

## The Educational Values Included in English Workbooks for the Higher Basic School in Jordan

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aims at examining the educational values included in the English workbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan. Adopting the ‘sentence’ as a unit of analysis, the research sample of this study consists of all the activities encountered in the English workbooks in 2017/2018. In light of the general framework of school curricula in Jordan, 36 values to be included in the subject workbooks are found to be spiritual, economic, societal, and aesthetic/environmental; the spiritual aspect is found to be the most frequent one (N=137, 42%). In specific, the most frequent educational values were spiritual for the tenth grade (18%), societal and economic for the eighth grade (15% and 8% respectively) and aesthetic/environmental for the ninth grade (4%).

*Keywords:* Educational Values, English Workbooks, Higher Basic School, Jordan

### Introduction

A serious and fruitful educational process depends on several pillars such as the curriculum, schoolbook, teacher, student and environment. A schoolbook is the most important element of this process; it reflects the real circumstance, philosophy, needs and ambitions of the society and based on which other elements get covered and enhanced. Since the society changes and develops according to various environmental, cultural and/or scientific factors, schoolbooks should then change to be always a clear and honest picture of that society and culture (Hashmi & Ateya, 2009). In view of the recent and subsequent developments in science and technology, the world is largely witnessing a period of change and transformation, especially in education facing unparalleled leaps worldwide due to advancing towards knowledge- and technology-based societies (Hamad, 2009).

Facing the challenges, threats, issues and problems of the contemporary life, an educational institution represented by its schoolbooks in general and the English textbooks in specific should also benefit from its advantages. The students can be made aware of the positive things and how to face up the negative ones. These issues should be part of the schoolbooks in accordance with the nature of the given subjects and the students' need for the same. Incidentally, the value system plays a role in developing and providing meaning(s) in the schoolbooks, the matter which helps the students achieve and remember (Younis, 2015). The inclusion of the

value system in the English textbooks has such benefits as enhancing the students being aware and educated, keeping them abreast of what may take place around and expand their circle of expertise, developing their intellectual strengths (Yazuri, 2011).

Values are defined as "the standards by which ideas, people, objects, works, subjects and individual and collective attitudes are judged in terms of their worth and beauty and whether they are desired " (Norhan, 2008, pp. 32-33). Values consist of three main components: "cognitive, including knowledge and theoretical information, sentimental: including emotions and inner feelings, and behavioral where a value appears" (Jemel, 2002, pp. 23-24). In actual fact, values have several classifications. Some are classified according to their sever application while some others are classified as binding and final ones. There are also the preferential, ideal values. Values are also classified whether they are general as spread in one society or special such as those spread in certain districts. Another classification also applies to the purpose of a value; in this respect, values can be apparent (explicit) or implicit. Some others are classified as permanent, transient (casual), ethical, religious, aesthetic, economic or political (Da'ilej, 2007).

The first thing to instill and develop values is to identify the value areas that should be taught at school and to select the educational instruments that help learners conceive and acquire these values. At the top of such instruments is the schoolbook, which still occupies an important position in the system of public education. It is considered as the main instrument for the implementation of the school curriculum, and the one on which teachers and learners depend in their teaching performance and academic achievement, and thus its content requires an analysis (Khalifa, 2006).

The content analysis approach is defined as a descriptive method of interpreting a phenomenon. It is a set of technical methods and procedures designed to interpret and classify the study material, including written texts, drawings, images and ideas contained in a book or curriculum. Using this approach of content analysis aims at identifying the extent to which the content considers the standards, criteria and components on which it is built (Esawi, 2015, p. 26).

A content analysis is carried out through formulating the research problem, hypotheses or questions, identifying the research population and the sample to be tested. Then, an exploratory study is to be conducted to achieve constancy, encode the content based on the procedural definitions formulated, analyze and discuss the data drawn in view of tables or classifications and lastly draw conclusions and interpret the quantitative and statistical indicators (Mohammad, 2012). Perhaps, one of the most important functions of a schoolbook analysis is to provide "a scientific and objective description of the patterns of values and ethical implications conveyed in these books" (Sawy, 2014, p. 249).

The importance of studying educational values lies in that it is a pillar the society is based on. It affects the formation of a learner's personality and behavior and helps define his/her attitudes toward various life situations. To examine educational values helps draw the attention of those who write and develop the English textbooks to how largely important to include educational values for the higher basic school. Studying this particular field provides the concerned planners with a list of appropriate educational values in view of which such schoolbooks are developed to become more effective in:

- developing the value system in the student's behavior,
- finding out how largely the English textbooks for the higher basic school can provide the learners with the educational values necessary for them, and
- providing the English teachers with a list of educational values to enhance, support and develop accordingly.

### Problem and Purpose

The present study concerned itself with the values of education with reference to the English textbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan. It analyzes the current English textbooks as to what extent they explicitly and/or implicitly include educational values, affirming the effect of such values in building a strong firmly connected society with truthful personalities. Based on the framework of school curricula in Jordan as well as the aforementioned purpose(s), the problem of this study lies in two research questions:

1. What educational values are the English textbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan *virtually* recommended to include?
2. Which of the educational values recommended do the English textbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan *actually* include?

In light of above, the following procedural definitions are considered throughout the study:

- *Educational values*: The terms and concepts that have positive meanings in the spiritual, economic, social and aesthetic aspects, and are present in the English workbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan for 2017/2018.
- *Activities*: The practical situations and procedures included in the English workbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan for 2017/2018, which the students are required to implement individually and in groups.
- *Higher basic school*: The compulsory educational stage in Jordan, which consists of the eighth, ninth and tenth grades.
- *English workbooks*: The textbooks officially described to teach for the students of the higher basic school in Jordan for 2017/2018.

### Previous Studies

Faify (2012) identified the Islamic values included in the English textbooks for the third secondary grade in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study had used the descriptive approach, based on the content-analysis of a sample of student books. The results of the study showed that the environmental values came first with a percentage of 25.7%, followed by the economic values (18.3%). The total values came with a percentage of 9.1%, of which the social, religious, national and health ones ranged between 3.7% and 8.5%.

Jaroudi (2011) identified the educational values included in the English textbooks in the third secondary grade as a descriptive and analytical study. The population and sample of the study consisted of the English textbooks at the secondary level for the academic year of 2010-2011. Methodically, the first study used the questionnaire as a tool for the content-analysis. A

number of 328 values were extracted from the three textbooks, of which 25% was taken by the cognitive values and 8.12% by the self-oriented ones, according to which the cognitive aspect was found to prevail. Also, both the promotional and national values ranked last with a percentage of 4.8%.

Revealing the values contained in the English textbooks for the eighth and ninth grades in Jordan, Shadifat (2009) had a study with a population to consist of the eighth and ninth grades' English books. The researcher analyzed the content of such textbooks using a special classification as a study tool to analyze the content and verify its validity and constancy of analysis. The results of the study showed that the total frequency of values in the English content for the eighth and ninth grades was 695, of which 313 frequencies were given to the eighth grade's book and 382 for the ninth one. For the eighth grade, both fields of scientific and religious and moral values came first, the field of economic and political values in the third place, the field of environmental values ranked fourth, the field of health values ranked fifth and the field of national values ranked last. The study also showed, with regard to the ninth grade, that the field of scientific values came first, the field of economic and political values in second place, the field of religious and moral values in the third place, the environmental values ranked fourth, the national values ranked fifth and the field of health values ranked last. The results of the study showed that the values in the English books for both Grades 8 and 9 were unorganized and unbalanced.

Another study by Nahedh (2009) aimed to identify the types of values contained in the English textbooks for the intermediate grades through analyzing the content of those books. The study used the analysis-based descriptive method. The results of the study showed that the total frequency of the values in the textbooks analyzed was 355, of which the first intermediate grade had 79 (22%), the second intermediate grade had 140 (40%), and the third intermediate grade 136 (38%). Eventually, the self-oriented values came at the top followed by the social and aesthetic values respectively.

In the same respect using the descriptive approach, Mohammad (2002) identified the educational values included in the English stories for the high school students. The study consisted of a questionnaire (or the questionnaire of values). It resulted in the development of criteria on which the high school stories be chosen. The study also showed that the social values were the most frequent in such stories followed by the environmental ones.

To conclude this Section, the previous studies have been found to emphasize the importance of analyzing the educational values in English schoolbooks in terms of their effective role in developing and improving them while being composed and taught. The studies above used the descriptive approach based on content analysis (e.g. Fayfi, 2012; Jaroudi, 2011; Shadifat, 2009; Nahedh, 2009). For the samples of the studies above, it consisted of English textbooks for the basic stage (e.g. Nahedh, 2009; Shadifat, 2009), and the English textbooks for the secondary (high) stage (e.g. Fayfi, 2012; Jaroudi, 2011; Muhammad, 2002). The present study, however, concerned itself with exploring the educational value system included in the activities of the English schoolbooks developed for the higher basic school in Jordan.

## Research Method

In light of the general framework of school curricula, a workcard was developed by the researchers as an instrument of the present study for analyzing the activities included in the English textbooks of the three grades of the higher basic school. This study mainly adopted the 'sentence' as a unit of analysis for observing the availability and frequencies of the educational values included in the aforesaid activities. For identifying the categories of analysis, the workcard was designed to encompass two types of categories: major and minor. The major categories of values in the present study were defined to be four: spiritual, societal, economic and aesthetic. The minor ones, however, were the values falling under each of the major categories.

### For the validity and reliability of the instrument above:

1. The workcard was sent to a number of twelve (12) experts and specialists. Holding PhDs in English curricula and teaching methods, counselling and psychological education, these referees were seven faculty members at Jordanian universities, three English teachers at public schools in Jerash and two supervisors at the Ministry of Education. Having obtained the referees' responses, amendments were made to the weak items and statements by redistributing them to the related major/minor categories. The subject workcard was verified in terms of its validity by the referees themselves as 91% of them agreed on the amendments, which was a reasonable percentage for the purpose of this study.
2. The workcard was reanalyzed one month later by following the same steps and standards. The observed proportion of agreement between the two analyses was found to be 96% upon applying Holsti's equation as follows:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

For verifying the reliability of the analysis, two professors of English curricula and teaching methods were asked to individually analyze the workcard as per the standards basically followed in this study. Then, the proportion of

agreement between the findings reached by the two parties was found to be 91.0 using Holsti's equation.

For the population of the study, it consisted of all the English textbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan to be taught for the academic year of 2017/2018. The sample in turn consisted of all the activities included in these textbooks as described in Table (1) below:

Table (1)

**Distributions of the activities in the Islamic textbooks for the higher basic school**

Study level (units)	Total number of activities		
	Eighth grade	Ninth grade	Tenth grade
Unit 1	8	5	6
Unit 2	5	7	8
Unit 3	9	6	7
Unit 4	7	8	7
Unit 5	8	4	8
Unit 6	5	8	5
Total	42	38	41

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****1. EDUCATIONAL VALUES RECOMMENDED:**

For answering the first research question of **what educational values the English textbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan are *virtually* recommended to include** in light of the general framework of curricula, the values generally recommended to be included in the subject English textbooks for the higher basic school were firstly counted in view of the general framework of curricula. Such values are basically recommended by the members of the national team in charge of the general and special production of English textbooks for the same school. The values have been also approved by the Ministry of Education in Jordan as per the Framework of Curricula as on 2003/2004 in view of which the subject textbooks were composed. A number of sixty four (64) values were found to be distributed to four aspects (see Table 2):

TABLE (2)

**Distributions of the educational values recommended to be included in the English textbooks for the higher basic school under the general framework of curricula:**

Aspect	Educational Values	Freq.	Perc.
Spiritual	Love of Allah 's blessings, humility, honesty, patience, piety, call for good doing, forbidding immortality, charity, altruism, steadfastness on the right way, self-reform, thanksgiving, conviction, dream, modesty, chastity, courage, sacrifice, justice, mercy, integrity and tolerance.	22	34
Social	Visiting neighbors, visiting patients, cooperating, preforming rights, brotherhood, permission, social solidarity, facilitation of others, etiquette, honoring	21	33

	parents, fulfilling promises, listening well to others, respect the others and order, polite talk, maintaining friendship, helping others, belonging to family, good treatment and taking responsibility.		
Economic	Good profit, forbidding cheats, useful work, exploiting time, love of work, balance and moderation of expenses, good management, avoiding cheating, staying away from monopoly and mastery and continuity of work.	11	17
Aesthetic/ Environmental	Animal welfare, plant culture and conservation, avoiding noise pollution, environmental safety, preventing depletion of water resources, love of nature, love of beauty, non-depletion of wealth, preservation of personal and environmental hygiene and adornment of beauty tools.	10	16
Total		64	100

Table (2) shows that the most frequent educational values came within the spiritual aspect (N=22, 34%). This particular finding might be caused by the keenness of the subject schoolbooks to achieve the desired outcomes in light of the general reasons determined for the same. In actual fact, the spiritual aspect is the starting point of the values of a civilization. The social values came second with a number of 20 (32%), the matter which could be attributed to their being the applied field of the spiritual conduct of a society. This finding is closely correlated with the study of Shdeifat (2009), in which the field of religious and moral values ranked first for the eighth and ninth grades in Jordan.

## 2. Educational Values Included:

For answering the second research question of which of the educational values recommended the English textbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan do *actually* include, the educational values included in the English textbooks for the higher basic school in Jordan were counted and distributed to the four types described above.

### Spiritual Aspect

**Table (3)**

**Distributions of the spiritual values included in the activities of the English textbooks for the higher basic school**

Values	Eighth grade		Ninth grade		Tenth grade		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%

Self-reform	7	16%	9	26%	11	19%	27	18%
Mistake revert	4	10%	3	9%	5	8%	12	8%
Mercy	-	-	-	-	4	7%	4	3%
Hypnosis	-	-	-	-	2	3%	2	1%
Patience	2	15%	2	6%	3	5%	7	5%
Justice	5	12%	5	14%	7	12%	17	12%
Maximized power of Allah	1	2%	1	3%	-	-	2	1%
Honesty	5	12%	2	6%	6	10%	13	9%
Devotion	1	2%	1	3%	2	3%	4	3%
Equality	-	-	2	6%	4	7%	6	4%
Satisfaction	2	5%	-	-	4	7%	6	4%
Courage	-	-	2	6%	1	2%	3	2%
Altruism	1	2%	-	-	5	8%	6	4%
Glory	2	5%	1	3%	1	2%	4	3%
Brotherhood	1	2%	2	6%	-	-	3	2%
Forgiveness	3	7%	2	6%	3	5%	8	6%
Dream	2	5%	1	3%	-	-	3	2%
Stability is right	-	-	2	6%	-	-	2	1%
Straightness	3	7%	-	-	-	-	3	2%
Rights Performance	4	10%	-	-	1	2%	5	4%
Total	43	31%	35	26%	59	43%	137	100%

Table (3) shows that the value of "soul reform" was the most frequent educational value within the spiritual aspect. It was observed 27 times (18% of the total number of values contained in the English textbooks for the subject stage. This finding could be attributed to the keenness of the activities in the English textbooks for the higher basic school to promote the value of self-reform for the students, the matter which helps develop their value of faith. Actually, they are in an important transitional phase as they move from a basic to a secondary school while they are still growing both physically and emotionally; in this respect, soul reform is dependent on how highly it is appreciated or cultivated according to the values of faith in consistence with one's spiritual state. The value of "justice" came second (N=17, 12%), which could be attributed to how the students of the subject stage are motivated towards justice in respecting others' rights while they are capable of controlling their feelings in their professional lives in a fair and balanced manner. The use of justice is also one of the greatest means to achieve quietness and tranquility in one's spiritual sphere, and this result is in line with Shdefat (2009) in which the religious and moral values ranked first in the eighth and ninth grader in Jordan.

Furthermore, Table (3) shows that the spiritual values were more frequent in the tenth grade with 59 times (43%) in favor of the value of "self-goodness" with a percentage of 19% of the total spiritual values in the same grade. The students at the peak of adolescence with troubled emotions need to self-fight and be more patient. A man is forced to love desires and fight the whims, and this requires that the textbook taught educate the students about the importance of patience.

### Social Aspect

**Table (4):**

**Distributions of the social values included in the English textbooks for the higher basic school**

Values	Eight grade		Ninth grade		Tenth grade		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parental assistants	1	%2	5	%16	1	%5	7	%7
Authorization etiquette	–	–	1	%3	–	–	1	%1
Communicate with others	7	%15	2	%6	1	%5	10	%10
Visiting the patient	–	–	1	%3	–	–	1	%1
Charity to the weak	3	%6	–	–	2	%10	5	%5
Cooperation	5	%11	–	–	1	%5	6	%6

Modern literature	3	%6	3	%10	2	%10	8	%8
Social integration	4	%9	2	%6	1	%5	7	%7
Love others	1	%2	—	—	—	—	1	%1
The spirit of brotherhood	2	%4	2	%6	—	—	4	%4
Charity to neighbors	1	%2	—	—	2	%10	3	%3
Do not spy					1	%5	1	%1
Consultation	2	%4	3	%10	—	—	5	%5
Validation of news transmission	1		1	%3	—	—	2	%2
Social Security	4	%9	—	—	2	%10	6	%6
Patriotism	1	%2	—	—	2	%10	3	%3
Communicate with colleagues	9	%20	8	%26	2	%10	19	%19
Leave the blind tradition	3	%6	2	%6	2	%10	4	%4
Exploiting time	47	1	1	%3	1	%5	5	%5
Total	47	%100	31	%100	19	%100	98	%100

Table 4 above shows that the value of “communication with colleagues” was the most frequent educational value within the field of social values. This particular value actually occurred 9 times, i.e. 20% of the total values included in the activities of the English textbooks for the higher basic school, the matter which could be attributed to the feeling of a student(s) that everyone needs to communicate with his/her colleagues to accomplish duties and exchange views. The value of “communicating with relatives” (N=7, 15%) came second since the latter as the oldest and most experienced are needed for deepening family ties and such feelings as love and brotherhood. As shown in Table 4, the social values were more frequent in the eighth grade than they were in the other grades by a frequency of 47 (48%). This result in specific might be due to the fact that students of this age range from middle childhood to early adolescence; they require a social environment through which they become acquainted with a wider community than just a family.

**Economic Aspect****Table (5)**

**Distributions of the economic values included in the activities of the English text-books for the higher basic school**

Values	Eight grade		Ninth grade		Tenth grade		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Balance and moderation	2	%7	1	%7	2	%25	7	%12
Useful work	10	3%7	-	-	3	%19	13	%23
Work perfection	3	%11	4	%29	3	%11	10	%18
Prohibition of cheating	1	%4	2	%14	-	-	3	%5
Good earning	3	%11	-	-	1	%6	4	,7%
Prohibition of assaulting people's property unlawfully	1	%4	-	-	1	%6	2	,2%
Utilizing time with benefits	1	%4	5	%36	1	%6	7	4%
Good measure	2	%8	1	%7	2	%13	5	9%
Learn about trades and crafts	4	%36	1	%7	1	%6	6	11%
Total	27	%29	14	%12	16	%28	57	%100

Table (5) shows that the "useful work" was the most frequent educational value within the economic aspect. This particular value occurred 13 times (=23% of the total values included in the textbooks of the higher basic school), the matter which was attributed to how such textbooks concern themselves with developing the students' value of living balance in all of their aspects of life as it is a state of mediocrity. The value of "mastering work" came second (N=10, 18%), which was almost attributed to why the students are prepared for academic majors and professions to be studied and selected in their secondary stage by looking for useful work(s) as a standard for making their future. This result is in line with Majali (2003) in that the investment transactions are available by 23% in the textbooks of Islamic education for the high school.

As shown in Table (5), the economic values were more frequent in the eighth grade than they were in the other grades (N. 27, 29%), which could be attributed to that the first stage of adolescence (11-14 years) is characterized by rapid biological changes from which new interests in the economic aspects of life emerge (e.g. desire to save up, economical spending, keenness on practicing useful and excellent work praised and admired by others).

## Aesthetic/Environmental Aspect

Table (6)

Distributions of the aesthetic/environmental values included in the activities of the English textbooks for the higher basic school

Evaluation	Eighth grade		Ninth grade		Tenth grade		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Attention to personal hygiene	22%	2		5	3%	3	30%	10
Aquatic wealth care	11%	1	%14	2	%1	1	12%	4
Physical health	11%	1	-	-	2%	2	9%	3
The preservation of the environment	22%	2	%21	3	1%	1	18%	6
Enjoyment of the beauty of the universe	22%	2	%14	2	1%	1	15%	5
Care of the livestock	11%	1	%7	1	2%	2	12%	4
Prohibition of corruption in the land	-	-	%7	1	-	-	3%	1
Total	27%	9	%42	14	30%	10	100%	33

Table (6) shows the value of “attention to personal hygiene” as it was the most frequent educational value within the aesthetic/environmental aspect. This particular value was found to occur 10 times (=30% of the total values included in the textbooks of higher basic school). This may be attributed to the importance of personal hygiene of students at this stage in terms of the biological changes of their bodies and the attention they require. Then, the value of “preserving the environment” came second due to the fact that environmental safety includes health and aesthetic aspects that contribute to provide a right educational environment for learning. This result is consistent with Jaroudi(2011) showing the aesthetic recreational values in the last rank (=8.4%), Shdefat (2009) showing the environmental values in fourth rank in the English textbooks for ninth grade and Nahed (2009) showing the aesthetic values in the third and last place.

As also shown in Table 6 above, the aesthetic/environmental values were more frequent in ninth grade than they were in the other grades (N. 14, 42%). This could be attributed to the ages of students (15 years old), it is interesting to develop self-inclinations in terms of interest in health and sports education, forming correct physical habits in a healthy environment as they grow.

### Recommendations

In the light of the results of the study above, the researchers recommend the following two points:

Developing the content of the activities encountered in the English textbooks for the higher basic school in light of the value system with its spiritual, social, economic and aesthetic/environmental aspects.

Including the content of the activities in the English textbooks for the higher basic school in light of the value system with its spiritual, social, economic and aesthetic/environmental aspects in a well-adjusted and orderly distribution.

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