Analysis of the content of elementary school books based on the achievement motivation constructs

Oreizi, Hamid-Reza (Ph. D.)[1]
Aabedi, Ahmad

Abstract

Text book is considered one of the most important references and resources for students' learning in education systems. In the same way, text books play one of the most important roles in Iran. Because of this importance and also because of the role of the content of text books in encouraging and providing for the needs beside making the students' learning process easy, the content of text books in primary school have been put under assessment and analysis in this research with respect to the construct of advancement motivation and its indexes. This research is the foundation for the current article. At the beginning of the article the theoretical and experimental background of the subject has been provided. The research tool includes 5 indexes and 125 sub-indexes and its reliability has been concluded to be 0.93 based on the ratio of agreed-upon indexes to all other ones.

1- Faculty member of the Scientific Committee of Isfahan University, Iran.

With regards to the findings and based on the resulted data from "content analysis forms" in the current research and the researches that have previously taken place in this field, it can be derived that: Mathematics and Experimental science books have to high extent paid attention to advancement motivation construct; Farsi literature, Religion, and Quran text books have to some extent paid attention to this matter; and Social Studies text books have been weak in paying attention to this matter. In elementary schools, it can also be said that grade 5 and 4 books have paid a lot of attention to advancement motivation construct and grade one and two have paid less attention to this matter.

On top of this, most attention to the mentioned construct in elementary school books have been seen in grade 5 experimental sciences, grade 3 experimental sciences, grade 4 social studies, grade 3 religious and Quran studies, and grade 5 mathematics. And finally, least attention to this construct has been seen in grade one Quran studies, grade 3 social studies, grade one experimental sciences, grade 5 religious and Quran studies, and grade 4 Farsi literature.

Key Words: Elementary school books, text books, motivation, education system, learning process, content analysis

Introduction

School book is one of the most important references and resources for students' learning in any education system. Along the same line, the school books play one of the most important roles in Iran as well and it is necessary to analyze these resources. A type of analysis, which is very beneficial and important for the curriculum planners, authors, and the elementary-school curriculum decision-

makers, is "content analysis". Content analysis aids in scientific and practical investigation of the concepts, motives, needs, attitudes, and all mentioned pieces in the educational content of books. This is so that these items can be compared with the curriculum plans in the elementary school education. This research has investigated and analyzed the content of school books in the elementary school in the aspect of paying attention to achievement motivation construct and its components.

One of the items that "identification of human behavior" needs and is paid attention to in school books, is "achievement motive". Scientific study about this motive was first stated by Murray. Murray (1938) believed that "need for achievement is consisted of defeating the obstacles, reaching for high standards, competing with others and moving ahead of them, and living with high standards". (Rio, Translated by Mohammadi, 1997). McClelland (1961, 1965) and John Atkinson (1965) believe that the motive for achievement is seeking success in comparison with a high standard. Considering the researches conducted by McClelland it can be said that achievement motive is the result of school books, children's literature, and parent's educational methods. By realizing that school books are of the most important references and resources for students' learning in the current education system, they can be considered one of the most important causes for suggesting students' achievement motive.

The chief aim in this research is the analysis of Iranian elementary school books content in order to investigate the amount of attention these books pay to the "motivation construct for the country's achievement and its components".

The Meaning of Achievement Motive

Achievement motive is the desire and eagerness, or the effort an individual shows in order to reach a goal or to have control over

objects, matters, individuals, thoughts, or a very high standard. (Wilder, 1989)

In Murray's belief (as Hejell and Zigler, 1992 narrate) the achievement motive is the motive that defeats obstacles and battles what is famous as "difficult".

Korman (1974) believes that achievement motive is consisted of a wish for moving ahead of a special behavior which has become a base or standard (Korman, Translated by Shokre-Kon, 1991).

Robins (1993) believes that the achievement motive is a desire for leaping ahead of others and an effort for reaching success and achievement, with regards to certain standards.

McClelland (1965) was interested in how the achievement motive was created and what the social outcome of such motive is. His efforts were firstly concentrated on to identify the motive that causes one individual to have more interest for work compared to another person; and then clarify whether such motive can be created in people who have no interest in working.

Atkinson (1964) expanded McClelland's studies in the field of achievement motive. In his opinion, people can be moved in two ways; a group by seeking success and a group by avoiding defeat.

For establishing the motive for achievement, Weiner stresses on the concept of finding the reason in two areas of "success" and "defeat" and says that the documents individuals have of the reasons for their success or defeat are important causes that determine both their behaviors that crave toward achievement and their future expectations from their activities.

Spence and Helmrich (1978) rejected this assumption that the achievement motive is a simple construct and stated that the achievement motive consists of a multi-aspect construct.

Feld, Ruhland, and Gold (1967) and Ruble concluded from their studies that the achievement motive can be of two types: internal or external.

Reinor and Entin (1983) stated that the predicting of the characteristics of a path identifies the individual's amount of success in future. Reinor (1970) points out that any achievement goal that is far in terms of reaching is less important than a goal that is in near future (Rio, Translated by Seyyed-Mohammadi, 1997).

Herman (1997) identified the ten evident characteristics that persons with high achievement motive possess compared to those who have low achievement motive. He did this based on theoretic and experimental basis which was available for achievement need. He also put the related researches under more investigation. The ten characteristics include:

1- High level of wish; 2- Strong motive for moving up; 3- Long-term preservation and endurance in facing assignments with mid-range difficulty level; 4- Interest for doing the halted work; 5- Possessing a dynamic understanding of time and realizing that matters happen quickly; 6- Having understanding of the future; 7- Doing a task in the right way; 8- Paying attention to the basis for selecting a friend, colleague, and a model; 9- Re-understanding through good activity in work; and 10- Behavior that consists of taking low amount of risk. Based on this, Herman produced the questionnaire of assessment of need for achievement, which is one of the most popular pen-and-paper questionnaires. (Hooman, 2001).

With regards to the mentioned variety of theories above, the ten components for the achievement motive construct have been put under investigation according to the description that has been mentioned in the "research methodology" section.

Method

In this research, content of elementary school books have been checked and put under investigation and content analysis by regarding the achievement motive construct and its components, including: 1- High level of wish; 2- Strong motive for moving up; 3- Long-term preservation and endurance in facing assignments with mid-range difficulty level; 4- Interest for doing the halted work; 5- Possessing a dynamic understanding of time and realizing that matters happen quickly; 6- Having understanding of the future; 7- Doing a task in the right way; 8- Paying attention to the basis for selecting a friend, colleague, and a model; 9- Re-understanding through good activity in work; and 10- Behavior that consists of taking low amount of risk. Considering the essence of the study, the content analysis research methodology has been used.

The statistical population, sample, and sampling method

The research's statistical population includes all 27 elementary school books during the 2001-2002 school year. The set of books was consisted of the Religious-teachings, Quran, Farsi, Social and civic studies, experimental sciences, and mathematics.

In this way, the complete statistical population (elementary school books) were investigated and analyzed by content based on the attention they give to the achievement motive construct and its components.

Measurement Instruments

In order to analyze the content of the mentioned books for their attention to the achievement motive construct, in this research, the check list for content analysis has been used, which is built based on scientific basis of the achievement motive and its theories. This

tool includes ten components and 125 secondary-components, which are prepared and constructed based on the definition of achievement motive construct and its theories.

Research Findings

The research findings based on the research questions are provided as follows:

1- How much attention have the content of grade one, two, and three school books paid to the amount of achievement motive construct and its components?

With respect to the achievement motive construct components, the content analysis of grade one, grade two, and grade three elementary school books shows that the most amount of frequency in grade one school books is related to foreseeing components with 14.4 percent and the lowest amount of frequency is related to the components dynamic understanding of time with 1.38 percent. As well, the most amount of abundance in grade one primary school books is that of Farsi books and the least abundance is related to Religious Studies and Quran.

With respect to the achievement motive construct components, the content analysis of grade two elementary school books shows that the most amount of frequency in grade two school books is related to "interest for continuing an unfinished task" components with 18.16 percent and the lowest amount of frequency is related to the components attention to the competency basis for selecting a friend with 2.14 percent. As well, the most amount of abundance in grade two primary school books is that of Religious Studies and Quran books and the least abundance is related to Experimental Sciences book.

With respect to the achievement motive construct components, the content analysis of grade three, four, and five elementary school

books shows that the most amount of frequency in grade three school books is related to "preservation" components with 14.5 percent and the lowest amount of frequency is related to the components promotion-seeking with 4.2 percent. As well, the most amount of abundance in grade three primary school books is that of Experimental Sciences book and the least abundance is related to Social and Civic Studies book.

2- How much attention have the content of grade four, and five school books paid to the amount of achievement motive construct and its components?

With respect to the achievement motive construct components, the content analysis of grade four elementary school books shows that the most amount of frequency in grade four school books is related to "preservation" components with 15 percent and the lowest amount of components is related to the dynamic components understanding of time with 3.20 percent. As well, the most amount of abundance in grade four primary school books is that of Social and Civic Studies book and the least abundance is related to Experimental Sciences book.

With respect to the achievement motive construct components, the content analysis of grade five elementary school books shows that the most amount of frequency in grade five school books is related to "interest for continuing an unfinished task" components with 15.95 percent and the lowest amount of frequency is related to the components paying attention to good competency basis for selecting a friend with 2.67 percent. As well, the most amount of abundance in grade five primary school books is that of Experimental Sciences book and the least abundance is related to Religious Studies and Quran book.

In general, the information on the primary school books content analysis for achievement motive construct components and the information on content analysis based on education level (grade) and the lessons shows an overall result. The conclusion is that the

most frequency for the achievement motive construct components in primary school books is related to the "interest for continuing an unfinished task", "preservation", "foreseeing", and "doing something well". The least abundance is related to dynamic components understanding of time, paying attention to competency basis in selecting a friend, and seeking promotion.

In addition to this the analyzed units related to achievement motives in primary school books state that the most amount abundance and attention to achievement motive construct components is related to grade five with 26.37 percent and the least abundance is related to grade one with 13.39 percent. As well the most abundance and attention to achievement motive construct components is related to the mathematics lessons with 23.11 percent, and the least abundance and attention is that of Social and Civic Studies with 12.99 percent.

Discussion and Conclusion

We can conclude based on the data provided by the content analysis forms that the math and experimental sciences books have to a high extent paid attention to the achievement motive construct in the school years under study. Farsi, and Religious Studies and Quran books have to a certain degree paid attention to it, and Social and Civic books have been weak in the aspect of paying attention to the construct. It can be said that from among the elementary school year's books, those of grade four and five have paid high attention to the achievement motive construct and those of grades one and two have done so to a lower degree.

From among the elementary school books the most amount of attention to the achievement construct motive has been found in the books with the following order: Grade five experimental sciences, Grade three experimental sciences, Grade four social and civic studies, Grade three religious studies and Quran, and Grade five mathematics. In contrast, the following books had the lowest

amount of attention to the achievement motive construct compared to other books of this period. The list in order of the weakest to the strongest for paying attention in this category includes: Books for teaching Quran in great one, Social and civic studies in grade three, Experimental sciences in grade one, Religious studies and Quran in grade five, and Farsi in grade four.

References

Atkinson, J. W.; & Litwin, Goth (1960). Achievement motivation and test anxiety conceived as motive to approach success and motive to avoid failure. *Journal od Social Psychology*, 60, 52-63.

Hejell, I. A.; & Zigler, D. J. (1992). Personality theories' basic assumptions: Research and pale cautions. New York: McGraw Hill.

Hermans, H.J. (1997). A Questionnaire measure of achievement motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 54, 353-363.

Human, Heidar-Ali (2001). Providing and standardizing the achievement motivation test. *Journal of Psychological Researches*, V. 6, No. 1&2.

Korman, A. K. (Translated by Hossein Shokr-Kon, 1977). Industrial and organizational psychology. Roshd Publication, Tehran, Iran.

McClelland, D.C & Winter, D. G. (1969). Motivatoin economic achievement. NewYork: Free press.

Murray, E. J. (Translated by Mohammad-Naghi Barahani, 1964). Motivation and Emotion. Chehr Publications, Tehran, Iran.

Murray, H. A. (1938). Explorating personality. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rio, J. M. (Translated by Yahya Seid-Mohammadi, 1976). Motivation and Emotion. Virayesh Publication, Tehran, Iran.

Robbins, S.P. (1993) Organizational behavior. Concepts controversies and applicaions. 6th ed. New York: Prentice Hall.

Wilder, B. (1989). Implication of the current theory of achievement motivation. *Psychology in School*, 8, 164-171.