense that the images of the early years of the revolution generally shows the elderly as middle-aged people or, in other words, depicted them as young. But as we moved closer to the present, these images were closer to the reality of aging population. These pictures are not only appropriate but also relates to the reality of old age in the country. This is because life expectancy increased from approximately 52 years to about 70 years in the recent years. So, it is natural that the appearance of current the aging population would be different from those in the past.

## Ethical Considerations

### Compliance with ethical guidelines

This article was confirmed by the Ethics Committee of University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences of Tehran.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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