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Designing an optimal spiritual curriculum model for social studies in primary school and evaluating curriculum from the perspective of specialists and the relevant teachers

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Abstract

Introduction: Spiritual curriculum means the induction of health through content and training programs. Such kind of curriculum, in addition to rational rising of students, provides them with a deeper and more productive feeling. This research aimed to design an optimal pattern of spiritual curriculum for social studies in primary school and evaluate from the perspective of specialists and relevant teacher.

Materials and Methods: In this research, firstly, regarding the theoretical foundations of the research subject, the optimal characteristics of four elements (goal, content, implementation and evaluation) are identified in the social studies curriculum and the model is presented. The study population consisted of all primary school teachers and curriculum specialists of Gilan province (consisting of 45 specialists and 8641 teachers) during the academic years of 2016-2017, meanwhile; all of the curriculum specialists were selected by using census sampling method and 360 primary school teachers were selected by using random sampling. The data collecting tool consisted of Self-made questionnaire whose validity was approved by curriculum specialists, in addition; its reliability was approved by Cronbach's alpha (0.86). Data analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: the results showed that the proposed model for spiritual curriculum in social studies has been satisfactory from the perspective of curriculum specialists and primary school teachers. Also, there was not a significant difference ($P>0.05$) between these two views on the desirability of the proposed model.

Conclusion: Based on the results, we can use this model in social studies for growing spirituality of students in primary school.

Keywords: Primary school, Social studies, Spiritual curriculum

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Introduction

Spirituality is the connection with the transcendent existence, belief in the unseen, and belief in human growth and development in order to overcome the twists and turns of life and regulate personal life based on the connection with the transcendent existence and understanding of the permanent presence of the transcendent existence in a meaningful, organized and directed existence. This aspect of human existence is natural, inherent, transformed, and improved according to growth and as a result of religious practices and rituals (1). Western thinkers have pointed out the neglect of the role of spirituality in life. For example, Frankel and Ekinson have stated that humans live in a period of spiritual confusion, while many people have a thirst for spirituality. In other words, meaninglessness is the primary existential problem of this time, and serious attention should be paid to spirituality (2). In this regard, the spiritual and inner perfection of people owes more than anything to the institution of education and training, not to any other institution, because under the shadow of teaching the correct ontological and value-based ideas and according to the acceptable moral and legal values, it is possible to develop godliness and spiritual perfection of people (3). According to Aynon and Ibnov, during the past decades, education curricula have always been a function of the events of society and its developments. The subject-oriented curriculum, with its special characteristics such as considering separate subjects, memory-oriented, book-oriented, teacher-oriented, superficial knowledge, and normative tests, has always been criticized. It has been determined that this type of curriculum is no longer compatible with modern educational approaches. (4). In criticizing the thematic and disciplinary curricula and in order to use the spiritual approach in lesson planning and teaching, they have stated that in the present era, man has lost his spiritual insight and needs to deal with feelings, emotions, thoughts and Be with your desires and search for their meanings. Therefore, a spiritual curriculum is the realization of spirituality through curriculum planning. In other words, a spiritual curriculum is a type of curriculum that wants to reach higher levels of consciousness and make life meaningful (2). A

spiritual curriculum is not only a means to understand educational content in schools intelligently, but it is a move beyond reasoning and analytical methods and thinking through the left hemisphere of the brain; that is, the spiritual curriculum is complete attention to emotional issues and thinking through the right hemisphere of the brain (5).

The spiritual curriculum requires the existence of a process in which communication is directed in the direction of transforming multiplicity into unity and identity (4). The need to pay more attention to children's spiritual development during childhood education is because the presence of spirituality in children's thinking, creativity, and imagination has been recognized. In other words, the research results indicate that children can express spirituality. In their imaginative games during childhood, they can express capabilities such as meaning-making and identification, which are key dimensions of spirituality in childhood (6). Teaching spirituality in schools can strengthen students' will, faith, and self-control (7) and provide the necessary conditions for moral, spiritual, and intellectual education (8). Therefore, the ways to access education should be mixed with spirituality because by introducing spirituality into education, the classroom becomes a lively and energetic place (9). Ezadi et al., in research entitled "Feasibility of implementing a curriculum with a spiritual approach in secondary school" concluded that the facilities of schools for implementing a spiritual curriculum at a high level and the knowledge and skills of teachers in the categories of art and aesthetics, ethics and spirit and attitude Regarding morality, it was above average. However, their attitude toward art, aesthetics, and spirit was below average (10). Also, in research titled "Spiritual Approach and Curriculum Planning" conducted by Qasimpour Dehaghani and Nasra Asfahani, the conclusion was reached that although educational systems must cultivate all dimensions of the existence of educators, in educational systems only the intellectual dimension of learners is paid attention to. Other dimensions of existence, especially the spiritual dimension, are neglected (2). Yarmohamedian and his colleagues studied the curriculum of countries such as Australia and Turkey in research entitled "Comparative study

of spiritual approaches according to the curriculum components in several countries of the world". The results indicated significant similarities and differences between the goals, content, and teaching methods in the studied countries (11). Irannejad, in research entitled "Designing and compiling the theoretical framework of the spiritual curriculum model in religious textbooks of the elementary school", concluded that the appropriate model of the spiritual curriculum for the elementary school should be a model that is based on four components (universal awareness, other awareness, self-awareness, and God-awareness). be (12). Clifford concluded a positive relationship between moral and spiritual curriculum during research entitled "Moral and Spiritual Education as an Inherent Part of the Curriculum" (13). Researchers have emphasized teaching spirituality and implementing a spiritual curriculum in schools (14-16). The results of various types of research in this field indicate that teachers play an important role in the spiritual education of students, willingly or unwillingly, and their performance and teaching methods in the classroom significantly impact students' spiritual growth (17,18). In order to implement spiritual curriculum in educational environments, it is appropriate to use active teaching methods and integration of spiritual and moral values (19). In other words, creating a space where students can learn collaboratively (20) and share their learning experiences in spiritual, religious, and moral values with each other (21,22). Moreover, the use of the story-telling method about the creation and the universe is very effective in reviving the spiritual dimension of students (23). The current research is based on the most common point of view in the field of curriculum design, which considers it to be a decision about the four elements of goals, content, method, and evaluation (24). The design of the ideal model of the spiritual curriculum in the elementary school social studies course and its evaluation from the point of view of curriculum experts and relevant teachers have been discussed.

Materials and Methods

The current research is a part of applied research carried out with the field research method. In order to identify and determine the characteristics

of the elements of the spiritual curriculum in the elementary school social studies course, theoretical resources were available in this field. The research community in this section included books, articles, theses, and printed and electronic texts (both domestic and foreign) related to the research subject. In order to collect the information, a sample was used. First, data were analyzed through descriptive analysis and theoretical inference. In the second part, the statistical population included 45 curriculum specialists and 8641 elementary school teachers in Gilan province in the academic year 2014-2015. Due to the limited number of specialists, they were selected as the research sample through random sampling. To select teachers, 360 of them (235 women and 125 men) were selected as the research sample according to the table by Karjesi and Morgan.

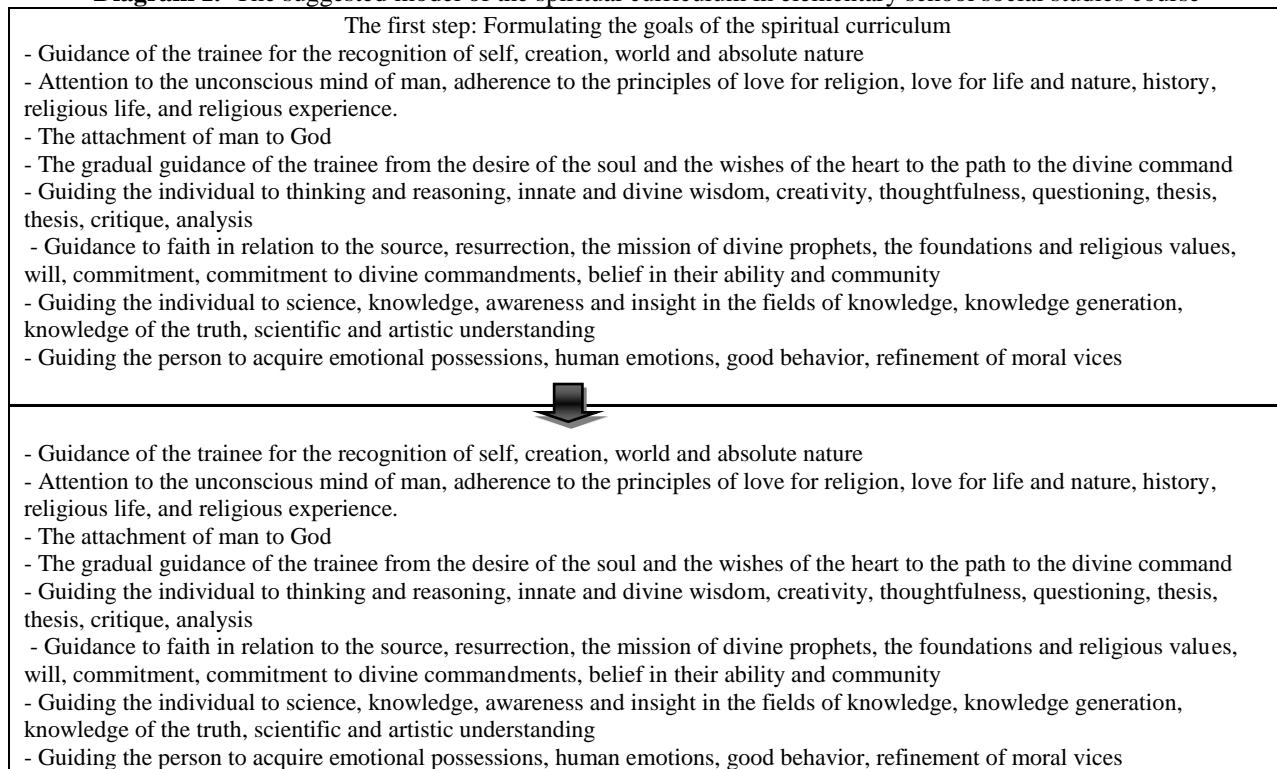
Research instruments

The data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire with 48 items with a five-point Likert scale (from very low "1" to very high "5"). The face and content validity of this questionnaire has been confirmed according to the opinion of the supervisors and advisors and five curriculum experts. Its reliability was calculated by examining the internal consistency of the factors that make up the questionnaire by implementing it on 30 randomly selected curriculum experts using Cronbach's alpha method. As a result, the coefficient (0.86) was obtained for the entire questionnaire, which is acceptable. To analyze the data collected in SPSS version 22 statistical software, descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage distribution table) and inferential statistics (chi-square test) were used.

Results

Considering that in the curriculum planning process, changing one element will affect other elements and what the learners learn, and considering the curriculum as a cycle for producing the curriculum document in the textbooks Curriculum planning in general education has a long history (25). For example, the suggested model for the spiritual curriculum in the elementary school social studies lesson is shown in the diagram.

Diagram 1. The suggested model of the spiritual curriculum in elementary school social studies course



-Learning environment:	-educational tools:	-teaching method:	- Teaching learning activities:	-Indicators of the implementation of the process
Classroom	Textbook poster	Scientific method of individual-group	Creating stories story telling	Educational background rather than educational content
School	Educational movies	Story telling	Completing story	Course curriculum concepts rather than facts
The Neighborhood	Marquette	theater	Painting	Student questions instead of his answers
	Qur'an	group discussion		Thinking of students rather than his knowledge
	sayings of the Imams	Work unit		Intuitive understanding instead of rational reasoning
	Activities tab	Inductive thinking		Intent to develop instead of classified content
		Deductive thinking		Learning process instead of learning products
		Exploratory thinking		Data quality rather than quantity information.
		Descriptive thinking		

Step Four: Curriculum evaluation spiritual

- Incorporation of methods of auto-evaluation with of teacher-centric and process-centric models
- Formative evaluation
- Final evaluation
- Operational evaluation
- Quantitative evaluation
- Qualitative evaluation

Table 2 presents the descriptive indicators related to the desirable elements of the spiritual

curriculum in the elementary school social studies course.

Table 2. Descriptive indicators related to the desirable elements of the spiritual curriculum in the elementary school social studies course

Elements of the curriculum	Groups	Very low		Low		Average		very		Very much	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Target	Teachers	1	0	3	1	17	5	181	50	158	44
	Experts	1	2	1	2	3	7	11	25	29	64
Content	Teachers	4	1	21	6	10	3	159	44	166	46
	Experts	1	2	1	2	5	11	14	31	24	54
Performance	Teachers	1	0	12	3	43	12	119	33	185	52
	Experts	1	2	1	2	5	11	7	16	31	69
assessment	Teachers	9	2	14	4	69	19	129	36	139	39
	Experts	1	2	4	9	5	11	8	18	27	60

Table 3 presents the Chi-square test results to examine the difference between the desired elements of the spiritual curriculum in

the elementary school social studies course from the perspective of curriculum experts and elementary school teachers.

Table 3. Chi-square test results to investigate the difference between the desirable elements of the spiritual curriculum in the elementary school social studies course from the point of view of curriculum experts and elementary school teachers

Elements of the curriculum	The chi-square statistic	Degrees of freedom	Error levels	Conclusion
Target	7.76	4	0.101	Non- significant difference
Content	8.78	4	0.067	Non- significant difference
Performance	2.75	4	0.600	Non- significant difference
assessment	4.43	4	0.351	Non- significant difference

According to Table 2, it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between the distribution of views of two groups, i.e., curriculum experts and primary school teachers, about the elements (goal, content, implementation, and evaluation).

In other words, considering the content of Table 2, it is concluded that more than half of the

teachers and curriculum experts have chosen many options.

Therefore, most of the research samples in both groups regarding evaluating the elements (goal, content, implementation, and evaluation) of the spiritual curriculum model in the elementary school social studies course have favored them.

Discussion

As it was said, in the design of the spiritual curriculum model in the elementary school social studies course, factors such as learner-centered learning theories and the characteristics of learners should be taken into consideration, and how these factors affect the four key elements of the curriculum (purpose, content, implementation, and evaluation) should be considered. Therefore, in response to the first to fourth questions of this research regarding the desirable characteristics of the spiritual curriculum elements in the social studies course of elementary school, the following characteristics can be listed for these four elements:

A-Objectives of the spiritual curriculum: 1- To guide the teacher in order to know oneself, creation, the world and the absolute essence; 2- Paying attention to the subconscious mind of man, adhering to the principles of love for religion, love for life and nature, history, religious life and religious experience; 3- A person's love belonging to God; 4- Gradual guidance of the teacher from the air of the ego and the desires of the heart and being on the path of the divine order; 5- Guiding the teacher to thinking and reasoning, natural and divine reason, creativity, thoughtfulness, questioning, research-oriented, reflection, criticism, analysis; 6- Guiding the teacher to believe in the origin, the resurrection, the mission of the divine prophets, religious foundations and values, will, commitment, commitment to the divine commandments, belief in the ability of oneself and one's society; 7- Guiding the trainer to science, knowledge, awareness and insight in the required fields, production of knowledge, knowledge of the truth of affairs, knowledge, scientific and artistic understanding; 8- Guiding the teacher to acquire sensual virtues, human emotions, pleasant behavior, refinement from moral vices (2).

B-Implementation of spiritual curriculum: the indicators of the implementation process are: 1- educational context instead of educational content; 2- lesson concepts instead of lesson facts; 3- The student's questions instead of his answers; 4- The student's thinking instead of his knowledge; 5- Intuitive understanding instead of logical reasoning; 6- Development intention instead of classified content; 7- The learning

process instead of the learning product; 8- Quality of information instead of quantity of information. The teaching-learning activities in the spiritual curriculum are 1- Creating a story; 2- Story-telling; 3- completing the story; 4- Painting. Appropriate teaching methods in this curriculum are 1- individual-group scientific research method; 2- Story-telling; 3- Demonstration; 4- group discussion; 5- work unit; 6- Inductive thinking; 7- Comparative thinking; 8- exploratory; 9- Descriptive. Appropriate educational tools in the spiritual curriculum are 1- Textbook; 2- Poster; 3- educational film; 4- replica; 5- Quran book; 6- Book of Hadiths of Imams; 7- Activities sheet. The educational environment in this curriculum can include classroom, school, and neighborhood (2).

C-Evaluation of spiritual curriculum: 1- Integration of methods related to self-assessment approach with teacher-oriented and process-oriented evaluation models; 2- formative evaluation; 3- Final evaluation; 4- Functional evaluation; 5- Quantitative evaluation; 6- Qualitative evaluation.

D-The content of the spiritual curriculum: 1- Suitability of the content with the goals; 2- Suitability of the content with the mental, emotional, intellectual and physical conditions of the learners, 3- Suitability of the content with the foundations of religion and values of Islamic-Iranian culture; 4- Appropriateness with individual, social or temporal and spatial human dimensions; 5- Paying attention to the view of Islam regarding the creator; 6- The expression of human creation, the purpose of creation such as worship, promotion of goodness, avoidance of evil and propagation of the message of Islam; 7- Expressing man's relationship with the creator, practical commitment to him and sincerity; 8- Expressing human relationships with others that will spread justice, pay attention to human life and dignity, be wise, develop morals and show kindness; 9- Expressing the relationship between man and the environment in such a way as to emphasize the role of the Caliph of God; 10- showing the acquisition of self-improvement or growth to improve oneself and gain experience from past mistakes; 11- Increasing the sense of responsibility or evaluating one's role; 12- Islamic habits that lead to Islamic practice (2).

The findings of this research on the desirable features of the four elements (goal, content, implementation and evaluation) of the spiritual curriculum in the social studies course of elementary school with the results of researches that in formulating the goals of the spiritual curriculum pay attention to the relationship between man and nature, knowledge of the universe and accuracy in natural phenomena, including Irannejad et al. (12) creating belief in God Almighty and learning religious rituals, showing respect to mankind, respecting moral actions and virtues and paying attention to the environment, cultivating all human aspects, patriotism, cultivating identity and unity National in the learners in the research of Yarmohamedian et al. (11), attention to the components of spirituality from the cognitive dimension in the research of Masouminejad (26) and in the selection and organization of the content of the spiritual curriculum to include the approach of problem solving and integration and the exchange of learning experiences and Presenting moral puzzles according to Shabani (21), identifying and adhering to ethics in Shamshiri research (27), Kazem and Youssef (19), Goodleaf (6), Tatang (28), Bowman and Small (16), Duffy (7), Heim-Brook (29) has emphasized that it is consistent.

The findings of this research regarding the emphasis on the learning process instead of the learning product and the use of active teaching methods such as story-telling, student-centered and problem-centered methods, paying attention to the individual differences of students in the process of teaching-learning, group discussion, conducting research, role-playing, work unit, cooperation and inductive thinking by Yarmohamedian et al. (11), Irannejad (12), Shabani (21), Kazem and Youssef (19), Luvik (20), Bowman and Small (16), Daniliuk et al. (8), King (23). Zohar and Marshall (22) align with implementing the spiritual curriculum. The evaluation method in the spiritual curriculum in the elementary school social studies course, it is emphasized the use of various evaluation methods, which is in line with the results of Irannejad's research (12) regarding the use of oral and written, functional, and cognitive tests, as well as paying attention to opinions, beliefs, and attitudes. Students' behaviors and performance during Shabani's evaluation (21) are consistent.

In addition, the findings of this research regarding the fifth question showed that the model of the spiritual curriculum in the elementary school social studies course was favorable from the point of view of curriculum specialists and elementary school teachers, and there is no significant difference between the views of these two groups. In the investigations carried out in the background of research related to the research topic, it was found that previous researchers have not conducted independent research to present a spiritual curriculum model in the social studies course and evaluate it from the point of view of curriculum experts and elementary school teachers so that this finding can be confirmed.

Directly compared with their results, but since the characteristics of each of the four elements of the spiritual curriculum (goal, content, implementation, and evaluation) in this research were extracted from the theoretical bases related to the subject of the research, it can be said that this finding is the results of the mentioned researches, as well as the results of other researches that have been conducted regarding spiritual education and spiritual curriculum, including; Izadi et al. (10), Mizani (14), Baghgoli (15), Maleki (18), Khaleghikhah and Masoudi (30), Clifford (31), NG (13), Duffy (7), Wright (17), because, in all these researches, the spiritual aspects of the learners are developed, the teacher is guided in the path of the divine order and freed from the bondage of the ego and the desires of the heart, the centrality of faith and reason in the curriculum, the attention of the learner to the super-material and worldly aspects of life. Furthermore, curriculum design in harmony with human nature has been considered.

In explaining this finding, it can be said that the development of spirituality and spiritual literacy of students should be emphasized as an essential priority in primary school curricula because the spiritual approach has caused a fundamental change in the teaching-learning processes of schools and all those present in the school (students, It completely involves teachers, assistants, administrators and even parents of students) (32). In addition, cultivating the spiritual dimension in students is also essential from the point of view that they learn to treat other classmates and their teacher with respect in

the classroom environment, to be open to criticism, and to tolerate hearing different and sometimes conflicting or opposing opinions. have their own; Trust in God and ask Him for help in the hardships and difficulties of education, be honest, kind-hearted and compassionate, use abilities such as thinking, creativity, and imagination that God has gifted to them, respect moral and human principles and values. Furthermore, to have dignity, to evaluate their actions and behavior, distance themselves from moral vices and adorn themselves with moral virtues, consider themselves a part of the world of creation, and consciously and diligently strive to make it more beautiful and prosperous and use their abilities to serve their society (2).

In the current research, curriculum elements are limited to four primary and essential (goal, content, implementation, and evaluation), which

are agreed upon by curriculum experts. Also, among the different educational courses and taking into account the importance of the introductory course in teaching children and the role of the social studies course in nurturing the social dimension of students, the design of the spiritual curriculum model is limited to the elementary school social studies course. Therefore, other researchers are suggested to consider the characteristics of students in other academic courses to design a spiritual curriculum model in the social studies course of other academic courses (secondary).

Conclusion

According to the results, it is possible to use the ideal model of the spiritual curriculum in the social studies course to cultivate spirituality in primary school students.

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