

An Analysis of the Critical Thinking for Citizenship Education in the Curriculum at Secondary Level

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Abstract

The fundamental goal of citizenship education is to prepare dynamic citizens who should have the ability to create a peaceful atmosphere in their society. This objective can only be achieved by developing higher order thinking skills which can guide the learner to become reflective and avoid deceptive information. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the existence of critical thinking for citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level. Through an in depth review of literature, five elements of critical thinking for citizenship education were identified. To analyze those five elements, a checklist was developed with its validity of .81. In order to analyze the three sources qualitatively, at first stage, four textbooks, i.e. English, Urdu, Pak-studies and Islamiyat of secondary level with respect to citizenship education were analyzed. At the second stage, curriculum document of these above mentioned four subjects were analyzed and at the third stage the education policy was also analyzed. The fourth stage comprised a questionnaire which was used to collect the data through survey/quantitative method from a 100 teachers who were teaching those subjects in order to verify/justify the qualitative data. On the basis of the findings of this study, it was concluded that critical thinking for citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level was not emphasized upon appropriately.

Keywords: Critical thinking, Citizenship education, Curriculum, Citizens

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Introduction

For promoting a strong civil society the role of citizenship education is mandatory (Elms, 2001). However, many people narrowly perceive that major function of citizenship education in schools is to prepare 'good citizens'. The ones, who should obey societal rules, respect human values, perform responsibilities and are aware of formal democratic principles (Gearon, 2003). It is an interesting fact that many politicians would satisfy at the presence of a passive citizen (good citizen), but the objective of Citizenship Education is the preparation of the dynamic and active citizens who are enabled, critically drew in with and attempt to influence the dimension of social events. Thus, such a critical distinction must be analyzed in both policy and practice in the context of active and passive citizenship (Ross, 2012).

Thus, in the broader sense, to meet the challenges of the 21 century, schools have to prepare well-informed and active citizens, and it is impossible without promoting critical thinking (Islin & Turner, 2002). Because it is an open secret that rapidly growing intolerance, xenophobia and terrorism in the society is a major global issue. Now particularly youngsters are the victims of this dilemma who are enchanted by the social media. Therefore, it is the need of the time to develop the higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking. Psychologists and educators of all the times Foresman, Fosel and Watson (2017) cited John Dewey (1913), Max Werthimer (1945) and Winn (2004) were of the view that thinking productively is far better instead of memorizing or guessing the correct answers. So critical thinking is characterized as a fine skill, which focuses on thinking reflectively, productively and ultimately evaluating the evidence (Santrock, 2014). Similarly, Moreno (2015) explained that critical thinking is a process of systematically assessing the information and drawing an inference based upon evidence. Therefore, the major goal of citizenship education is to teach *how* to think rather than *what* to think. It is a fine tip to live in a society which is facing vast amount of information that is just a click away from our learners. Our immature minds are unable to distinguish between facts and opinions. Many students do not think critically even about the deceptive and unreliable information. To add to it, they are not capable of identifying propaganda or biasness. As our schools spend much time to convince their students to reach at single correct answer rather than motivate them to develop critical thinking by coming up with new ideas (Santrock, 2014). Thus, many experts are of the view that classroom should be managed to teach critical thinking repeatedly and explicitly (Halpern, 2003). Teachers should ask students to analyze, infer, create, evaluate and reflect rather than just define, state or describe (Santrock, 2014). Moreno (2015) cited Nickerson (1988) proposed that critical thinking is composed of four major elements:

1. Meta-cognition
2. Motivation
3. A set of components about the issue be considered
4. A set of component skills

Similarly Ennis (1987) proposed 12 skills of critical thinking. Another educationist Clark (2007) described 10 elements of critical thinking which are crucial for citizenship education. By considering the opinions of all the above mentioned experts and of many other suggestions from the literature, the researchers have carefully pointed out the following five elements of critical thinking which made it a significant dimension of citizenship education

1. Spirit to resolve conflicts by listening to others
2. Ability to provide well-reasoned conclusion and solutions
3. Ability to think open mindedly within alternative system of thought
4. Effective communication with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems
5. Skills to participate effectively in public life

Critical thinking, or critical analysis, is logical and vivid thinking that involves critique. When school children are asked to give rationale or some supporting evidence to support their reasoning, they discuss controversial issues from different contexts (Lenhardt & Steele, 2005). In this way, they assess and question what other people say instead of accepting it as a truth. Critical thinking is an important dimension of citizenship education which demands a dialogical, reflexive and socially embedded learning environment. However, many students and teachers find it difficult to proceed through dialogical and reflexive educational processes.

Objectives of the Study

1. To prepare a 'checklist which may indicate the elements of critical thinking for citizenship education.
2. To analyze the four curriculum documents 2006, and textbooks of same 4 subjects viz. English, Urdu, Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat and education policy 2009 about the existence of critical thinking for citizenship education.
3. To find out the opinions of teachers teaching these subjects at secondary level for promoting critical thinking for citizenship education in the existing curriculum.

Research Questions

1. What are the major elements of critical thinking for inculcating citizenship education through curriculum at secondary level?
2. To what extent are the elements of the critical thinking for citizenship education existing in curriculum documents 2006, textbooks for the 4 subjects and in education policy 2009 at secondary school level?
3. Does the secondary school curriculum have necessary content to promote critical thinking for citizenship education in the students?
4. Do the teachers teaching four subjects perceive that the current curriculum and their practices are successful for developing critical thinking with respect to citizenship education?

Research Methodology

The objectives of this research study were achieved by using 3 instruments in the context of qualitative and quantitative (mixed) methods.

A. Qualitative Method

At first stage' the qualitative study was carried out in which the analysis was made about the three sources such as curriculum documents (2006), the education policy (2009) and four textbooks, viz. English, Urdu, Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat at secondary level with respect to citizenship education of Punjab Province of Pakistan. Thus these three sources mentioned above were analyzed qualitatively with the help of following 2 instruments.

1. Checklist: A checklist was developed for the content analysis of the three sources mentioned above with the help of literature review. In this way 5 elements, of critical thinking with respect to citizenship education were identified. The validity of this checklist was found .81 by a panel of experts.
2. Relational analysis model: This was the second research tool which was chosen for content analysis. This model was also adopted by Wikinson and Birmingham (2015) for content analysis of similar type related to this research study. This tool was found very useful for identifying themes/elements/issues found in the curriculum, textbooks and education policy related to critical thinking for citizenship education. In the light of this model the content was analyzed in 8 steps as follow:

- i. Specify the research questions
- ii. Frame the analysis
- iii. Specify the type of relationship to examine
- iv. Code and categorized the text (s)
- v. Elicit the relationship
- vi. Coding of the relationship
- vii. Analysis of the relationship
- viii. Mapping the relationship

B. Quantitative Method

The data were also collected quantitatively from a fourth source from the teachers who were currently teaching the above mentioned four subjects through a questionnaire. All those 5 elements of critical thinking identified for citizenship education for the preparation of instrument number 1 were aligned to develop the third instrument of five point Lickert scale. This tool was used to know the point of view of teachers about the existence of the elements of critical thinking for promoting citizenship education in the real situation of the school. For this purpose researchers randomly selected 26 schools of both male and female from one Tehsil of Lahore. Then 100 male/female educators were purposefully selected who were directly involved in teaching those 4 subjects selected for analysis of this research study. Thus the data obtained from two stages of qualitative and quantitative analysis from the 4 sources viz. 4 curriculum documents 2006, 4 textbooks (English, Urdu, Islamiyat and Pakistan Studies), educational policy 2009 and teacher survey have been presented after analysis in table 1 and table 2. Its graphical presentation may also be seen on the next page. The rationale for using both qualitative and quantitative (mixed) method was to comprehensively analyze the data and ensuring the existence of critical thinking as a significant dimension of citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level. The procedure for calculating the validity is given as follows:

Number of items considered relevant by all the panelists=11, Number of terms=15, ICVI= $11/15=.73$

NOTE: Interpretation of I-CVIs: If the I-CVI is higher than 79 %, the item will be appropriate. If it is between 70 and 79 %, it needs revision. If it is less than 70 %, it is eliminated.

Table 1*Determination of Validity for Critical thinking*

Sr. No	Item Statements	I-CVI	Remarks
i.	Does this curriculum develop the spirit to resolve conflicts by listening to others (analyzing power)?	.87	Appropriate
ii.	Does this curriculum raise the ability to provide well reasoned conclusion and solution?	.80	Appropriate
iii.	Does this curriculum strengthen the ability to think open mindedly within alternate systems of thought?	.80	Appropriate
iv.	Does this curriculum provoke affective communication with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems?	.80	Appropriate
v.	Does this curriculum teach skills to participate effectively in public life?	.80	Appropriate
vi.	S-CVI	0.81	Appropriate

Similarly, for quantitative analysis, a sample of 100 teachers was randomly selected from one Tehsil of Lahore district who were teaching the above mentioned four subjects at secondary level. This method was adopted to verify the existence of critical thinking as one important dimension of citizenship education in curriculum and textbooks.

The findings of this study are given as follows:

Table 2*Critical Thinking for Citizenship Education at Secondary Level in four Subjects*

	Spirit to resolve conflicts by listening to others	Ability to provide well-reasoned conclusion and solutions	Ability to think open-mindedly with in alternative system of thought	Effective communication with others in figuring out solution to complex problem	Skills to participate effectively in public life
English 9	0	8	8	25	33
Urdu 9	11	16	0	16	0
Pak.study9	25	50	0	50	0
Pak. study 10	13	0	0	13	0
English 10	31	15	23	46	23
Islamiyat10	47	6	41	41	0
Urdu10	7	0	4	4	0
Edu. Policy	100	100	0	100	0
CD. English	0	0	0	0	0
CD. Urdu	0	0	0	0	0
CD. Islamiyat	0	0	0	0	0
CD.PK. Study	0	0	0	0	0
Teacher survey	11	3	12	3	2
Results					
χ^2	220.47	264.78	50.29	226.66	25.89
<i>p</i> value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

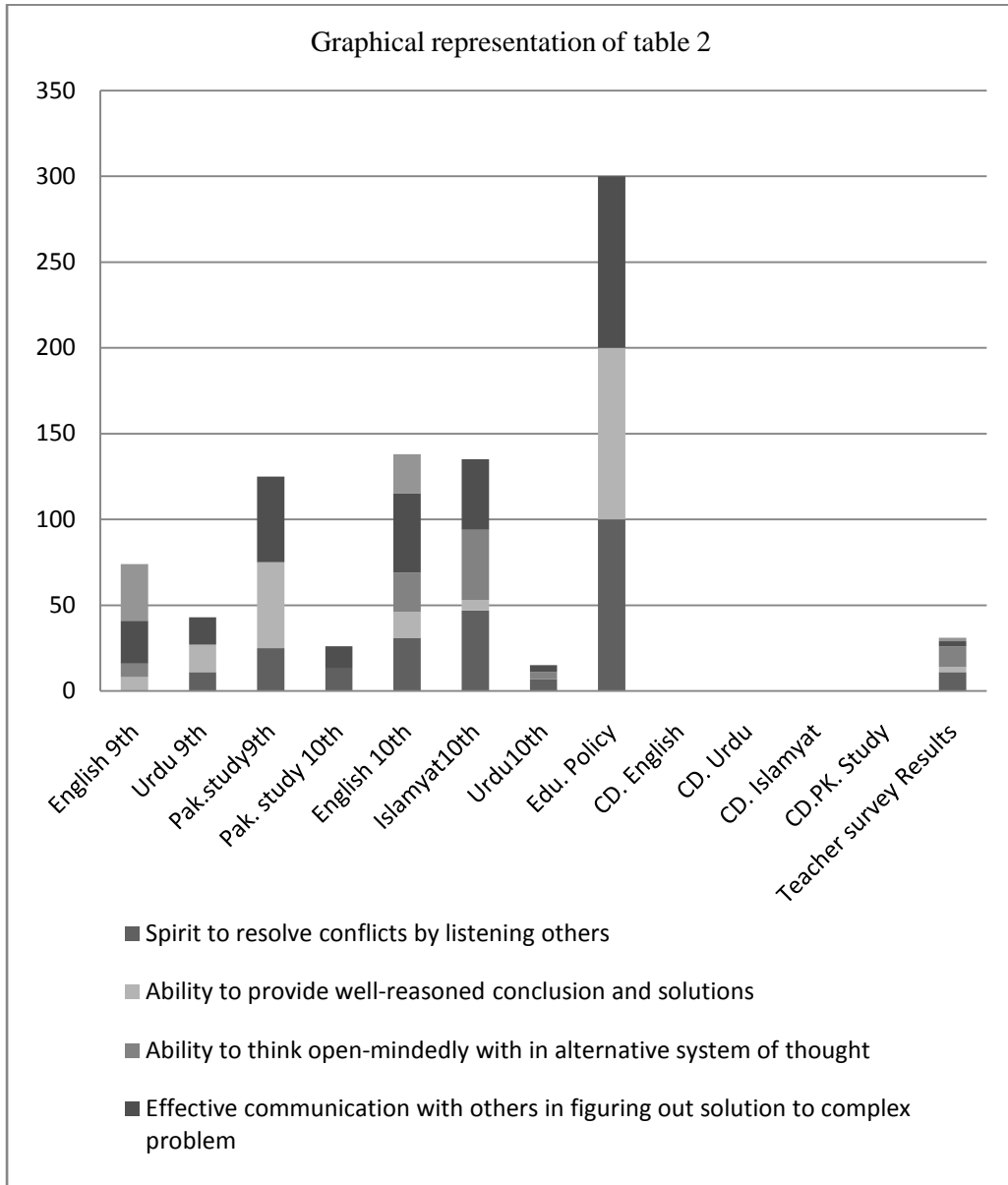


Figure 1

(i). Spirit to resolve conflicts by listening other

Spirit to resolve conflicts by listening to others is an essential part/element of critical thinking. It creates conformity and solidarity for peaceful society. It was analyzed as follows:

- Textbooks: English 9th had no such content, i.e. zero percent while English 10th had 31% content about this element of critical thinking. Urdu 9th had 11% while Urdu 10th had 7% ratio for the presence of content relevant to it. Pakistan studies 9th had 25% and Pakistan studies 10th had 13% content about it. However, Islamiyat had a reasonable figure of 47% for containing material about the critical thinking for spirit to resolve the conflicts by listening to others.
- Education policy: Education policy had fully emphasized over this element with a ratio of 100%.
- Curriculum documents: Curriculum documents of all the four subjects viz. English, Urdu, Pakistan studies and Islamiyat had absolutely no mention about this element of critical thinking, i.e. zero percent.
- Teacher survey: Teachers' survey results depicted 11% presence of content in the curriculum in this regard.

Therefore, it may be deduced that education policy fully supported this view whereas textbooks had a partial contribution towards this element. However, curriculum document totally ignored it. These findings have been somewhat exaggerated by the teachers' survey about the element of critical thinking.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved to contribute to the element of 'spirit to resolve conflicts by listening others' under the aspect of critical thinking for citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level.

(ii) Ability to provide well-reasoned conclusions and solutions

Ability to provide well-reasoned conclusions and solutions is an indication of a wise and an intellectual personality. This element has been analyzed as follows:

- Textbooks: English 9th had 8% and English 10th had 15% content about the element of critical thinking. Whereas Urdu 9th had 16% but Urdu 10th had no content about it, i.e. zero percent. Pakistan Studies 9th had 50%, however, Pakistan Studies 10th had zero percent content about the critical thinking with respect to the ability to provide well-reasoned conclusions and solutions. Islamiyat 10th comprised of 6% content about it.

- *Education policy*: Education policy had complete guidance about this element, i.e. 100%.
- *Curriculum documents*: Curriculum documents of all the four subjects had no emphasis upon this element at all, i.e. zero percent.
- *Teachers' survey*: Teachers' survey result reflected only 3% presence of this element in the curriculum about critical thinking at secondary level.

Therefore, it may be concluded that education policy fully and textbooks partially emphasized about this element but curriculum document ignored this component of critical thinking. This has been reflected by the teachers' survey to some extent as well.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved to contribute about the element of 'ability to provide well-reasoned conclusions and solutions under the dimension of critical thinking of citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level.

(iii) Ability to think open mindedly with an alternate system of thoughts

This value will cause people to respect and understand each other, their neighbors and to teach them how the social environment becomes peaceful, which is possible only by broad-mindedness. This component was analyzed as follows:

- *Textbooks*: English 9th contained this element with 8% value while English 10th with 23%. Similarly Urdu 9th had zero percent while Urdu 10th had 4% content about the ability to think open mindedly with an alternate system of thoughts. The textbooks of Pakistan studies for both 9th and 10th classes had absolutely no mention of content regarding this element, i.e. zero percent. However, Islamiyat 10th had 41% content about this element of critical thinking.
- *Education policy*: Education policy had zero percent advice about this element of critical thinking.
- *Curriculum documents*: Curriculum documents of all the four subjects have no emphasis upon this element of citizenship education at secondary level.
- *Teachers' survey*: Teachers' survey result provided an insight with a prominent figure of 12% about the presence of this element in the curriculum for critical thinking.

Therefore, it may be concluded that Islamiyat and English textbooks contained this element to some extent. All the other sources have totally neglected this element. Teachers' survey also gave some stereotypical finding about this element of critical thinking.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved to contribute about the element of 'ability to think open mindedly with alternate system of thoughts' under the aspect of critical thinking of citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level.

(IV) Effective communication with other in figuring out solution to complex problem

It is a fundamental part of critical thinking. With the help of this element critical situations may be dealt efficiently to develop harmony among contradictory issues of the society. This element may be analyzed as follows:

- *Textbooks*: English 9th contained 29% and English 10th had a more significant figure of 46% for this element. Urdu 9th had 16% and Urdu 10th had 4% ratio for this element. Pakistan studies 9th contained 50% whereas Pakistan studies 10th had 13% contribution in the textbook with this regard. Islamiyat 10th has 41% emphasis about this component.
- *Education policy*: Education policy provided a wholesome guidance for this element, i.e. 100%.
- *Curriculum documents*: Curriculum documents of all the subjects showed no contribution for this element at all, i.e. zero percent.
- *Teachers' survey*: Teachers' survey result reflected only 3% inclusion of this element in the curriculum which indicated that this element of critical thinking is ignored in the curriculum.

Therefore, it may be deduced that Education Policy contained 100% guidance about this element and all Textbooks partially included this element but Curriculum Documents ignored this component entirely. This result had been affirmed by the results of the teachers' survey as well.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved to contribute about the element of 'effective communication with other in figuring out solution to complex problems' under the aspect of critical thinking for citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level.

(v) Skills to participate effectively in public life

In order to ensure the correct functioning of the society and hence the state, every citizen must fulfill their duties to the state by engaging in public activities. These activities can be in the form of, participation in public debates, performing civil duties, etc. This can be analyzed as follows:

- *Textbooks:* The textbook of English 9th contained 33% and English 10th had 23% content about this element. All the other textbooks have completely ignored content about the 'skills to participate effectively in public life', i.e. zero percent.
- *Education Policy:* Education Policy had absolutely no guidance about this important element of critical thinking for citizenship education.
- *Curriculum Documents:* The curriculum documents of all the four subjects included in this study did not have any material regarding this element.
- *Teachers' Survey:* Teachers' Survey gave a rightful insight into these findings, with a value of only 2%.

Thus, these findings showed that only the textbooks of English partially included the content about this element. Whereas all the other sources, including textbooks, education policy and curriculum documents have no mention of this important aspect of critical thinking, i.e. zero percent. Majority of the teachers also supported these findings, and only 2% teachers gave their views in favor of its existence in the curriculum which means that the remaining 98% teachers viewed that element 'skill to participate effectively in the public life' for critical thinking is absent in the curriculum for citizenship education at secondary level.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved to contribute about the element of 'skills to participate effectively in public life' under the aspect of critical thinking of citizenship education.

Discussion

In developing our self-understanding, our political institutions and even our science, critical thinking is one of the finest human mind faculties. It can best confront the epistemological challenges like skepticism, causal explanations or statistical claims and human errors (Solso, Maclin, & Maclin, 2016). Critical thinking has been deeply rooted within the spectrum of human reflective thinking. Therefore, good critical thinkers should hold the tools of logic and reasoning along with understanding the complexities of language and expression. Critical thinking improves the inquiry of truth and falsehood which allows to communicate and share judgments to others. Students must learn to make a distinction between the statements or proposition of both truth and falsehood because both can't sustain at a time for one statement (Foresman et al. 2017). For this particular research study 2 research instruments (Checklist and Relational Analysis) were used to analyze the qualitative data obtained from 3 sources viz. curriculum documents 2006, 4 textbooks and educational policy 2009. Whereas the questionnaire aligned to checklist was prepared as the third instrument. This tool was used for quantitative analysis of data obtained from a sample

of 100 teachers who were teaching those 4 subjects at secondary level. Thus, this mixed methodology was based on using the 3 research instruments for collecting as well as analyzing of data to get authentic findings to reach at the comprehensive conclusion. The Checklist was prepared after a comprehensive review of literature. There were numerous elements of critical thinking were initially pointed out at the primary stage for preparing the Checklist. However with the suggestions of the panel of experts, the researcher finalized the 5 elements of critical thinking as a one dimension of citizenship education. As some elements were overlapping with other dimensions of citizenship education. Researchers were determined to find out 5 elements of critical thinking which have been given with analysis in table 1 and table 2. The second instrument was named as 'relational analysis' which was basically aimed to analyze the content of 3 sources as mentioned above. This tool was adopted by Wikinson and Birmingham (2015). Therefore this tool aided successfully for identifying/exploring the relationship between themes or issues present in the curriculum or textbooks. This instrument was specified to analyze the content in 8 stages. In this way it did not only filtered out the data obtained from the first instrument of Checklist but was much helpful at the most difficult and complex stage of exploring the relationship of critical thinking with respect to the citizenship education. The third instrument was a questionnaire to verify the qualitative data obtained from earlier 3 sources by the most concerned stakeholders i.e. teachers teaching those 4 subjects. In short, the data obtained or analyzed qualitatively or quantitatively was not only consistent but also complimentary to each other.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this research study, it can be concluded that critical thinking for citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level was not mentioned appropriately. Similarly, all the three sources which were analyzed qualitatively viz. Textbooks, Education Policy and Curriculum Documents were not equally involved to contribute towards all the five elements/components of critical thinking for citizenship education and Teachers' survey verified that also. This means that both qualitative and quantitative analyses were to some extent verifying and complementing each other about the existence/absence of critical thinking in the curriculum. There were five prominent elements of critical thinking, which had been analyzed with the help of a checklist for qualitative analysis from three different sources such as textbooks, educational policy 2009 and curriculum documents 2006 about the four subjects such as English, Urdu, Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat. Although there were different percentages about the existence of five elements of critical thinking for citizenship education in the curriculum at secondary level but it was evident that overall the existence of critical thinking for promoting citizenship education was not satisfactory. It was either ignored totally such as

in the Curriculum Documents or partially present, for instance, in the Textbooks of all the four subjects. Similarly, it can be seen in the education policy 2009 where two elements were totally ignored but three elements were 100% present. The quantitative analysis of teachers' survey obtained from the teachers, who were teaching those subjects at secondary level, reflected the situation in their view with a very low percentage of containing all the five elements of critical thinking for citizenship education at secondary level.

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