

Developing an Understanding of Teaching Philosophy of Islamic Education at School Level in Pakistan and Austria: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

A comparative content analysis of textbooks of Islamic education at school level in Austrian society and in a society with strong position of Islam is the major objective of the study. Thematic analysis with deductive way of coding is used to analyze the content of text books of Islamic education to be taught in the public sector schools and for the data collected through interviews from administrative body, curriculum developers, head teachers and teachers teaching Islamic education and Muslim community in Austria and Pakistan. Objectives of the study are to determine the philosophy of teaching Islamic education from 1st to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria and Pakistan. Population of the study is comprised of administrative body of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich), teachers of Islamic education working with schools of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich), Muslim community living in Vienna as well as textbooks of Islamic education to be taught at elementary school level in Vienna. While, administrative body of School Education Department, Punjab and head teachers and teachers teaching Islamic studies at public sector school level in Punjab Province of Pakistan was focus of the study. In the study, convenient sampling is used for administrative body of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich), teachers of Islamic studies teaching in schools of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich), administrative body of School Education Department, Punjab Province, and curriculum developers of Curriculum Wing, Islamabad, head teachers and teachers in schools of Punjab Province of Pakistan. All the text books of Islamic education from 1st to 5th class have been selected to achieve the objectives of the study. The interview data has been collected through personal visits, using SKYPE and email. The study is significant for the school education department, education ministries, NGOs working for school, curriculum developers, and policy makers as well as for teachers and parents of Austrian and Pakistani society. School education department can reform the textbooks of Islamic education at secondary school level in both countries.

Keywords: Textbooks, Islamic Education, Philosophy, Comparative Analysis

Introduction

“Islamic Education is the educational process through which children are educated with the conscious guidance which includes the mind, emotion, spirit and physical to produce a civilized human being (Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady, 1987). In the Pakistan’s Education Policy 1998-2010 the objectives of teaching of Islamic Education are elaborated as “Education and training should enable the citizens of Pakistan to lead their lives according to the teachings of Islam as laid down in the Qur’an and Sunnah and to educate and train them as a true practicing Muslim”. (Pakistan’s National Education Policy: 1998-2010:2). According to UNESCO (1997) in the report titled,

“A Study on Primary School Curriculum and Textbook in Pakistan” the general goals of the Primary Education Curriculum are to provide for the overall growth and development of the child, to create in the child a sense of citizenship in community, country and world and to promote intellectual development of the child which includes literacy in languages, numeracy in Mathematics, inquiry in Science, problem-solving in Social Studies and inculcating values in Islamiyat. Primary education is offered at primary school and starts at the age of 5 and lasts for 5 years. Mostly in rural areas, the availability of education is limited and many teachers have not received required professional training (Education System Pakistan, 2015). According to (Heera, 2015) the aims of teaching Islamic education includes to encourage students to acquire positive attitudes, develop balanced personalities, and appreciate knowledge; to work closely together with parents to provide a secure, nurturing and motivating environment for children to grow and be mature, to make students more aware of Allah and their responsibility to serve Him and propagate His message; to teach students how to prepare for their ultimate objective: success in the life hereafter and to help establish in students the firm commitment and dedication to Islam as the internal source of guidance. Islam is taught in schools in Austria to Muslims (Berglund, 2015, p-3). In 1997 the Islamic Religious Pedagogical Academy (IRPA) was established and approved by the Austrian Ministry of Teaching and Cultural Issues (Berglund, 2015). A number of religious schools including Muslim schools exist in Austria (Berglund, 2015,p-14).

Research Questions

1. What is the philosophy of teaching Islamic education at school level in Austria and Pakistan?
2. What is the pedagogical criteria for teaching of Islamic education in Austria and Pakistan?
3. What are similarities and differences in the objectives, targeted learning outcomes and content of textbooks of Islamic education at school level in Austria and Pakistan?

Methodology

Population of the Study

The purpose of the study is to make a comparative analysis of philosophy of teaching Islamic education, pedagogical criteria, targeted learning outcomes, content and prospects of teaching Islamic education at public sector school level in Austria and Pakistan. The population of the study is comprised of Islamic education textbooks to be taught at school level in Austria and Pakistan, curriculum developers, head teachers as well as teachers teaching Islamic studies at elementary level in Punjab Province of Pakistan. While, administrative body, teachers teaching Islamic education in schools of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) as well as Muslim community living in Vienna is the population of study.

Validity of Interview Questions

Interview questions have been developed for the curriculum developers, head teachers and teachers. Validity of interview questions was determined through experts from both countries.

Data Collection

Textbooks to be taught in public sector schools from 1st class to 5th class have been collected in Austria and Pakistan. Interviews has been conducted from the administrative body, teachers of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) and Pakistani community in Austria via personal visits and data was collected from Pakistan through personal visit from administrative body, head teachers and teachers of school education department of Punjab province of Pakistan.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis with deductive way of coding is used in the content analysis of the text books of 1st class to 5th class text books of Islamic education to be taught in the public sector schools in Austria and Pakistan. Thematic analysis was also used for the data collected through interviews. The collected data has been analyzed keeping in view objectives of the study. Philosophy of teaching Islamic education, objectives of teaching Islamic education, targeted learning outcomes of teaching Islamic education, similarities and dissimilarities in the content of text books of Islamic education from 1st to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria and Pakistan. Except this, pedagogical criteria for teaching of Islamic education in both countries have been determined. Thematic analysis has been used in the analysis of content of the textbooks as well as data collected through interviews. A deductive way of coding has been used in the analysis of the data. Islamic education is comprised of 1. Beliefs and 2. Practices. Thematic analysis of text books of Islamic education has been done regarding beliefs and practices.

Participants of the study in Pakistan are in the opinion philosophy of teaching Islamic education has positive effects on the thinking of students. They are in the opinion that content of textbooks of Islamic education is socially accepted. They accepted that teaching of Islamic education has prominent effects on the personalities of students regarding to promote social ethics in the family and social life. They consider that it is essential to teach Islamic education. In this way, society will become a truly Muslim society. The content will promote understanding and comprehension more about Quran and Sunnah. The participants of study of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) are in opinion that teaching of Islamic education at school level in Austria is promoting the message of peace and developing positive attitude in the Muslim students in Austria.

Results

Findings of the study are followings.

1. Basic beliefs of Islam called the pillars of Islam have been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Pakistan than in Austria.
2. Social ethics have been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria than in Pakistan.
3. Nationalism has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria than in Pakistan.
4. The concept of peace has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria in Pakistan.
5. The concept of respecting others has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria in Pakistan.
6. The concept of respect for other religions has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria in Pakistan.
7. Preaching Islam has been more elaborated in the Islamic education text books in public sector schools in Austria in Pakistan.
8. Curriculum developers of Pakistan are in the opinion that philosophy of teaching Islamic education is to promote ideology of Islam in the next generation.
9. Head teachers of Pakistan believe that philosophy of teaching Islamic education is to promote Islamic beliefs and ethics in the incoming generation.
10. Teachers of Pakistan are in the opinion that philosophy of teaching Islamic education is

to promote the concept of humanism in the next generation.

11. Curriculum developers, head teachers and teachers of Pakistan hold the view that there is no specific pedagogical criteria for teaching of Islamic education at school level and there is need of training regarding teaching of Islamic education at school level.

12. Curriculum developers in Pakistan are in the opinion that text books of Islamic education are promoting ideology of Islam and ethics in the new generation.

13. Curriculum developers in Pakistan consider there is need to define and condemn religious extremism and terrorism in the content of textbooks of Islamic education at school level.

14. Curriculum developers in Pakistan believe that Pakistani society will become more religious through continuous teachings of Islamic education at school level.

15. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that teaching of Islamic education is promoting peace in the society in Pakistan to some extent.

16. Head teachers in Pakistan hold the view that there is need to add the concept of peace, importance of peace and peace practices in the content.

17. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that teaching of Islamic education is developing daily religious practices and social ethics in the personalities of students.

18. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that there is need to refine the content of Islamic education in view of social and national circumstances.

19. Head teachers in Pakistan hold the view that teaching of Islamic education will mature the Pakistani society as a religious society.

20. Curriculum developers, head teachers and teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that content of Islamic education is socially accepted in Pakistan.

21. Teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that there is need to refine the content of Islamic education textbooks within the passage of time keeping in view issues and problems in the society.

22. Teachers in Pakistan believe that Pakistani society will become more religious through the continuous teachings of Islamic education at school level.

23. Administrative body and teachers of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) are in the opinion that philosophy, basic objectives of teaching of Islamic education in Austria are to promote the Islamic message of peace, humanity and respect in Austrian society.

24. Muslim community in Austria is in the opinion that the philosophy and basic objectives of teaching Islamic education is to promote the Islamic beliefs in the next generation.

25. Administrative body and teachers of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) and Muslim community suppose that teachers teaching Islamic education are well trained.

Conclusion

The study has been conducted on the comparison of teaching philosophy, objectives of teaching, targeted learning outcomes and content of text books of Islamic education and prospects of teaching Islamic education in Austria and Pakistan. In Pakistan, the analysis of collected data represents that major focus is on the basic beliefs of Islam and history of Islam than Islamic socialization, ethics and peace. While, in Austria, the analysis of data represents that major focus is on Islamic socialization, ethics and peace than basic beliefs. Basic beliefs of Islam called the pillars of Islam have been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Pakistan than in Austria. Social ethics have been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria than in Pakistan. Nationalism has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st to 5th class in public sector

schools in Austria in Pakistan. The concept of peace has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria than in Pakistan. The concept of respecting others has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria than in Pakistan. The concept of respect for other religions has been more elaborated in the text books of Islamic education from 1st class to 5th class in public sector schools in Austria than in Pakistan. Head teachers of Pakistan are in the opinion that philosophy of teaching Islamic education is to promote Islamic beliefs and ethics in the incoming generation. Teachers of Pakistan are in the opinion that philosophy of teaching Islamic education is to promote the concept of humanism in the next generation. Curriculum developers, head teachers and teachers of Pakistan suppose that there is no specific pedagogical criteria for teaching of Islamic education at school level and there is need of training regarding teaching of Islamic education at school level. Curriculum developers in Pakistan are in the opinion that text books of Islamic education are promoting ideology of Islam and ethics in the new generation. Curriculum developers in Pakistan hold the view there is need to define and condemn religious extremism and terrorism in the content of textbooks of Islamic education at school level.

Curriculum developers in Pakistan are in the opinion that Pakistani society will become more religious through continuous teachings of Islamic education at school level. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that teaching of Islamic education is promoting peace in the society in Pakistan to some extent. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that there is need to add the concept of peace, importance of peace and peace practices in the content. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that teaching of Islamic education is developing daily religious practices and social ethics in the personalities of students. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that there is need to refine the content of Islamic education in view of social and national circumstances. Head teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that teaching of Islamic education will mature the Pakistani society as a religious society. Curriculum developers, head teachers and teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that content of Islamic education is socially accepted in Pakistan. Teachers in Pakistan are in the opinion that there is need to refine the content of Islamic education textbooks within the passage of time keeping in view issues and problems in the society. Participants of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) are in the opinion that philosophy basic objectives of teaching of Islamic education in Austria are to promote the Islamic message of peace, humanity and respect in Austrian society. Muslim community in Austria is in the opinion that the philosophy and basic objectives of teaching Islamic education is to promote the Islamic beliefs in the next generation. Participants of Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich) and Muslim community are in the opinion that teachers teaching Islamic education are well trained. In the textbooks of Islamic education in both countries, Islamic socialization has been included but the major gap exists in the form of lack of proper definitions of peace, honesty, brotherhood, ethics and respect.

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