The Albanian "Social Education" Textbook and the Construction of Self-Concept

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the content of the social education textbooks of the elementary school in Albania, and to identify the principal element of self-concept construction. The main objectives are to analyze the texts content, analyze the element of self-concept and compare the finds. The principal hypothesis is that the social education textbook include the principal self-concept sources, like motivation, thoughts, feeling, and effects of other peoples` reaction, social comparison and accessibility. It will be used a desk research and literature reviews of all social education textbooks of Albanians` elementary school and the most important study of self-concept construction. From the analyze of the textbook content emerge that the principal sources of self-concept are present, except the feeling and accessibility.

Keywords: The Albanian "Social Education" Textbook and the Construction of Self-Concept

1. Introduction

The concept of self is a form of knowledge that is builds within the subject's experience through detection, organization and fixation. In memory of the information relevant to the self; once organized in the mind, these structures of knowledge perform the function of direction and behavior organization. People construct the self-concept in much the same way as they form impressions of others.

According to self-perception theory, they also look at their own behavior to infer their own characteristics. They also use thoughts and feelings and other people's reactions. However, there are differences in how we perceive ourselves and how we perceive others, producing actor–observer differences in attribution (Baumeister & Bushman 2011:71-72). Knowledge is organized around multiple self-aspects, which are not always a coherent structure, but by means of selectivity we manage to make a coherent structure of the self.

The first element that we have to highlight is the nature of the self. The self is both cognitive and social construction, which means that the particular cognitive limitations and advances at each developmental period will dictate the emerging of nuclear self, and the socialization experiences will dictate the content and the value of the self (Harte 2012: 2).

Even the "self", as a psychological concept, has undergone numerous redefinitions that have led to conceptual confusion regarding its multiple meanings. Today a multi-faceted representation makes its way, which, in line with the interpersonal, relational and intersubjective vision of the multiplicity of the self, describes the self as a complex set of emotions, memories, attitudes and impulses that constitute the personality. In this sense, the self becomes so multifaceted that it constitutes in its many facets and functions the bridge to understand the structure of personality through memories.

Self-concepts are cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world. The ability to know the Self emerges when there are two conditions: the ability to produce and respond to symbols and the ability to assume the attitudes of others. Mead was the first scholars that identify the difference between "me" and "I". So, I: aware subject, able to know, take initiatives and reflect on oneself Me: how much of the Self is known by the ego (the way I see myself); Me material (the "ME" body); Social Me (others in "Me"); Me spiritual (the "Me" aware and capable of reflection).

Thus, if the self is an "I" that thinks and a "Me" that is the content of those thoughts, one important part of this "me" content involves mental concepts or ideas of who one is, was, and will become (Leary, Tangney 2012: 72-73).

The term self-concept is a general term used to refer to how someone thinks about, evaluates or perceives themselves. To be aware of oneself is to have a concept of oneself. According to Baumeister the self concept is the individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is. Self Concept is an important term for both social psychology and humanism (Baumeister 1999).

Lewis (1990) suggests that development of a concept of self has two aspects: Lewis differentiates *the existential self*, which is the first to appear and allows one to feel a person distinct from others and endowed with continuity over time, from *the categorical self* or the ability to define oneself in categorical terms of age, sex and size (Eysenck 2004:550).

The child realizes that they exist as a separate entity from others and that they continue to exist over time and space. If they are observed in a mirror, the children, to recognize themselves, can resort to contingent indications, derived from the fact that the mirror image moves precisely with its movements, or morphological indications, or stable physical characteristics such as features and the look. Obviously the first to be used are the contingent clues, already at 9 months, when the little ones show more interest in their images. From the second year of life, language becomes a source of proof of recognition, through the use of self-references such as "me" and "me"; moreover, the refusal of help and the deliberate disobedience can be interpreted as signs of self-affirmation and therefore of the presence of the organization of the self. Even the fames anthropologist Marcel Mauss argues in 1938 make a distinguish between the term "persona" and "moi", when for "persona" he understand a social concept of what it means to be a person, and "moi" refers to a person`s sense of being (Stevens 1996:230).

The self emerges in an implicit form already in the first months of life, through the effect of action, with which one's own behavior can influence objects and others; the self represents one of our creation, determined by personal values and preferences, it allows us to put emphasis on some aspects more than on others, leading us to a distorted image of ourselves when compared to what others have of us. The concept of self involves cognitive aspects, it is dynamic and is modified by self-observation, experience, successes and failures; childhood represents a particularly sensitive period for this purpose.

Numerous dimensions of the self-concept have been considered in social psychology, like a self-perception theory, the accessibility, the social comparison etc.Abasic but useful distinction is between the content of self conceptions (identity), and self-evaluation (self-esteem). On one side, Identity relates to our basic values that dictate the choices we make. These choices reflect who we are and what we value (Heshmat, sitography). According to the Gestalts conception, a human being becomes a person and a social actor only in the context of his relations with others and with physical and institutional realities. On the other side, Self-esteem deals with the evaluative and emotional dimensions of the self-concept.

In everyday life these two aspects of the self-concept are closely interrelated: Self-evaluation is typically based on substantive aspects of self-concept, and identities typically have evaluative components. Within social psychology these two dimensions involve largely separate literature (Gecas 1982, p. 1-33). We can summarize some self-concepts` dimension:

1. The construction of the self-concept: The acquisition of self-awareness turns out to be a secondary process compared to the experience of the relationship with the other. The consciousness of others precedes the consciousness of oneself. People are able in the course of a symbolic interaction to acquire the role of the other and to adopt the attitude taken by their interlocutor in the comparison of themselves. In the course of symbolic interaction, people construct an identity, take on a role and negotiate rules and meanings.

2. Self-perception theory: The self-perception theory argues that people learn things about themselves from their own behaviors (people come to know themselves simply by observing their own behavior), and the environment forces working on the persons.

3. Motivation: Motivation is the activity that orients the behavior of the individual, a hypothetical concept that expresses the individual ability to organize one's own behavior in a particular direction following the action of some stimuli coming from outside. It is an interior predisposition - definable otherwise as a need, a drive or a desire - that sets in motion behavior directed towards specific objectives. Motivation is dictated both by intrinsic factors and by extrinsic factors to the person.

4. Accessibility: Thinking about actual or imagined behavior increases the accessibility of related personal characteristics, which leads to self-inferences.

5. Thoughts and feelings: More accurate inferences about the self are drawn from the thoughts and feelings of a person. Our thought and feelings provide other persons with valuable information about what they are like. That means that counseling your own thoughts and feelings can yield meaningful self-knowledge (Brown,1998: 53).

6. Effects of other people's reactions: The concept of the looking glass self demonstrates that self-relation, or how one views oneself is not a solitary phenomenon, but rather includes others. Cooley theorizes that human beings possess an

inherent tendency to reach out, interact, or socialize with those people and objects that surround them (Rousseau N., 2002, sitography).

7. Social comparison: In Festinger's original theory of social comparisons, he stresses that people wish to know themselves. He postulates that people have a basic need to maintain a stable and accurate self-view. There exists, in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinions and his abilities, and people evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparison respectively with the opinions and abilities of others(Festinger, 1954, sitography).

2. Methodology

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the content of the social education textbooks of elementary schools in Albania, and to identify the principal elements of self-concept construction. The main objectives are to analyze the texts content, the elements of self-concept and compare the findings. It will be used a desk research and literature reviews of all social education textbooks of Albanians` elementary school and the most important study of self-concept construction.

3. Results

"Education for Society 1" addresses topics such as: Me and others, Cooperation, Rules between us (courtesy, games), Rules about us (family, school, street, park etc.), Our Families (needs and desires of our families). In Chapter 1 "Me and Others" we recognize these aspects of the formation concept of ourselves:

Tab. 1:

Category	Element of Categorical Self	Wishes	Emotions	Tasks
Girls	Self Description is present	-Reading	*Missing the term "emotion"*	- Take care of the animals - Clean the house
Boys	Self Description is present	-Driving a car -Always watching Tv or Computer	*Missing the term "emotion"*	- Clean his teeth - Put the toys in their place

Category	Being useful	The relationship with parents
Girls/Boys	It is based on gender equality and activities that take place in schools, neighborhoods or public places by boys and girls.	Tell how did your parents bring you up with care and love?

"Society for Education 2" addresses topics such as: Individual Development, Needs, Desires and Rights, Responsibility to Self, Others and the Community, Rules between Us and Rules about Us, Our Path and Community. In Chapter 1 "Individual Development, Needs, Desires, and Rights," we discern these aspects of forming the concept of ourselves.

"Society for Education 3" addresses topics such as: Individuals and Groups, Communication in Society, Rules (Classes, Games), Community Services, Roads, Health and the Environment, and Production and Distribution.

"Education for Society 4" deals with topics like: Me and others, Cooperation, Rules between us (courtesy, games), Rules about us (Family, school, street, park etc.), Our Families (needs and desires of our families). In Chapter 3 "Individual Development and Identity", we distinguish these aspects of the formation concept of ourselves:

Tab. 2:

Category	Interview your self	Emotions	To choose together	Inclusion
Girls/Boys	-what are you more tired of -what pleases you more -why do I sometimes get bored - Do you have difficulties in dealing with classmates and friends	Missing the term "emotion"	"I think not only the winners but also the others need to be evaluated" "The students noted that Mirko, the Egyptian boy, had made major changes in the classroom".	A child with special needs wants to become part of a class. The teacher tells them that they can make progress like the others. The pupil must answer what did he think about this case: "Should he/she be treated as equal to you?"

"Social education 5" treats these issues: Me and the others, Cooperating, Rules between us (courtesy, games), Rules about us (Family, school, street, park etc.), our family (needs and wishes of our family). At the Capture 1 "Me and the Others" we highlight this self-concept:

Tab. 3:

Family functions	Family responsibility
Reproduction	Love
Social	Regret
Affection	Care
Economical	Help

Tab. 4: Conclusive table

Sources of the Self-Concept	Sources of the Self-Concept present in albanian texts
The construction of the self-concept	It is present the description of themselves
Self-perception theory	--------
Motivation	1-They have the possibility to choose 2-Place students in hypothetical situations. For example, how would they choose the leader of the class, how would they vote etc.
Accessibility	----------
Thoughts and feelings	1.Missing the term "emotion" 2.Thought about themselves - what concerns you more - what pleases you more - why am I bored sometimes - Which are the difficulties in dealing with classmates and friends
Effects of other people's reactions	In relation to a child with disability the student must answer what he thinks about the situation: "Should he be treated as equal to you?"
Social Comparison	"I think that not only the winners but also the others need to be evaluated. The students noted that Mirko, an Egyptian, had made major changes in the classroom" - bias

4. Discussion

Based on these results, it is obvious that the authors' approach to the education of desires and emotions is relatively stereotyped, because girls promote reading while boys work with computers or machines. Equally, it is worth stopping in the tasks they have as children. As a result, girls take care of animals and do housework (showing they are more empathetic and hardworking than boys), while boys play jaws and put their toys in their right places (so it looks as if the boys are more efficient than girls). Many researchers have shown that in Albanian primary education textbooks there are stereotyping elements like stereotyping of parenting or gaming roles (Hodaj 2013:30-38).

In the sentence "tell how did your parents bring you up with care and love?" We noticed carelessness in two points: firstly, not all children in the classroom have parents and secondly, not all are brought up with love and care. Such a question can cause unpleasant emotional reaction such as disappointment, regret for oneself, and hate towards the characters of affection that did not stay close. Regarding the fact that "will be useful for the community" we highlighted gender equality and activities that take place in schools, neighborhoods or public spaces, both by boys and girls.

Taking about motivation, we noted that they have the possibility to choose, and the teachers put students in hypothetical situations (ex how would they choose the leader of the class, how would they vote etc.). Furthermore, we highlighted the

presence of social comparison features: "I think not only the winners but also the others need to be evaluated. The students noted that Mirko, an Egyptian boy, had made major changes in the classroom". In this case, no caution has been taken to form racial prejudice. In Albania, there have been several studies on discrimination against the Egyptian community (Komisioneri për Mbrojtjen nga Diskriminimi 2014; Të Drejtat e Romëve dhe të Komuniteteve Shtegtarenë Europë).

5. Conclusion

From the analysis of the textbooks content emerges that the principal sources of self-concept are present, except the feeling and accessibility. Education through emotions is an essential question for the formation of personality and a great challenge for the authors of the textbooks. The harmonization of emotional and intuitive thinking with the rational is one of the greatest challenges of civilization (Cunico, 2008:7). For this reason, it is very important to integrate aspects of the emotional education into the textbooks. This part of educational reality represents a challenge for the Albanian researchers who should be able to bring new studies on the subject.

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