THE ROLE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES CONSERVATION IN EDUCATIONAL TEXTBOOKS OF SOCIAL AND NATIONAL EDUCATION IN BASIC STAGE IN JORDAN

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the role of Jordanian educational curricula in promoting and preserving the various forms of Jordanian cultural heritage. By adopting the approach of content analysis, it primarily examines the textbooks of the subject "social and national education" for the grades 4-10 in the Basic Education Stage to evaluate their role in educating students about cultural heritage and raising their awareness of its value. The study reveals that the textbooks under investigation have failed to educate students about how to deal with their cultural heritage and how to preserve it, particularly against the various threats and abuses that endanger it. This demonstrates the urgent need to integrate heritage education in school curricula as a significant pedagogical force in order to enhance and enrich students' understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Cultural heritage; Education; Social and national textbooks; Jordan

Introduction

Cultural heritage represents a significant component of a people's cultural and national identity. It provides people with a sense of unity and belonging and helps them understand who they are as well as make sense of the world in which they live in. Cultural heritage is what we live with today and what we pass on to the future generations [1]. In other words, it plays a significant role in constructing and maintaining a people's collective identity. Indeed, the interest in cultural heritage does not imply a retreat to the past but rather functions as a foundation for the present and future. This clearly demonstrates the complex and intertwined relationship between cultural heritage and sustainable development as the two go hand in hand. However, cultural heritage could only function as a conduit of sustainable development through appropriate education in order to raise awareness of its prominence [2, 3]. The relationship between cultural heritage and educational programs has become essential in the world to bridge heritage, conservation, and understanding of history and to graduate qualified students in the sphere of education with high self-esteem associated with internal self-confidence [4, 5].

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Jordan is endowed with various forms of valuable and irreplaceable forms of cultural heritage. There is an urgent need to protect it against the imminent threats of damage and destruction. These cultural and symbolic components contribute greatly to defining who we are, and thus to constructing our collective identity. They manifest themselves in various social practices, representations experiences, ideologies, and skills [6].

Education is the way for the survival of communities and its continuity, and it is a mean to its progress and development [7]. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society [8]. In the current knowledge-based economy, the main concern of educators is the children and how parents and educators can help them be well-prepared for this 21st century requirements. It is not enough to prepare them academically, and thus school should prepare students for life. Our children need to be 'information literate' by enhancing their ability to read, search, find, critique and apply the information in their daily life [9]. There is also a proliferation of researches arguing for effective teaching strategies on cultural heritage within the schools' formal curriculum. However, effective ways of integrating local heritage in the Basic Education subjects remain sparse [2]. For example, *Smith (2011)* found out that using heritage place and landscape analysis in teaching history is more effective as students clearly see their own histories as closely linked to and expressed through attachment to the place [10].

The educational system in any society is assumed with a noble mission of preparing and empowering youth through an array of educational and social experience. The education system in Jordan, for example, continually strives to provide sound and proper knowledge and skills necessary for learning and growth and to contribute fully to the required nurturing and caring for youth" [11-13].

One of the main topics covered in textbooks of social and national education in Jordan is cultural heritage. This is considered a timely topic due to the centrality of cultural heritage in constructing our collective identities. However, the type of knowledge and the way it is introduced to students indicate a failing strategy and policy. As will be discussed throughout this study, educational textbooks do not, to a large extent, equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with the various forms of cultural heritage and ways of protecting them.

Study Problem and Questions

One could easily notice the various forms of irresponsible practices by people throughout Jordan in dealing with the various forms of cultural heritage. This represents a serious problem that is keen to rise in the future. Some of these practices, particularly those related to archaeological sites and other forms of tangible heritage, attest to the urgent need to combat this alarming practice. The following narrative, collected by the authors, sums up a wide range of such common practices:

A Jordanian family visited a museum in the US and while touring it, the children wanted to touch some of the displayed archaeological artefacts, the museum employee told them that they could not and they conformed to that. The same family visited a museum in Jordan and the same request was made by the children. The museum employee responded "sure." The father told him: "no need because they might break them"; the same employee added "so what? no worries. Let the kids enjoy it and have fun. Whatever breaks can be easily fixed.

Such story illustrates the lack of awareness among most common people in Jordan of the value of archaeological artifacts. It also demonstrates the fact the most museum employees lack the necessary skills and education of how to deal with artifacts and other materials displayed in museums.

Another widespread practice in Jordan is that visitors of archaeological sites, university and school students in particular, try to document their visit by writing personal things on the walls, stones and other parts of the site such as their names, date of visit, their phone numbers and other details. Moreover, one of the main threats that archaeological sites face are night robbers and excavators who always look for artifacts and other findings to sell in the black market or to traffic illicitly. Generally, the illicit antiquities trade in the region is composed of a diverse complex population of participants; however, a simple underlying structure is revealed based on specific geographical, political, economic, and cultural rules. The flexible network structures explain the variability observed within the trade, as well as provide the basis behind ongoing debates about the roles of organized crime, terrorism, and the Internet in antiquities trafficking [14].

One of the main reasons behind these and other irresponsible practices is the failure of the educational system in educating students about the importance of the various forms of cultural heritage for their cultural and national identity, as well as for the development of the country. Books of social and national education, under investigation, lack the necessary topics and themes to raise awareness among students and to promote respect for cultural heritage inside and outside classroom. It is highly important for the student to define the illicit antiquities, and to learn that the theft of culture and the extinction of archaeology is a serious crime [15-17].

Educational curricula at all levels are entitled with the mission to deepen the full responsibility of every citizen for the assets of heritage. Misuse will ultimately hinder the progress of the society as it reflects an undesirable image of the Jordanian citizen. The formal educational system is vital to combat such irresponsible practices. In this regard, there is a huge responsibility on the shoulders of teachers who teach the subject of social and national education.

Based on the above, this study aims to examine and evaluate the content of books of social and national education in the basic stage in terms of their inclusion and discussion of topics that relate to cultural heritage, and the degree to which these topics contribute to the protection and preservation of this cultural heritage.

In sum, this study seeks to address the following questions:

1) What are the topics of cultural heritage that are included in the books of social and national education in the basic stage?

2) What is the degree to which the concepts of cultural heritage are included in the books of social and national education according to content analysis?

3) Are there any statistical differences at the level of significance ($0.5 = \propto$) in the degree of inclusion of topics of cultural heritage that can be attributed to the classroom?

4) Are there any significant statistical differences at the level of significance ($0.5 = \propto$) in the degree of inclusion of the topics of cultural heritage that can be attributed to the field/area?

Significance of Study

The significance of this study stems from its attempt to examine a very important topic that has not been addressed adequately by researchers in social and educational studies. There is

an obvious shortage of local and regional studies on the role of educational curricula in protecting cultural heritage. The study reveals valuable outcomes that have significant academic and policy implications. Policymakers need to rethink their policies and strategies about dealing with cultural heritage in school curricula. Moreover, this study seeks to raise public awareness of the importance of cultural heritage and the proper ways of preserving it in light of the unprecedented societal transformations brought about by intertwined waves of modernization and globalization.

Methodology

This study employs the content analysis tool as it seeks to analyze the content of social and national education textbooks in the basic education stage. In developing this tool, issues and questions related to cultural heritage were divided into six major areas: problems facing cultural heritage (Area 1); the reality and magnitude of the problem of trafficking in antiquities (Area 2); the implications of trafficking in antiquities (Area 3); awareness of the value of cultural heritage (Area 4); global and local partnerships (Area 5); and proposed solutions (Area 6). This tool was reviewed by a number of specialists in curriculum and teaching methods, archaeology and anthropology prior to its implementation. Their observations were limited to the addition of some international bodies that support and specialize in cultural heritage such as FHI 360 (formerly Family Health International) and UNESCO.

Procedures of content analysis

The tool of content analysis was developed through the following procedures:

- Defining the goal of the analysis: to identify and examine the topics of cultural heritage included in the textbooks of social and national education.
- Determining the scope of analysis: textbooks of social and national education in the basic education stage in Jordan.
- Identifying a list of cultural heritage issues/concepts and classifying them into six major areas.
- Processing the results of the content analysis and classifying them into several tables after conversion of them to frequencies and percentages.
- Reanalyzing the results after a period of time in order to verify the stability of the analysis. Agreement between the first analysis and the second analysis reached almost the percentage of 100%.
- Content analysis was done over the period of 25/12/2016 to 5/5/2017.

Results and Discussion

Textbooks of social and national education for grades 4-10 included a number of topics related to cultural heritage. Most, if not all of these topics, deal with tangible forms of cultural heritage, mainly cultural and archaeological sites in various parts of the country.

The following table summarizes the topics of cultural heritage and their percentage to the total content in grades 4-10.

Table 1. Topics of Cultural Heritage

Grade	Topics covered	Total percentage to total content
4	Aqaba, Wadi Rum, The Dead see, Maeen Baths, Karak Castle, Ajloun Castle, Shoubak Castle, Al Mashta Palace, and Qasr Umrah	9%
5	Amman, Jerash, Umm Qais, Madaba and Petra	24.16%
6	Tafila, Ma'an, and Aqaba	17.75%
7	Amman (the path of the Hoorayat, the Castle Mountain, the Roman Amphitheater, Ain Ghazal, Al-Husseini Mosque, the cave people), in addition to archaeological sites in Irbid (Um Qais, Abella, Beit Ras, and religious tombs).	13%
8	Ajloun, Karak	14.2%.
9	Balqa, Zarqa and Madaba	13.3%
10	Mafraq and Jerash	12.26%

The above table demonstrates that textbooks of social and national education dedicate some of its content to issues related to cultural heritage. However, most of these topics focus on tangible cultural heritage, mainly archaeological and cultural sites. Some of these topics are repeated in different grades through vertical integration; that is, introducing a piece of knowledge with incremental increase across class educational environments. This indicates that the term cultural heritage is reduced to tangible elements, and thus intangible elements are treated as insignificant or marginal components of the complex and broad concept of cultural heritage. It is crucial to integrate intangible cultural heritage elements in school curriculum.

This level of inclusion can be attributed to the official interest in cultivating the issue of national identity among students through promoting the idea that Jordan is a country that is deeply rooted in history and that its history is associated with ancient human civilizations. Another reason behind the emphasis on archaeological and cultural sites is the continuous official effort to market these sites to young people and residents of Jordan as part of the campaign to encourage tourism in Jordan.

It is also noted that these subjects were included under the title of "a journey in my home country" to students of grades four and five, and under the title of "cultural biography" for grades 6-10. Such titles illustrate the emphasis on presenting the history of Jordan and its link to ancient civilizations. Moreover, these topics are listed at the end of the curriculum content, except for the 4th grade, which means that they are not given enough attention by teachers due to the shortage of time or student dropout at the end of the academic semester. Furthermore, topics of cultural heritage are very descriptive and do not provoke creative thinking or promote analytical skills among students.

Moreover, content analysis reveals that there is an obvious neglect of issues related to the value of cultural heritage and its centrality to people's collective identities, as well as the importance of protecting it against the endangering practices and activities (Areas 1 and 4). This is clearly noticed in textbooks of grades 4-6. As has been mentioned before, most of the lessons on cultural heritage are presented to the students as part of Jordan's historical development, without any discussion of their significance.

Trafficking in antiquities and smuggling (Areas 2 and 3) are not addressed at all, even though they pose an alarming problem that needs urgent intervention. We can conclude that textbooks of social and national education have failed to provide students with any form of guidance, education or awareness regarding this problem. This neglect can be attributed to the failure of the parties and key players involved in the curriculum design and implementation to

formulate clear policies and vision about the issue of cultural heritage. This may also be due to the unwillingness of those who design school textbooks to introduce negative ideas to school students that may harm the image of the country and its citizens. They seek to highlight the positive issues and responsible practices rather than negative and inappropriate ones.

In regard to the importance of the local-global partnership (Area 5) in protecting cultural heritage, the educational curricula under investigation do not address this particular issue. For example, the textbook of grade 9 mentions, but without any discussion, the efforts of local organizations/agencies and universities to protect the various forms of cultural heritage. The financial and other forms of support of UNESCO, as one of the international agencies concerned with cultural heritage, is also briefly mentioned. Thus, students are not really exposed to the serious efforts by local and international organizations in safeguarding the various forms of cultural heritage.

The table 2 summarizes the frequencies of cultural heritage indicators according to the six areas.

Table 2. Frequencies of Cultural Heritage Indicators

Area	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Problems facing cultural heritage	0	0	0	0	0		
Magnitude of the problem of trafficking in antiquities	0	0	0	0			
Implications of the spread of trafficking in antiquities	0	0	0	0			
Awareness of the value of cultural heritage	0	0	0	1/5			
Local-Global Partnership	0	0	0	0			
Proposed solutions	0	0	0	0	0	10/5	1/7

As has mentioned before, almost all textbooks under investigation present historical information about the history of Jordan and its deep link with ancient human civilization. However, they fail to tackle the issue of irresponsible practice carried out by some people such as illegal excavations and antiquities trafficking. Not equipping students with necessary skills and knowledge hinders their participation in the national responsibility of protecting the country's cultural legacy. It is also noted that the technological development in the field of archaeology has been accompanied by the emergence of various forms of illegal practices in archaeological and cultural sites promoted by financial motives, entertainment, political and religious revenge, and the spread of fraud artefacts and other findings. The following two cases stated to this claim. The textbook of grade 8 includes an ideal educational situation for this purpose on page 55 which reads "preserve as a citizen the existing antiquities and heritage" but it is not stressed or discussed. Similarly, the textbook of grade 5 entails a unit on "our popular heritage" which could be utilized in a better way to convey some awareness messages to students. Instead, it mentions briefly some traditional games that people used to practice in the past.

Conclusions

As has been discussed throughout this study, cultural heritage is not a retreat to the past but rather a foundation for the future. Any society that is keen to live its present and build its future, it has first and foremost to know and be proud of its past. Thus, cultural heritage

provides us with a key to unlock the multifaceted as well as complex relationship between the past, present, and future.

The institution of education assumes a huge responsibility of educating students, especially those who are in the basic stage, about their cultural heritage and helping them develop a positive relationship with it. School curricula play a vital role in enhancing students' collective identity and sense of belonging to the society they live in.

The results of this study indicate that the educational system in Jordan lacks a clear and specific educational philosophy to provide school children with enough education on issues of cultural heritage and the main problems that endanger it such trafficking and smuggling. They have failed to foster positive attitudes among students towards their cultural heritage. Such neglect can be attributed to two main reasons: inappropriateness of such issues to school students in the basic stage and lack of desire to teach students such negative practices despite the vast area of inclusion that has been identified in the textbooks of social and national education.

The main result of such neglect is the loss of emotional attachment of students towards their heritage, especially archaeological and cultural sites. Affiliation, emotional attachment and pride are important ways to preserve various forms of cultural heritage and to protect them from the inappropriate practices. School curriculum needs to promote participatory learning that would motivate and empower students to change their attitudes and behaviors to enable them be active agents in their country's sustainable development. Moreover, school teachers should be trained on effective teaching methods of cultural heritage. Otherwise, it will be the individual himself who may destroy heritage objects and acquisitions because he does not recognize and appreciate their significance and moral value.

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