

5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Educational Sciences - WCES 2013

## A survey on Tendency toward Curriculum Ideologies among Academic Board Members in Educational Sciences Faculties- Tehran 2010-11

Mohsen Farmahini Farahani<sup>a\*</sup>, Mehdi Maleki<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Associate professors, Shahed University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>b</sup>MA in curriculum development, Shahed University, Tehran, Iran

---

### Abstract

Improvement of curriculum development by the members of a faculty can be facilitated by identifying their own and others' ideology. This work is aimed to survey types of curriculum development ideologies that exist among members of faculty in educational sciences departments in Tehran universities. Research society was comprised of all faculty members in the departments in 2010-11, adopted through census. Among the 95 members, 30% were women and 70% men. The research was carried out as a descriptive (surveying) study using a standard questionnaire of curriculum ideology developed by Schiro (2008). The questionnaire focuses on six curriculum factors (including: Purpose, Teaching, Learning, Knowledge, Childhood, and Evaluation) and four curriculum ideologies (Scholar Academic Ideology, Social Efficiency Ideology, Learner Centred Ideology, Social Reconstruction Ideology). Data analysis involves examining frequency and percentage frequency of ideologies held by faculty and graphs of their ideologies. In general, results of the surveys over each quadrant of the ideology graphs are as follows. Greatest ideological preference was inclined toward ("the") Learner Centred Ideology (69%), followed by Social Reconstruction Ideology (11%), social Efficiency ideology (11%), Scholar Academic Ideology (5%) and finally the combination of the Learner Centred Ideology and social Efficiency ideology (4%). In addition, the ideologies least preferred by academic board members included tendencies toward Scholar Academic Ideology (70%), Social Reconstruction Ideology (13%), Social Efficiency Ideology (7%), Scholar Academic and social reconstruction ideologies in combination (7%) social reconstruction and social Efficiency ideologies in combination (3%) and finally Learner Centred Ideology with (0%) Therefore, it can be concluded that ideological preference among academy members most favors the Learner Centred Ideology and least favors the Scholar Academic Ideology. Seemingly, the reason for the inclination towards the Learner Centred Ideology among the faculty members had to do with the fact that they were all engaged in educational fields at governmental universities. More, one could also deems it wise to believe that the participants coming from humanities pay more tribute to interactive relations with the students compared to those who come from non-humanities.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Ideology, faculty member, Scholar Academic Ideology, Social Efficiency Ideology, learner-centred ideology, Social Reconstruction Ideology;

---

Mohsen Farmahini Farahani. Tel.: +989123721060

E-mail address: [farmahinifar@yahoo.com](mailto:farmahinifar@yahoo.com)

## 1. Introduction

As a political issue, scholars of the political and critical school of thought design curricula, trying, as a result, to emphasize this fundamental fact that only, by focusing on the pertinent fields, is a comprehensive and general perception of a feasible curriculum. It is fruitless and unfit to separate a curriculum from its commonly-multiple grounds and to ponder on the concept without paying any attention to the grounds related to it, such as “ideology.”

Curriculum ideology refers to people’s endeavors as they engage in a curriculum activity or think about curriculum issues (Schiro, 2008, p. 10). Moreover, ideologies concerning curricula refer to general philosophical and educational fields that support descriptive theories of curriculum (Mehrmohammadi and Amin Khandaghi, 2009, p. 30). According to Schiro (2008), the curriculum visions, philosophies, doctrines, opinions, conceptual frameworks, and belief systems of educators are called curriculum ideology. An ideology is a collection of ideas, a comprehensive vision, a way of looking at things, or a worldview that embodies the way a person or a group of people believe the world must be organized and function. It is “a certain ethical set of ideals, principles, doctrines, myths or symbols of a social movement, institution, class, or large group that explains how society should work, and offer some political and cultural blueprint for a certain social order” (Schiro, 2008, p. 8).

### 1.1. *The Scholar Academic Ideology*

Scholar Academics believe that over the centuries our culture has accumulated important knowledge which has been organized into the academic disciplines in universities. The purpose of education is to help children learn the accumulated knowledge of our culture: that of the academic disciplines. The aim of education for Scholar Academics is to extend their disciplines by introducing them to young people. This involves recruiting young members of a discipline first by having them move into it as students and later raising them up in its hierarchy. Discipline extension is accomplished through imparting its knowledge and ways of thinking to students. The curriculum provides the means of doing so and derives both its meaning and its *raison d'être* from the academic disciplines. Scholar Academics’ major concern is to construct a curriculum in such a way that it reflects the essence of their discipline (Schiro, 2008, p. 4).

### 1.2. *The Social Efficiency Ideology*

Social Efficiency Advocates believe that the purpose of schooling is to efficiently meet the needs of society by training the young to function as future mature contributing members of society. Their goal is to train the young in the skills and procedures they will need in their workplaces and at their homes in order to lead productive lives and perpetuate the functioning of the society. Social Efficiency ideologists believe that the most efficient achievement of a curriculum’s ultimate objectives results from applying the routines of scientific procedures to curriculum development. Central to Social Efficiency, the conception of scientific procedure refers to the assumptions that a change in human behavior (learning) takes place within a fairly direct cause/effect, action/reaction, or stimulus/response context (Schiro, 2008, pp. 4-5).

### 1.3. *The Learner-centered Ideology*

Learner-centered proponents do not focus on the needs of society or the academic disciplines; on the contrary, they focus on the needs and concerns of every individual. They believe schools should be enjoyable places where people develop naturally in accordance with their innate characteristics. The goal of education is the growth of individuals, each in harmony with their own unique intellectual, social, emotional, and physical attributes. This leads learner-centered advocates to treat the concept of growth as the central theme of their endeavors. The developmental growth of learners in terms of their conformity with the laws of their being should become the educator’s very objective. As a result, education involves substantiating the inherent capabilities of people (Schiro, 2008, p. 5).

### 1.4. *The Social Reconstruction Ideology*

Social Reconstructionists are conscious of the problems of our society and the injustices done to its members, such as those originating from racial, gender-based, social, and economic inequalities. They assume that the purpose

of education is to facilitate the construction of a new and more equitable society that offers maximum satisfaction to all of its members. The aim of Social Reconstructionists is to rectify this situation by eliminating from their culture the aspects they consider undesirable, substituting them with social values they take as desirable and, by so doing, to reconstruct their culture so that its members will attain maximum satisfaction of their material, spiritual, and intellectual wants (Schiro, 2008, p. 6).

By considering the curriculum a method of realization of the objectives and channelizing the general goals of every educational system, ideologies may be regarded as principles to spot the needs for decision making in this field (Taleb Zadeh Nobarin & Fathi Vajargah, 2002, p. 111).

Taking into account the aforementioned importance of the issue, along with the necessity of bringing in the ideology of curricula for future pertinent projects by scholars, the present work tries to determine the tendency of the board members in education faculties in the universities in Tehran to adopt an educational ideology to facilitate progress in the procedure of curriculum planning. The findings can also help the scholars learn more about the necessity of comprehensive developments, dependence on rational, social, emotional, and physical features, the valuable knowledge ruling the society, finding solutions through expanding educational services, cultural revival, and social development.

Literature review revealed several similar studies regarding the approaches, attitudes, theories, and ideologies of curriculum. Among Iranian works, Abbaspour (1996), Salsabili (2000), Mohsen Pour (2004), Nouri (2005), Maleki (2006), AminKhandaghi (2008), Bagheri (2008), Taghipour Kelor (2009), and around the globe, Schiro (1992), Cotti (1997), Cheung and Honng (2000), Honng and Cheung (2002), Cheung and Wong (2002), Cotti and Schiro (2004), Jenkins (2009), and Cochran (2010) are but a few examples.

## 2. Method

The research was carried out as a descriptive study (survey), using standard questionnaires of Curriculum Ideology by Schiro (2008). Statistical population comprised all faculty members of the departments of universities in Tehran in the academic year 2010-2011, selected through census. Among the 95 faculty members, 30% were women and 70% men. The questionnaire focused on curricula based on the six factors including: Purpose, Teaching, Learning, Knowledge, Childhood, and Evaluation (Scholar Academic Ideology, Social Efficiency Ideology, Learner-centered Ideology, and Social Reconstruction Ideology). For data analysis, frequency, percentage frequency and ideology graph were employed.

The results of the research were validated based on Schiro (1992), Cotti and Schiro (2004), and the curriculum ideology diagram for each faculty board member was given to them along with a commentary and a short review of the quadruplet ideological bases. Then the participants were asked to provide their comments. A general agreement was found among the participants that the diagram fairly represents their beliefs. Finally, frequency and percentage statistical comparisons and ideology diagrams were used for data analysis.

## 3. Findings

The findings of the survey are presented in Table 1. The curriculum ideologies (horizontal), in two groups of the most and the least, are plotted against the list of the universities included (vertical).

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of the most and least tendency of the faculty members toward ideology of curriculum

Ideology University	Most tendency					Total	least tendency						
	SA	SE	LC	SR	LC, SE		SA	SE	LC	SR	SA, SR	SR, SE	
Allameh Tabatabaei	Frequency	0	0	15	3	0	18	15	1	0	0	2	0
	Percent	0	0	83	17	0	100	83	6	0	0	11	0

Tehran	Frequency	0	2	11	1	2	16	10	2	0	2	2	0
	Percent	0	12/5	68/75	6/25	12/5	100	62/5	12/5	0	12/5	12/5	0
Tarbiat Moaleme Tehran	Frequency	2	2	8	3	1	16	12	2	0	1	1	0
	Percent	12/5	12/5	50	18/75	6/25	100	75	12/5	0	6/25	6/25	0
Al-Zahra	Frequency	0	1	6	0	0	7	5	0	0	2	0	0
	Percent	0	14	86	0	0	100	71/42	0	0	28/57	0	0
Shahid Beheshti	Frequency	0	0	6	1	0	7	5	0	0	1	0	1
	Percent	0	0	86	14	0	100	72	0	0	14	0	14
Tarbiat Dabir Shaid Rajae	Frequency	1	2	4	0	0	7	3	1	0	2	1	0
	Percent	14	29	57	0	0	100	43	14	0	29	14	0
Tarbiat Modares	Frequency	0	2	3	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	1
	Percent	0	40	60	0	0	100	80	0	0	0	0	20
Shahed	Frequency	1	0	3	1	0	5	3	0	0	2	0	0
	Percent	20	0	60	20	0	100	60	0	0	40	0	0
Total	Frequency	4	9	56	9	3	81	57	6	0	10	6	2
	Percent	5	11	69	11	4	100	70	7	0	13	7	3

The total results indicate that 4 out of 81 faculty members (5%) showed a tendency towards “Scholar Academic Ideology” while 9 of them (11%) did so towards “Social Efficiency Ideology”. 56 members (69%) favored “Learner-centered Ideology” whereas 9 members (11%) considered “Social Reconstruction Ideology” their first priority. Finally, 3 (4%) showed a tendency towards both “Learner-centered Ideology and Social Efficiency”.

In general, the majority of the faculty members (69%) adopted Learner-centered ideology as their dominant ideology.

Table 1 shows that 57 out of 81 faculty members regard “Scholar Academic Ideology” as their fourth priority, while 6 members (7%) tended to adopt “Social Efficiency Ideology” at the same priority. None of the participants placed Learner-centered Ideology at their fourth priority.

Regarding “Social Reconstruction Ideology”, 10 members (13%) ranked it as their lowest priority and 6 (7%) gave this position to “Scholar Academic Ideology” and “Social Reconstruction Ideology,” together. Moreover, 2 (3%) put “Social Reconstruction Ideology” and “Social Efficiency Ideology” as their lowest priority. This shows that the majorities of the participants are reluctant to adopt “Scholar Academic Ideology” and, as mentioned in the table above, 70% ranked it as their lowest priority.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study investigated the tendency towards curriculum ideologies (Scholar Academic, Social Efficiency, Learner-centered, and Social Reconstruction) among education faculty members in Tehran city. The results showed that majority of the participants chose Learner-centered Ideology as their first choice while Scholar Academic Ideology was placed as the lowest.

The authors believe that such a trend has its roots in the fact that faculty members are generally familiar with educational environment of Tehran-based universities and that they are active in humanitarian fields, featuring much emphasis on human relations and interactions with the students. One noticeable point is that Learner-centered Ideology is equivalent to the attitudes such as self-actualization (Eisner and Vallance, 1974), humanism (McNeil, 1977), experientialism (Schubert, 1996), spiritual self-development (Joseph et al, 2000), developmental-humanistic transpersonal (Miller, 1983), and progressivism (Eisner, 1994).

Surveys of curriculum ideologies are of paramount necessity for national educational systems. Developments in the fields based on curriculum, requires theoretical works and epistemological studies as an indispensable basis. Development of national curriculum education ideology requires cooperation among all experts and theoreticians. Nowadays, a critical and vital need of Iranian education system is to find a national education ideology consistent with the national culture, history, philosophy, and religion (Mohsenpour, 2004). In order to highlight the necessity of this issue, a general agreement among all previous works with regard to such needs can be noted (Mohsenpour, 2004). However, in spite of all the emphasis, the vacant place of a comprehensive ideology for meeting all demands

is undeniable. Maleki's (2006) recommendation for a spiritual and natural attitude in the field of curriculum is a noticeable development, which is based on Islamic philosophy and educational method. Having its roots in human nature, it points out that spiritual and natural tendencies of mankind are the main bases. "Spirituality" refers to the fact that ideology is centered on directing the learner towards spiritual values (Maleki, 2006).

## References

- Abbaspour, N. (1996). Application of philosophical theories in lesson planning, with emphasis on the theory of John Dewey. Tehran: College of Education and Psychology. University of Tarbiat Moalem Tehran.
- Amin Khandaghi, M. (2008). Exploration of the Nature of Theory in the Field of Curriculum Studies and Proposing a New Classification for Authentic Theories in This Field. Tehran: Tarbiat Modares University.
- Bagheri, K. H. (2008). Curriculum development philosophical foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Tehran.
- Cheung, D. & Ng, P.H. (2000). Science teachers' beliefs about curriculum design. *Research in Science Education*. 30(4), 357-375.
- Chung, D., & Wong, H. (2002). Measuring teacher beliefs about alternative curriculum design. *Curriculum Journal*. 13(2), pp. 225-248
- Cochran, J. (2010). Secondary mathematics teacher's curriculum philosophies and experience. San Marcos Texas: dissertation.
- Cotti, R. & Schiro, M. (2004). Connecting teacher beliefs to the use of children's literature in the teaching of mathematics. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*. 7(4), pp. 329-356.
- Eisner, E. (1994). *The Educational imagination* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Eisner, E. & Vallance, E. (1974). *Conflicting Conceptions of Curriculum*. McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Hongng, P. & Cheung, D. (2002). Student-teachers' beliefs on primary science curriculum orientation. 45, pp. 42-53.
- Jenkins, S. B. (2009). Measuring teacher beliefs about curriculum orientations using the modified-curriculum orientations inventory. *Curriculum Journal*. 20(2), pp. 103-120
- Joseph, P. B. et al (2000). *Cultures of Curriculum: Studies in Curriculum Theory Series*. Translated by: Mahmud Mehrmohamadi et al. Tehran: SAMT Publication.
- McNeil, J. D. (1977). *Curriculum: a comprehensive introduction*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Maleki, H. (2006). Curriculum perspectives innate - spiritual, "based on the philosophy of education "National Congress of the Humanities.
- Mehrmohammadi, M. & AminKhandaghi, M. (2009). Compare Eisner curriculum ideologies: Another view. *Educational Studies and Psychology*, Ferdowsi University, tenth.
- Miller, J. P. (1983). *The educational spectrum: orientations to curriculum*. Translator: Mahmud Mehrmohamadi et al. Tehran: SAMT Publication.
- Nouri, M. (2005). Compared the views of experts on the planning approach prevailing system of education curricula and the optimal approach for it. Tehran. Master's thesis curriculum planning, Beheshti University.
- Mohsenpour, B. (2004). Need to develop a theory of curriculum for Islamic education. *Journal of Educational Innovations*, (7) in the third.
- Salsabili, N. (2000). Provide a useful perspective on the curriculum model curricula in the country of Iran. Tehran: College of Education and Psychology. University of Tarbiat Moalem Tehran.
- Schiro, M. S. (2008). *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns*. SAGE Publications.
- Schiro, M. S. (1992). Educators' perceptions of changes in their curriculum belief systems over time. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 7(3), pp. 250-286.
- Schubert, W. H. (1996). Perspectives on four curriculum traditions. *Educational Horizons*. 74(4), pp.169-176.
- Taleb-Zadeh Nobarin, M. & Fathi Vajargah, K. (2002). *Topics specialized curricula*. Tehran: Aeegh Publications.
- Taghipour Kelor, E. (2009). Identify the dominant approach in the curriculum of elementary school teachers in the academic year 2009. Tehran. Master's thesis curriculum planning, Beheshti University