

The Image of Women in the Books of National and Civic Education of Basic Stage in Jordan

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the image of women in the books of national and civic education of basic education in Jordan. To achieve the purpose of the study, content analysis was utilized. Results of the study indicated that the woman's image in these books is traditional and atypical because of her low and weak participation in public jobs, restricted participation in traditional jobs, restriction of her roles in the home, limited positive characterization of her roles, and her appearance as a follower and helper to men. Finally, the significance of this study lies in its contribution to educational reforms related to woman image and textbooks.

Keywords: image of women, national and civic education, basic stage, Jordan

Introduction

The woman issue has attained the attention of philosophers and thinkers throughout the ages. There have been wide debates about the different issues related to this topic. Probably, the most important controversial issues about this type are the nature and image of the woman. In other words, to what extent the woman can play roles equivalent to those of the man; and whether or not there is a bias against the woman, and of what nature? Furthermore, does this pose an obstacle before the woman; and what are the reflections of this on the community? Subsequently, to what extent could she be equal to the man?

The variation of the woman image from society to another is due to many factors. Some factors are religious, cultural or social, which is unique to each community. The ancient Egyptian civilization granted the woman an important role and special status related to familial, societal, and political rights. Quite contrary was the woman image in the ancient Mesopotamia civilization, where the woman was owned by the man (Taha, 2004).

On the one hand, Islam greatly honored care for the woman; the reward for raising her by her parents is deliverance from Hell. Islam reassured her rights in her different roles as a daughter, sister, mother or wife. It guaranteed to her the right to learn, own freely, select the husband, the right in inheritance, the right to work within the Shari control; and equality between her and the man in the Shari tasks and duties, save those concerning her feminine nature (Al-Tamimi & Khawalda, 2011). Although Islam had given the woman all these rights, and more, we find the Arabian woman is still living a complicated reality because of many habits and traditions, as well as misunderstandings in many of the religious texts. The image is still traditional and typical; she has only simple rights; her roles, in many circumstances, are limited to home and motherhood; and she is deprived of many of other roles, particularly, the political, economic and social role (Al-Hothali, 2011).

Many Arab countries are faced with the urgent need to alter the woman's image, in general, and the Arabian woman, in particular; to keep pace with the international development and reformative trends concerning the roles of the woman and upgrading her status and her participation in different roles. Many of these countries sought to increase attention to the woman and raise her status in many ways. The ways included increasing her education opportunities, making her aware of her various rights, encouraging her to practice these rights, and increasing chances for her to enter the labor market (Al-Kharouf & Qamash, 2005).

There was a clear positive response in Jordan, in particular, to these trends. In this regard, many of the civil society institutions are keen to give the woman her rights and enable her to practice political and social rights. They regarded the woman equal to the man in both the rights and duties; the effective laws ensured her the rights of work, education, and equal opportunities to the man (Al-Khoza'ie, 2006).

To deal with this issue, attention was shifted to the educational institutions, being one of the important tools of change in communities, on the one hand, and because the textbook plays another important role in this aspect with regard to the formation of the mentality and thought of the learner. The textbook provides

culture, knowledge and value, which will vitally contribute to the formation of the learner's attitudes toward various issues (Burner, 2006; Nasr, 2013; Otoom, 2014).

Accordingly, the image of the woman in the textbook drew the attention of many researchers to developing these books, improving them and eliminating any bias against the woman in these books; as a step in the right way to play her role and assume her suitable position in different development types, as well as improve her image.

In this aspect, Qark, Agton, Frechette and Kellev (2005) conducted a study aimed to identify the image of the woman in a sample of history books in the USA since the 1960s. The results showed that the woman did not attain the status or attention which the man had in those books. Schoeman (2009) conducted a study aimed at identifying the image of the woman in the history books in South Africa. The study revealed that in spite of the wide talks about equality between the man and the woman, the man is given the main role, larger than that of the woman. Furthermore, the study demonstrated men as the only decision makers. Qadiri and Ofouneh (2015) conducted a study on the Palestinian curriculum, through the content analysis of the Arabic language, science, mathematics and history textbooks. The study results showed the typical image of the woman.

Woyshnner and Schocker (2015) conducted a study aimed at identifying the image of the woman in the history books at the secondary stage of education. The results showed that the black woman in those books is marginalized, not given any effective role in any field or area. Williams & Bennett (2016) conducted a study aimed at identifying the image of the woman in the history books in the United States of America; and to what extent such an image changed from one era to another. The study showed a typical image of the woman, and most often characterized by being a follower of or dependent on the man; and that such an image had not changed over time. The study further showed a significant improvement in the books concerning the emphasis on the woman's rights.

It is obvious that the image of the woman, whether locally or internationally, is still negative and she is being regarded as a follower of the man. This may be due to the fact that many societies are still regarded as masculine rather than feminine ones.

Research Problem

This study was conducted to explore the woman's role in the national and civic education textbooks in Jordan, the trends concerning the woman shaped by these books, in addition to the visual image of the woman. Finally, it also aimed to

configure the way learners will look at the woman, and how to deal with her in future. Therefore, this study attempted to reveal the image of the woman in the national education and civics textbooks, especially, due to the pivotal role of these books in addressing and rooting the learners' attitudes toward different societal issues. In other words, the study attempted to answer the following question: What is the woman's image (traditional, typical) in the national and civic education textbooks?

Significance of Research

The importance of this study lies in the importance of the topic it addresses, due to the multiple effects of this topic on the community of various groups and categories; and due to the influence of this image, demonstrated by the books, on the learners and their future attitudes toward the woman. It is going to be important to the teachers of these subjects, in terms of the extent of their use of the appropriate strategies in illustrating the image of the wife in the textbooks. It also reveals the strategies employed by the authors of the books and curriculum-makers in addressing the changes in the Jordanian community, and the international calls seeking equality between the man and woman.

Research Methodology

General Background of Research

The presented study aimed at identifying the image of the woman in the national and civic education textbooks. To achieve this objective, content analysis was employed. Through these procedures, the text could be explained and described, and the attitudes of the writer to the study topic would also be identified. Subsequently, the image of the woman will be identified, as stated in the study sample of the textbooks, as compared with the image of the man.

Instrument and Procedures

A questionnaire was constructed to analyze the textbooks of the national and civic education. The aim of this questionnaire was to define the image of the woman through obtaining what describes the woman in the textbooks contents, in the form of one single word, sentence or phrase; calculate their frequency and prevalence in the content, as opposed to what describes the man. Construction of this questionnaire was based on a number of previous studies such as Al-Ban'ali (2009) and Mazil (1998).

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the researcher presented it to a number of professors. The recommendations of the professors focused on deleting the dimension concerning the relation of the woman to sex, and other related particulars, such as makeup, frequency of saloon visits, and interest in fashions. The instrument reliability was confirmed by selecting a random unit from the textbooks sample, and was analyzed by the researcher and one of the educational supervisors, in the light of the applicable analysis rules and the study objectives. The reliability coefficient was found to be 80%.

Study Population

The subject of the study comprised 12 textbooks representing the secondary stages from the 5th grade to the 10th grade in Jordan. In addition, two textbooks (covering the civic and national subjects) were chosen for each grade. These textbooks were used by all students in Jordan studying these grades and subjects.

Results and Discussion

The first dimension is about the jobs or professions occupied by the woman as opposed to those of the man.

The related data were collected by reading the study sample textbooks, monitoring the jobs entrusted to the woman and their frequencies, as well as those of the man. Then, they were categorized into traditional occupations and professions, such as motherhood, home care, nursing, sewing, teaching, secretariat; and contemporary jobs and professions, such as political position (e.g. ministers), medicine, engineering, judicature, and law. Table 1 illustrates these results.

Table 1. Jobs and professions occupied by men and women

| JOB Book | Traditional Jobs and Professions | | | Non-Traditional Jobs and Professions | | | Total Job Number | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|---|------|--------------------------------------|----|------|------------------|----|------|
| | F | M | Tot. | F | M | Tot. | F | M | Tot. |
| Fifth | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 67 | 72 | 7 | 68 | 75 |
| Sixth | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Seventh | 8 | 3 | 11 | 8 | 28 | 36 | 16 | 31 | 47 |
| Eighth | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 31 | 33 | 6 | 34 | 40 |
| Nineth | 5 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 19 | 23 | 9 | 24 | 33 |
| Tenth | 3 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 3 | 16 | 19 |

| JOB Book | Traditional Jobs and Professions | | | Non-Traditional Jobs and Professions | | | Total Job Number | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|------|------|--------------------------------------|-------|------|------------------|-------|------|
| | F | M | Tot. | F | M | Tot. | F | M | Tot. |
| Total | 23 | 15 | 38 | 19 | 161 | 180 | 42 | 176 | 218 |
| Percentage | 60 | 39.4 | 100 | 10.55 | 89.42 | 100 | 19.26 | 80.73 | 100 |

Table 1 shows that the total frequencies of the jobs or professions occupied by women were 42 jobs or professions (19.26%), as opposed to 176 jobs or professions (80.73%) occupied by men. Furthermore, women occupied 19 non-traditional jobs (10.55%) as compared to 161 non-traditional jobs or professions (89.42%) occupied by men. We further found that the total number of the traditional jobs or professions occupied by women were 23 jobs, whereas the total number of the traditional jobs or professions occupied by men was 15 jobs or professions (39.4%). These results show that these books highlighted the role of the man as more participant in the public jobs than that of the woman, indicative of the limitation of the woman's role in jobs or professions.

This trend was further ascertained by the old residues in the mind of the man, his thoughts and attitudes, who does not want to be equal to the woman, and still prefers the woman to remain dependent on the man in different life affairs (Halwani, 2005).

Second dimension. This dimension is about the role of the woman as depicted in the content of the woman photographs or drawings in these textbooks.

The researcher analyzed all the photographic pictures or drawings concerning the roles of the man and the woman. Thereafter, they were sorted into two sections based on their contents: photographs and drawings showing the woman in different roles outside the home, participating in social activities, and those showing the woman in limited roles inside the home. Table 2 shows the results of this dimension.

Table 2. Frequencies of the woman and man photographs inside and outside the home

| Role Grade | Outside the Home | | | Inside the Home | | | Total Frequencies | | |
|------------|------------------|---|------|-----------------|---|------|-------------------|---|------|
| | M | F | Tot. | M | F | Tot. | M | F | Tot. |
| Fifth | 24 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 24 |
| Sixth | 4 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 7 |

| Role Grade | Outside the Home | | | Inside the Home | | | Total Frequencies | | |
|------------|------------------|-------|------|-----------------|-------|------|-------------------|-------|------|
| | M | F | Tot. | M | F | Tot. | M | F | Tot. |
| Seventh | 23 | 1 | 24 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 23 | 2 | 25 |
| Eighth | 16 | 5 | 21 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 17 | 9 | 26 |
| Nineth | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Tenth | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 69 | 9 | 78 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 71 | 14 | 85 |
| Percentage | 88.6 | 11.58 | 100 | 16.66 | 83.33 | 100 | 83.52 | 16.47 | 100 |

Table 2 shows that there were 14 (16.47%) photos depicting the woman in social roles both outside and inside the home, as opposed to 71 photos of the man (83.52%). Meanwhile, there were 5 photos (83.31%) showing the woman in social roles inside the home as opposed to two photos only of the man (16.66%). This implies a clear bias against the woman by restricting the man's share, in general, in practicing her role, and limiting her role to the traditional one, confined to being inside the home. This negatively influences the females who study these textbooks, because it refers to the woman's limited role and being restricted to the work inside the home.

Third dimension. This dimension is allocated to the personal traits of the woman as opposed to those of the man.

By personal traits we mean the descriptions of both the woman and the man in the textbooks of the study sample. These descriptions were monitored and assorted to discriminate those concerning the woman or the man. Then they were divided into positive traits, such as active, beautiful, generous, or fair, and negative, such as weak, corrupt, or lazy. Table 3 illustrates these results.

Table 3. Personal traits of males and females

| Personal Traits Grade | Positive Traits | | Negative Traits | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|---|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Fifth | 3 | 46 | 0 | 0 |
| Sixth | 2 | 44 | 0 | 0 |
| Seventh | 2 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Eighth | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Nineth | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Tenth | 4 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Total | 15 | 82 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 15.46 | 84.53 | 0 | 0 |

Table 3 shows that there are 15 traits (15.46%) depicting the woman in the study sample as opposed to 82 traits of the man (84.53%). This is an apparent bias of the books and their view of the man, as they depict him in a more positive way than the woman, who is shown in the textbook sample in a limited number of positive traits. Again, this affects the learner by instilling in his/her mind a more positive image of the man than the woman.

Fourth dimension. This dimension concerns the nature of the relation between the man and the woman.

Meaning, is the main personality for the man and the secondary for the woman, or vice versa? The data related to this dimension were collected from the readings of the sample textbooks, and monitoring, many times, the words indicating the relation of the man with the woman, as a mother, sister or wife, or the relation of the woman with the man, as a father, husband or brother (Table 4).

Table 4. The main roles played in the relations between the man and the woman

| Nature of the Relation Grade | Relation of the Woman with the Man | | | Relation of the Man with the Woman | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|------|------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | Mother | Sister | Wife | Father | Brother | Husband |
| Fifth | 1 | 1 | 4 | - | - | - |
| Sixth | 9 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - |
| Seventh | - | - | 4 | - | - | - |
| Eighth | - | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| Nineth | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Tenth | 8 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - |
| Total | 18 | 4 | 13 | - | - | - |

The above table shows that the main role or the main (pivotal) personality in the nature of the relation between the man and the woman is the man, with the total of 35 times (100%). Meanwhile, the books were “empty” of any reference to a relation where the woman is the main (pivotal) personality. This ensures that the reference to the woman in the relation nature between the man and the woman is secondary, while emphasizing the pivotal status of the man in this relation, and his central role. Once again, this is another area of the failure of the study sample books in equalization between the man and the woman in the nature of the relation between both of them. This was supported by the study of Williams and Bennett (2016), showing that the woman appears, many times, in a negative, low image, and is given less importance than the man.

Fifth dimension. This dimension is about the representation degree of both the woman and the man in the study textbooks, based on mentioning the names that are explicitly referring to them.

To obtain the data of this dimension, the study sample textbooks were read to find the occurrence of the names concerning femininity and masculinity. The following table illustrates the results.

Table 5. Representation degrees of the male and female in the textbooks

| Personality Book | Names Mentioned in the Textbooks. | | Total |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| | Personality Types | | |
| | F | M | |
| Fifth | 5 | 19 | 24 |
| Sixth | 6 | 42 | 51 |
| Seventh | 3 | 31 | 34 |
| Eighth | 2 | 32 | 24 |
| Nineth | 1 | 16 | 17 |
| Tenth | 0 | 23 | 23 |
| Total | 20 | 163 | 183 |
| Percentage | 10.93 | 89.07 | 100 |

Table 5 indicates that the feminine names mentioned in the sample textbooks were 20 personalities (10.92%), as compared to 163 names indicating the man (89.07%); a clear deviation in favor of the masculine names. The man accounted for most of the names, which negatively influences the learners, ingraining in their brains the strong and large presence of the man at the expense of the woman. This, in turn, provides a new impression, in addition to those previously mentioned, and reinforces the former impressions that the woman has no presence and no contribution worth mentioning.

Further, a qualitative part was used in this study to enrich its qualitative nature. Two authors (a man and a woman) of the textbooks under study were interviewed to question the trends found in the textbooks. The authors agreed that these trends are normal and expected because of the traditions of society along with its habits. The authors further said that textbooks should relate to the needs and traditions of society.

Based on the above discussion, the following recommendations are suggested: first, the necessity of adopting clear policies at all the levels of the decision makers in the educational institutions toward equality between the man and the woman; second, revision of the textbooks by specialized committees before adopting them,

to make sure that they do not contain any bias feature in favor of the man at the expense of the woman; third, adoption of specific mechanisms that contribute to highlighting the actual role of the woman, her bright image and status in the community, through the contents of the textbooks, photographs and drawings; fourth, conducting similar studies that explore the image of the woman in other courses and grades different from those of the study sample.

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