

# The Evaluation of Fourth Grade's Farsi Book with Attention to Teach Life Skills in Academic Year of 2012-2013

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## Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the basic content of fourth grade's Farsi book in teaching life skills. The population consisted of fourth grade's Farsi book in academic year of 2013-2012. The sample was equal to the population. The research method was descriptive and content analysis. The unit of analysis was sentence. The assessment tool was the life skills categories checklist; its validity was estimated 0.89. The descriptive statistics, table, chart, and percentage were used for analyzing the data. The results indicated that eight life skills were included in fourth grade's Farsi book: community cognition and social relations training (14.7%), thinking (creative - critical) training (9.9%), the skill of communicating with others (15.7%), the training of value cognition (19.8%), decision making training (1.7%), teaching of coping with emotions and psychological stress (7.1%), teaching the cognition of abilities (5.1%), physical health teaching (5.6%).

**Keywords:** life skills, thinking skills, value cognition skill, decision-making skill, coping with emotions and psychological stress

## Introduction

The human being is a potential evolving existence. His internal forces do not appear spontaneously unless necessary conditions are provided for it. Learning is necessary for achieving talents and abilities. The education of human is a necessity to achieve the perfect stage. Education is one of the basic human rights (Mohammadkhani, 2004).

The effect of education on personal and social behavior and structure of society is clear. Today, the growing need of community for education has attracted the attention of politicians

and planners to this system. The rapid growth of population and increasing demands for education has caused the community to devote substantial resources to this sector. Every community needs education for survival. If the people of a society are unable to agree on common goals and specific actions, they will not live in peace with each other in long time.

Creating positive changes in behaviors, knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes of people is the main purpose of education. In addition to the school in which formal education takes place, however, individuals and other institutions of society such as parents and other family members, friends, religious associations, mass media particularly radio and television, and publications contribute in learning, changes in behavior, and informal education.

School is a place that teaches people the approved practices of community. It is necessary that special attention is paid to all of its facilities, so that it will be successful in the process of training. Experience and theoretical skills are the results of education; it is divided into formal and informal education. The present study aims to determine what kinds of skills are offered to students in fourth and fifth grade's Farsi book so that they enjoy their social life.

The experts in education consider the curriculum as the heart of educational system. The curriculum is like a center that other educational factors rotate around it and become significant. The curriculum is composed of elements; of which the content of curriculum is an important element (Tarmyan, 2000).

Many studies show that many of health problems and behavioral disorders have emotional and psychosocial roots. Furthermore, other studies state the low self-esteem, inability to express emotions, and lack of communication skills lead to many individual problems such as harmful drug use, delinquency, dangerous sex, risky behavior, and violence. The World Health Organization has provided life skills training program for promoting mental health and preventing mental - social disorders. School is one of the most powerful entities after the family; and it can have a profound effect on children and teenagers. Considering the effect of textbook content on students' learning and behavior and evaluating the fourth grade's Farsi book in terms of teaching life skills, the researcher aims to answer the following questions:

- How is the content of fourth grade's Farsi book in teaching some life skills?
- How much the planners and authors of fourth grade's Farsi book have been able to consider the different life skills?

The basic research questions

For answering to the main question, detailed questions are as follows:

- 1 – How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of ability cognition?
- 2- How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of family , moral, and religious values?
- 3- How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of communicating with others?
- 4- How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of familiarity with the concept of community and social relationships?
- 5- How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of thinking-creatively and critically- to students?
- 6- How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of decision-making to students?
- 7- How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of coping with emotions and stress to students?
- 8- How much the fourth grade's Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of physical health to students?

### **The classification of life skills**

After reviewing the developmental theories related to the cognitive, emotional, moral, intellectual, physical, psychological, social, cognitive, and occupational factors, Brukes achieved to 305 life skills. Finally, he divided them to four categories that are appropriate for different ages:

- 1 – The skills are related to interpersonal relationships - human relationships
- 2 – The skills related to problem solving - decision making
- 3 – The skills related to physical health - health maintenance
- 4 – The skills related to identity development - purpose in life

According to Brukes- quoted by Ginter (1999)- these classes are related together and have dynamic nature. So that, changes in one of the areas and dimensions may have positive or negative impact on other areas. In one of the educational resources in Iran, a variety of life skills has been classified. This classification is more general than UNICEF's skills classification and includes:

- 1 - decision-making skills
- 2 – Problem-solving Skills
- 3 - creative thinking skills
- 4 - Critical Thinking Skills
- 5 - effective communication skills
- 6 - self recognition
- 7 - Empathy
- 8 - coping with emotional and mental stress. "(Tarmyan, 2000)

Derived from the series of life teaching to youth, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has classified the life skills as follows:

- 1 – The recognition of abilities (self-recognition)
- 2 - Personal, family, and social recognition
- 3 - Familiarity with appropriate communication
- 4 - Familiarity with communication with others
- 5 - Familiarity with the concept of community and social relationships
- 6 – The determination of life objectives
- 7 – The decision-making ability
- 8 – The ability to avoid from violence
- 9 - Familiarity with physical and mental health (United Nations Children's Fund, translated in 2000).

### **Materials and Methods**

This study analyzed the content of the fourth-grade Farsi book in terms of teaching life skills. The method of descriptive study is content analysis. "Content analysis is a research method that describes systematically and objectively the manifest content, communications, and the characteristics of messages. In this method, the messages or information are coded on a regular basis. They are classified in a way that the researcher is able to quantitatively analyze them." (Delavar, 2011). The unit of analysis in this study is sentence. A sentence or phrase states a specific concept or idea and has been become quantity by the classification method. During the study and reviewing the books has authored on life skills, various categories were obtained for life skills. Based on the guide of teaching life skills is designed by the UNICEF, each category was defined operationally and the markers representing each of the skills were

identified. Three primary school teachers with valuable experience in teaching and also teaching the fourth grade were invited. Then, the list of extracted components was given to teachers. All sentences of fourth-grade's Farsi book were given to teachers. They were asked to indicate their views on sentences by marking the check-list.

### **The population**

The fourth-grade's Farsi book has been taught in 2013-2012 and includes texts, exercises, questions, writing, Persian grammar, and images.

The sample and sampling method

The sample is equal to study population. The sample size calculation has not been done here. All sentences of fourth-grade Farsi books such as texts, images, questions, and grammar has been studied in terms of life skills training.

### **The data collection method**

The unit of content analysis in this study is sentence. The census was used to measure frequencies. This means that every time an evidence of a category was observed, it was considered a frequency for the category. For example, recognizing the capabilities was a category. The level of attention to self-recognition was determined by counting the frequency of sentences associated with it such as the self-reliance, self-attention, and understanding the talents.

### **The validity and reliability of research tool**

In the content analysis, it is desirable that two or more individuals code the same messages independently and the reliability of their activities will be assessed. The checklist of categories was given to various people and experts to confirm their validity to see if this checklist of categories has a repeatability feature? In other words, in case of repeating the study, similar results can be achieved?

$$CR = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

Or

$$CR = \frac{\text{Agreed}}{\text{All}} \times 100$$

$$\text{categories}$$

The validity was determined using this formula; where M is the agreed number in the two coding. 1N is the number of first code and 2N is the codes in the second study. One hundred sentences were investigated in this content analysis. The differences in classification were 11 cases; its validity was obtained as follows:

$$CR = \frac{2 \times 89}{100 + 100} = 0/89$$

The following formula was used for obtaining the final coefficient of jury's opinion.

$$p_i = \frac{p_o - p_e}{1 - p_e} \Rightarrow p_i = \frac{\text{Expected agreement percent} - \text{observed agreement percent}}{\text{Expected agreement percent} - 1}$$

In his formula, the  $p_o$  has been calculated previously and the number of 0.89 was obtained. For finding  $p_e$  , the following has been done.

Categories	Frequency	The ratio of all topics
Recognition of abilities	9	9%
Family Values	7	7%
Moral values	10	0.10
Religious values	8	8%
Communicate with others	12	0.12
The concept of community	20	0.20
Thinking	7	7%
Decision-making	4	4%
Emotion	5	5%
Physical health	7	7%
Non-relevant to training	11	0.11

$$p_i = \frac{0.89 - 0.11}{1 - 0.11} = 0.88$$

The reliability (0.88) is a high coefficient and is the agreed coefficient between the judges.

**The method of data analysis**

The descriptive statistics, frequency tables, graphs, and percentage was used for investigating the research questions. There was not any sample; therefore, the parametric test has not been conducted.

**Results**

Table 1: The percentage and frequency distribution of fourth-grade’s Farsi book content in terms of teaching life skills

	Related to teaching life skills	UUnrelated to teaching life skills	Toatal
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Frequency	2012	516	2528
Percentage	79.6	20.4	100

Table 2: The percentage and frequency distribution of life skills categories in fourth-grade’s Farsi book in 2013-2012

Components	Recognition of abilities	Recognition of values			Communicating with others	Social responsibility	Creative thinking	Decision making	Coping with stress	Physical health	Not teaching the life skills	Total
		Family	Moral	Religious								
Frequency	129	53	329	119	398	370	251	43	179	141	516	2528
Percentage	5.1	21	13	4.7	15.7	14.7	9.9	1.7	7.1	5.6	20.4	100

		19.8								
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**Discussion and Conclusion:**

A number of 2,528 fourth-grade’s Farsi book’s sentences, pictures, and phrases were investigated in the present study. A number of 2012 cases were related to teaching the life skills and 516 sentences were related to the lack of life skills teaching. The most frequently recorded skill was related to the communicating effectively with others (398 sentences); and the least recorded skill was related to decision-making.

The main question: How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching the life skills?

In response to the research question- according to the Table 1.4- it is determined that from the total of 2528 sentences recorded in the book, a number of 2012 sentences (79.6%) is related to the teaching of life skills and 516 sentences (20.4) is not related to the teaching of life skills.

1 – How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of ability cognition? From the total of 2012 sentences related to the teaching of life skills, 129 sentences (5.1%) were about the teaching of ability cognition.

2- How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of family , moral, and religious values?

According to the Table 2.4, 501 sentences (19.8 %) are related to the teaching of values. A number of 53 (2.1%), 329 (13%), and 119 (4.7%) sentences are about family values, moral values, and religious values, respectively.

3- How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of communicating with others?

According to Table 2.4, 398 sentences (15.7%) are about communicating with others.

4- How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of familiarity with the concept of community and social relationships?

Table 2.4 shows that 370 sentences (14.7%) are about teaching this skill.

5- How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of thinking-creatively and critically- to students?

Table 2.4 shows that 251 (9.9%) sentences are related to teaching of this skill.

6- How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of decision-making to students?

According to Table 2.4,43 sentences (1.7%) are related to teaching of decision-making.

7- How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of coping with emotions and stress to students?

Regarding Table2.4, 179 (7.1%) sentences are about teaching of coping with emotions and stress.

8- How much the fourth grade’s Farsi Book has paid attention to teaching of physical health to students?

Table 2.4 shows that 141 (5.6%) sentences are about teaching of physical health.

Overall, the fourth-grade’s Farsi book has considered the teaching of life skills; it has given the priority to preparing students for life.

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