Curriculum Research

Volume 6, Issue 1
Mar. 10, 2025

Developing spiritual citizenship curriculum model in the second secondary school

Article info

Article Type:

Original Research

Authors:

Zeinab Rajabi[1]

Mohammad Javadipour[2]

Hamidreza Rezazadeh Bahadaran[3]

Morteza Samiei Zafarghandi[4]

Article History:

Received: 2024/11/20
Accepted: 2025/02/28
Published: 2025/03/10

Abstract

In recent years, many educational systems have paid attention to spiritual citizenship education as one of the most fundamental methods of educating responsible citizens. The purpose of the current research was to provide a model of the curriculum of the spiritual citizen in the second secondary school. To serve that end, a qualitative approach and Grounded theory method were used. The participants were selected based on purposive sampling (snowball) method. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 21 professors and experts including 12 males and 9 females, aged between 41 and 62, hoding PhD degree with 6 - 25 years of experience, who had valuable experiences and research related to the research topic. The collected data were analyzed in the three main stages of open, axial and selective coding. Interview data analysis revealed five main categories which affect spiritual citizen model; namely, causal factors, underling factors, intervening factors, strategies, and advantages. The findings suggest that the proper implementation of spiritual citizenship education can lead to development of responsible, informed, and accountable citizens in society.

Keywords: High School Curriculum, Spiritual Citizenship, Secondary School

1. PhD student in Curriculum Planning, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
Email: zei.rajabi@gmail.com
2. Department of Educational Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author).
Email: javadipour@ut.ac.ir
3. Department of Educational Sciences, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
Email: rezazade1390@gmail.com
4. Institute for Educational Studies, Educational Research and Planning Organization, Tehran, Iran.
Email: mo_samie@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Human is a social being due to his need, perfectionism and personality structure. Indeed, all humans are affected by social conditions to a significant extent and they can communicate with others through their existential development and influence the society and their personalities. Also, human is a responsible being who is responsible first to God and then to others. In line with human's responsibility towards others, one of his most important roles in society is the role of citizenship.

Considering the changes and challenges of life, in a world that is constantly changing, the need for citizenship education is very important (Sharifi & Mirshah Jafari, 2015). For the transformation and adaptation of humans in the society, we must teach true values, and the greatest task of the rulers of any society is to provide a basis for the possibility of flourishing the abilities and the spiritual evolution of the society, that is, moving towards human values (Naqibzadeh, 2017). Despite this, there are different citizenship behaviors in people in the society which are influenced by the individual's perception of citizenship. The fact that every person in the society has different perceptions of citizenship depends on the social and political realities and scientific attitudes, belief, identity of people, and their spiritual and moral values (Taniguchi & Nakano, 2017; Vogelers 2011; Cohen, 2019).

Citizenship is geographically related to the whole world, and the concept of citizenship has expanded from the political level to the social and cultural level. In countries that have internal disputes and conflicts, citizenship has received more attention (Niens & Reilly, 2014, cited by Vogelers, 2017). Citizenship is a set of duties, rights, assignments, responsibilities, social and political obligations, sense of belonging and social membership for serious and active participation in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres of society (Nick Warez & Afrasiabi, 2016). In observing the ethics of citizenship in the society, sometimes people respect the principles of citizenship due to compulsion and short-term interests. In many cases each person thinks about individual interests instead of national interests, which ultimately leads to chaos. In such a situation, in order to prevent chaos in the society, it is necessary for governmental agencies to supervise the performance of people. Performing citizenship duties and active

participation in the society depends on the commitments and spiritual beliefs of people. Citizenship has been closely related to the development of ethics due to its influence in the society (Voglers, 2017). For the development of morals and commitment of the individual in the society, we can refer to the spiritual citizen (Millar et al, 2024). Since attitudes are based on the foundation of systematic knowledge and awareness, citizenship education has also been examined based on different approaches. Among these, the role of celestial religions, religions, sects and their approaches is very important (Shamshiri, 2014).

2. Review of the Related Literature

In the spiritual citizen, a person does not oblige herself or himself to follow the law out of fear. Rather, truthfulness, trustworthiness, and adherence to moral values obligates a person to follow the rules and adher to them by his own will (El Shibli & El Nabulsi, 2017). In spiritual citizenship, people tend to internalize the motivation to comply with the rights and duties of citizenship so that they can maintain a peaceful and stress-free life with each other and with the environment and train the future generation (Riabovol, 2025). This will minimize the costs of the society and the city; otherwise, such costs will constantly increase to control the members of the community (Nikomram et al., 2010). A spiritual citizen provides a suitable social platform for a person's activity so that he can do everything for his progress.

Schools and their curricula play a decisive role in the application of the spiritual citizen model in life among all other institutions in spiritual education. In other words, schools have a direct role in providing opportunities for the development of insight and desire and improving the skills and functions necessary for spiritual life (Yarmohamedian et al., 2013). Of course, as in Iran the curriculum is derived from the moral system of Islam, God has a central role and other domains are defined based on this role. The main approach of moral education in the official and public education system of Iran is of a virtuous religious nature, which is evident in the objectives of the Supreme Council of Education (Azadmanesh & Hosseini, 2014). However, these objectives should be more realistic and modified according to the mental development and experiences of students.

Unfortunately, these objectives are mostly idealistic and most of the time are not practical in society (Azadmanesh & Hosseini, 2014). One of the reasons is that the spirituality is a vague, complex and all inclusive issue and has various dimensions, topics and concepts (Heydari et al., 2014; Yarmohamedian et al., 2013). Also, there is no curriculum available to develop characteristics such as critical thinking, accountability, fighting for injustice, understanding each other, cooperation and participation, respecting traditions and cultures, as well as to raise international law awareness and respect for race and religions in students in an integrated and comprehensive way (Butcher, 2017).

One of the important factors in raising a spiritual citizen is having spiritual literacy, which deepens our understanding of spiritual texts, behaviors, customs and beliefs that can help people to realize the need to respect different people's opinions (Aka Mahmoud, 2018). Copley (2008) and Conroy et al. (2015) argue that teacher training is vital for spiritual education and teachers are one of the main factors in the success of any spiritual education program (Jafrali Zavor, 2019). In fact, one of the important factors that hinders the proper education of students in the field of spiritual citizenship is the existence of ineffective trainers and teachers (Thamrin et al., 2024). Other factors that are harmful in religious education are factors such as duality of the teacher's behavior as a role model with the contents of religious books, separating the religion curriculum from other textbooks and limiting it to only teaching superficial content instead of internalizing religious beliefs, and not integrating the learned materials in social life (Kartiwi, 2024).

In general, paying attention to religious education in the field of education is an undeniable necessity. Although such necessity is accepted as the main and important task of education in our society, the results of numerous research conducted in our country indicate that there are defects and weaknesses in the field of religious education and the education system has not been very successful in its mission in the field of religious education (Islamian, 2017). Citizenship and spirituality trainings in our education system are unclear and without any clear purpose. In textbooks, most of the definitions and repetitive and cliché materials are passed on to the students. This has caused the accumulation of information and their non-acceptance by the students (Hazeri & Akhgar, 2013).

Further, there are some evidence of the relative weakness of citizenship, especially in the field of responsibility and participation of citizens in obtaining citizenship rights in Iran (Mirfardi, 2014). Limited social participation of citizens, especially in official and public arenas (Mousavi, 2011), minimal political participation (in the sense of simply voting) (Jalaipour, 2012), high level of social indifference, self-righteous individualism and lack of civil commitment (Ghafari, 2013; Mohsani Tabrizi, 2012), insignificant amount of time Iranians spend on voluntary and charitable activities (an average of two minutes a day according to the report of the Iranian Statistics Center in spring 2014) and people's ignorance of their citizenship duties are negative issues which confirm the claim that spiritual citizen education is necessary in Iran (Azadmanesh & Hosseini, 2014).

Unfortunately, despite the importance and necessity of identifying spiritual citizen training, this issue has not been addressed seriously and effectively in our educational and academic context (Mousavi & Mubaraki, 2016). For example, littering and polluting the environment and not complying with driving rules that lead to traffic problems and increasing accidents, late payment of bills and insurance premiums and tolls and not complying with the rights of urban transport organizations are cases of non-compliance citizenship in the society, which requires continuous monitoring by government agencies and incurring costs for the government. Any violation and ignoring the rules and customs of urbanism and not respecting the rights of others will fuel tensions, violence and many social, economic and cultural adversities. (Nick Verz & Afrasiabi, 2016). Therefore, dealing with spiritual citizenship can be the key to solving many of the above problems.

The reason for choosing secondary education for citizenship education is that secondary education is very important because of its essential role in the formation of personality and education of young people and its impact on their participation in the development of society. The future of the society's life is determined at this stage and the students' productivity comes from the quality of this course. Regarding the spiritual citizen, various books and writings have been published in Iran and outside of Iran, each of which presents a specific aspect of it. But the sources rarely contain the topic of citizenship education from a religious point of view, and so far the curriculum model of a spiritual citizen has not been designed in Iran. For example, in a study by Akhgar and Khalili (2015) regarding the components of citizenship education from the perspective of the Qur'an and

Sunnah, they did not consider its educational aspect in the education system. Mehr Mohammadi (2013), Qaltash et al. (2013) and Ahaderi and Khalili (2015) did not pay attention to religious trainings in the field of citizenship education. Also, in a research by Yarmohamedian et al. (2013), he studied the approaches of spiritual education in three countries, Australia, Turkey, and Japan, and the dimension of citizenship was not discussed. In international studies such as those conducted by Chi-Kin Lee (2020) and Mahipalan (2018) the spiritual dimension of citizenship education have not been mentioned.

Therefore, the researchers felt necessary to consider spiritual aspects in the current qualitative study. In fact, the aim of the research was to design a model for the spiritual citizenship of students hoping to provide solutions for social anomalies caused by moral problems in order to promote spiritual citizenship behavior in the society in the second secondary school. Hence, this research was an attempt to develop a model of the spiritual citizen curriculum in secondary school. To serve that end, the following research questions were formulated:

- What are the causal factors involved in the spiritual citizen curriculum model?
- What are the underling factors involved in the spiritual citizen curriculum model?
- What are the intervention factors involved in the spiritual citizen curriculum model?
- What are the strategies used in the spiritual citizen curriculum model?
- What are the advantages of the spiritual citizen curriculum model?

3. Methodology

In the current qualitative research, the grounded theory method was used. The participants of the study included 21 professors and experts; 12 males and 9 females, aged between 41 and 62, hoding PhD degree with 6 - 25 years of experience in teaching and researching in a wide range of relevant educational desciplines. In order to answer the research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with research samples (professors, experts,) who had valuable experiences and research related to the research topic. The process of data collection continued until the theoretical saturation

stage, and after 21 interviews, saturation took place. The statistical population of this research was made up of those experts and professors who were knowledgeable in spiritual citizenship, had conducted research in this field and could provide valuable information to the researchers. Non-random chain sampling (snowball), which is a type of targeted sampling, was used in this study.

Considering the reliability and validity of the interview prompts, the questions were modified and approved by 6 expert professors in the relevant field after being initially designed. Before starting the interviews the written consent was obtained from the participants and they were assured that no changes would be made to their opinions and their identities would remain confidential. To record the interviews, all conversations were audio recorded. Then, the recorded interviews were carefully listened to by one of the researchers and transcribed verbatim. After the interview were transcribed, the "member check" method was used to confirm the validity of the interview data. In this way, the interview transcripts were sent to the participants again to confirm the accuracy of the content. The interviews continued until the saturation of data (Abadi, 2015). In this regard, the samples of this research were formed by 18 experts and professors of curriculum development.

The data analysis of this research was done according to the guidelines of Strauss and Corbin (1390). This method includes three main stages of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In the open coding stage, key words or words with a high semantic load were extracted. In the axial coding stage, duplicate codes were removed and codes that had a common meaning were placed in the same category. In the selective coding stage, the codes obtained in the axial coding stage were examined in terms of semantic sharing. Then, they were categorized in the form of categories. In the current research, 108 codes were emerged in the open coding stage, and 28 and 15 codes were formed in the axial and selective coding stages, respectively. It is necessary to note that in order to validate the findings from coding and analysis, the review criteria of the researcher and independent coders were used (Creswell and Clark, 2007). For this purpose, the researchers who were responsible for writing the current research carefully checked and coded the primary raw data. The findings were provided to 5 other experts who were active in the field of spiritual citizenship to check the validity and reliability of the coding.

4. Findings

In order to answer the research questions, after operationalizing a total of 21 interviews with the research participants who were expert professors and directly related to the subject, the collected data were analyzed in the form of open coding. Doing the open coding process on these data led to the achievement of many concepts, which the researcher tried to reduce and categorize based on similarities and conceptual commonalities. The results of this coding are presented in the following tables:

- RQ 1. What are the causal factors involved in spiritual citizen curriculum model?

Table 1.

Causal Factors

Causal Factors	1. Attitude towards the current state of the spiritual citizen	1-1. The need to strengthen spirituality 1-2. Attention to spirituality in lifestyle 1-3. The need for tangible and structured spiritual training 1-4. The emergence of various problems resulting from lack of spirituality
	2. The emergence of multiple literacies	2-1. The importance of acquiring spiritual literacy 2-2. Attention to spiritual knowledge in everyday life 2-3. Spiritual intelligence

1.1 The need to strengthen spirituality: Attention to and strengthening spirituality is one of the necessities of life in the present era. One of the participants stated that:

> *Unfortunately, in the present era, people are severely attacked by cultural attacks and propaganda bombardment, and this has led to deviations in people's lives, so strengthening spirituality can act as a barrier against these attacks.* (Participant No. 3)

1.2 Paying attention to spirituality in lifestyle: Lifestyle in the modern world has undergone fundamental changes, which has doubled the need for awareness in this field. One of the participants noted that:

> *What we are witnessing in this century is the promotion of a lifestyle devoid of values. Unfortunately, the Western lifestyle is being introduced as the authentic lifestyle, and this has caused harm. Dealing with such a lifestyle requires gaining spiritual awareness.* (Participant No. 13)

1.3 The need for tangible and structured spiritual training: Spiritual training must be provided in a systematic and effective manner. One of the participants argued that:

> *You cannot hope to strengthen spirituality in students with unfocused training. There needs to be a fundamental thought in this regard, and the training needs to take a scientific form and have a proper structure.* (Participant No. 19)

1.4 The emergence of various problems due to lack of spirituality: The emergence and severity of social harms in society is an indication of the weakening of spirituality. One of the participants mentioned that:

> *There are increasing types of mental, psychological, and social harms in society, from divorce to depression, suicide, conflict, and so on. Well, when you find the root of these harms, you realize that most of the people involved in these problems have received proper spiritual education. We need to be able to equip our students with these skills in school.* (Participant No. 5)

2.1 The importance of spiritual literacy: The concept of spiritual literacy has attracted the attention of many experts in the last decade. One of the participants stressed that:

> *If you study the international and comprehensive definitions of literacy, you will realize that one of the literacies that is emphasized is spiritual literacy. In fact, spiritual literacy is emphasized in line with other literacy such as media and health literacy, so we must act proactively in this area and educate students with high standards of spiritual literacy.* (Participant No. 17)

2.2 Paying attention to spiritual knowledge in everyday life: Knowledge has various dimensions, and paying attention to it, especially in the field of spirituality is a necessity of the present era. One of the participants admitted that:

> *In the past, learning both math and science was very important, but the question is, will a student today be successful if he only knows math and science? In today's*

complicated world, we need a student who, in addition to math, has the ability to understand and interpret values, beliefs, and convictions... (Participant No. 10)

2.3 Spiritual Intelligence: Paying attention to spiritual intelligence, along with other intelligences, has become a priority in today's world. One of the participants claimed that:

Fortunately, with the various definitions of intelligence that have been developed, it is no longer just the cognitive dimension and cognitive intelligence that are at stake, and things like spiritual intelligence have been approved by many experts and scholars as essentials of life in the current century. Therefore, schools should be able to have a program in this area and strengthen spiritual intelligence in students in a scientific manner. (Participant No. 14)

- RQ2. What are the underling factors involved in the spiritual citizen curriculum model?

Table 2.

Underling Factors

Underling Factors	3. The needs of students, parents, teachers and institutions	3-1. Involving in problems related to spiritual issues and students' need for knowledge in this field 3-2: Parents' demand for providing information and knowledge related to spirituality 3-3. Teachers' demand for cultivating knowledge related to spirituality in students 3-4. The need of various institutions and organizations for students equipped with up-to-date information and knowledge in the field of spirituality

3.1 Involving in problems related to spiritual issues and students' need for knowledge in this field: Involving in students in spiritual issues highlights the need for proper education in this field. One of the participants stated that:

High school students are at an age where they can easily understand and comprehend spiritual issues. On the other hand, adolescence is a sensitive period

> *in terms of spiritual matters, and some students may experience ambiguities and problems in their social lives due to their limited knowledge in this field. Therefore, teaching spiritual issues can be the key for solving many problems during this period.* (Participant No. 19)

3.2 Parents' demand for information and knowledge related to spirituality: In the last decade, parents' attitude has changed from merely teaching some subjects to preparing students for a righteous life. One of the participants argued that:

> *Fortunately, parents no longer just want their children to learn English or be good at math, but they also want their children to be capable enough to live a healthy life in society, which is why parents demand for education related to spirituality.* (Participant No. 2)

3.3 Teachers' demand for developing knowledge related to spirituality in students: Teachers are also among those who want to develop knowledge and skills related to spirituality in students. One of the participants acknowledged that:

> *With the increase in the level of knowledge and education among teachers on the one hand and their direct involvement with students' conditions, including personal, social, and psychological issues, on the other hand, teachers' tendency to provide information and spiritual education to students is increasing.* (Participant No. 6)

3.4 The need of various institutions and organizations for students equipped with up-to-date information and knowledge in the field of spirituality: Today, most government institutions and organizations are looking for responsible and healthy citizens. One of the participants reported that:

> *If you look closely at society, you will realize that citizens with limited knowledge and skills in various fields, including spirituality, cannot properly benefit from the services of institutions and organizations. Therefore, cultivating spiritual literacy is an essential need for living in such a society and benefiting from the services of organizations.* (Participant No. 18)

- RQ 3. What are the intervention factors involved in the spiritual citizen curriculum model?

Table 3.

Intervening Factors

Intervening Factors	4. Internal environment 5. External environment	4-1. Structural support from within the educational institution towards spiritual citizenship education 4-2. Dynamic atmosphere within the organization towards spiritual citizenship education 4-3: Developing spiritual citizenship education programs from within and relying on internal elements of education 5-1. Top-down view towards spiritual citizenship education without considering field realities 5-2. Externally-driven version of spiritual citizenship education without considering internal capacities of education 5-3. Facilitative and not interventionist attitude of society towards spiritual citizenship education

4.1 Structural support from within the educational institution towards spiritual citizenship education: Internal supports play a significant role in educating spiritual citizens. One participant admitted that:

> *If a school tries to educate spiritual citizens in the best possible way, but there is no proper planning at the organizational level and the existing structures do not support these programs, the desired results will undoubtedly not be achieved. As a result, the first step to implementing these things is to have a macro policy, then based on this macro policy, we can plan for each level, including high school.* (Participant No. 14)

4.2 Dynamic atmosphere within the organization towards spiritual citizenship education: Vitality and dynamism within an organization play an important role in educating spiritual citizens. One of the participants believed that:

> *The organizational environment within the school and the educational institution should be flexible enough to encourage spiritual citizenship education, so that*

creative suggestions in this regard are welcomed and any exclusion in the field of spiritual education is avoided. (Participant No. 8)

4.3 Developing spiritual citizenship education programs from within and relying on internal elements of education: Interventions outside the education system lead to the failure to implement imposed programs in the field of spiritual citizenship education. One of the participants mentioned regard:

One problem is that in the field of spiritual citizenship education, a number of pressure groups from outside the educational institution want to impose their own expectations on these programs. In such circumstances, teachers and administrative staff secretly disobey when implementing the program because they do not consider themselves involved in this program. (Participant No. 10)

5.1 Top-down view towards spiritual citizenship education without considering field realities: A one-sided view of spiritual citizenship education has been one of the main obstacles to implementing such programs. One of the participants remarked that:

Some people think that an important issue like educating spiritual citizens can be done by forcing and giving orders, but that is counterproductive. (Participant No.5)

5.2 Externally-driven version of spiritual citizenship education without considering internal capacities of education: Lack of attention to the internal capacities of education is another obstacle to educating spiritual citizens. In this regard, one of the participants stated that:

When the voices of teachers, students, and stakeholders are not heard in programs such as spiritual citizenship education, there is no doubt that the program will fail to succeed. We must pay attention to the internal capacities of education and creatively apply them in developing spiritual citizenship education programs. (Participant No. 11)

5.3 Facilitative and not interventionist attitude of society towards spiritual citizenship education: Society should be a facilitator of spiritual citizenship education, not an interfering factor. One of the participants stressed that:

> *Unfortunately, the programs that are developed in the field of spiritual education are mostly based on the interventions of the society. In such circumstances, the desired results are not achieved and the programs remain useless. I think the best role that the society can play in this field is as a facilitator.* (Participant No. 11)

- RQ4. What are the strategies used in the spiritual citizen curriculum model?

Table 4.

Strategies

Strategies	6. Progressive Approach 7. Regressive Approach 8. Indifference Approach	6-1. Digestion and integration of spiritual citizenship education into curricula 6-2. Use of new approaches in spiritual citizenship education 6-3. Positive attitude towards spiritual citizenship education 7-1. Underestimating spiritual citizenship education 7-2. Superficial and meaningless education education in the field of spiritual citizenship 8-1. A superficial attitude towards spiritual citizenship education 8-2. Lack of adherence to scientific and practical spiritual citizenship education

6.1 Digestion and integration of spiritual citizenship education into curricula: One way to address spiritual citizenship education is to incorporate it into the curriculum. One of the participants stated that:

> *Fortunately, the view has been created that spiritual citizenship education, as an important skill for the current century, should be presented scientifically in curricula. This promises to flourish this type of education in the near future.* (Participant No. 17)

6.2 Use of new approaches in spiritual citizenship education: The use of new technologies in spiritual education is one of the positive approaches in this field. One of the participants admitted that:

> *When the education of spiritual citizenship is deeply and meaningfully embraced, new technologies and innovative educational methods will undoubtedly be used to teach it.* (Participant No. 20)

6.3 Positive attitude towards spiritual citizenship education: A positive attitude towards citizenship education is a key issue in this regard. One of the participants claimed that:

> *If you survey teachers, students, and parents, you will find that most have a positive view and attitude towards spiritual citizenship education and talk about the necessity of addressing spiritual citizenship education.* (Participant No. 8)

7.1 Underestimating spiritual citizenship education: One of the unproductive approaches to dealing with spiritual citizenship education is to trivialize it. One of the participants stressed that:

> *Unfortunately, some people inside and outside the educational institution ignore the importance of spiritual citizenship education with arguments such that we are in the 21st century and we should focus more on objective sciences than spirituality.* (Participant No. 6)

7.2 Superficial and meaningless education education in the field of spiritual citizenship: Relying solely on preserving spiritual concepts is another destructive approach in this regard. One of the participants emphasized that:

> *Some teachers, when it comes to teaching new subjects such as becoming a spiritual citizen, think that they should give a lecture in class like in other subjects and then test the students to see how much they have memorized. Our training has not changed the behaviors so far. If it had changed behavior, we wouldn't have all these problems and social harm. We only taught the topics to the students theoretically, not in a practical way.* (Participant No. 3)

8.1 A superficial attitude towards spiritual citizenship education: Another unproductive approach to spiritual citizenship education is to do it hastily. One participant noted that:

> *Some colleagues think that the main courses are math and literature, etc., and if courses like Spiritual Citizenship are added, they consider it a huge burden that just needs to be done and they can get away with saying a few superficial trainings.* (Participant No. 9)

8.2 Lack of adherence to scientific and practical spiritual citizenship education: Another unproductive approach to educating spiritual citizens is lack of adherence to scientific and practical education. One of the participants suggested that:

> *Unfortunately, some teachers and education professionals do not have practical and scientific belief in spiritual citizenship education. When you do not believe in something, you will definitely not implement it correctly and the effectiveness of that program will be under question.* (Participant No. 9)

- RQ5. What are the advantages of the spiritual citizen curriculum model?

Table 5.

Advantages

Advantages	8. Behavioral dimension	8-1 Avoiding immoral and delinquent issues
	9. Moral dimension	8-2 Maintaining religious identity in today's turbulent environment
	10. Ideological dimension	9-1 Avoiding sin
		9-2 Promoting good morals
	11. Mental dimension	9-3 Not being vulnerable to negative moral issues
	12. Belief dimension	10-1 Institutionalizing positive thoughts against the negative dimension
	13. Intellectual dimension	10-2 Awareness raising
		11-1 Healthy mental nutrition
		11-2 Healthy mental diet
		12-1 Adherence to ethics in all aspects of society
		12-2 Critical thinking in society
		12-3 Self-awareness and self-belief in society
		13-1 A solid intellectual foundation in various social dimensions
		13.2 Wise self-care and other-care

8.1 Avoiding immoral and delinquent issues: One of the advantages of spiritual citizenship education is avoiding crime and misbehaviors. One of the participants claimed that:

> *Citizens who have received appropriate spiritual education usually avoid crime and wrongdoing due to their spiritual beliefs.* (Participant No. 16).

8.2 Maintaining religious identity in today's confusing environment: Among the advantages of spiritual citizenship education is the preservation of identity in the tense conditions of today's society. One of the participants expressed that:

> *In today's world, which is constantly bombarded by the media, the spiritual citizen preserves his or her spiritual and religious identity and tries to choose the authentic way of living.* (Participant No. 14).

9.1 Avoiding sin: Among the advantages of spiritual citizenship education is the avoidance from commiting sin. One of the participants acknowledged that:

> *A spiritual citizen realizes that commiting sin is inexcusable and unacceptable, and that God looks over our actions wherever we are, and tries to avoid it.* (Participant No. 16)

9.2 Promoting good morals: Among the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is the promotion of good ethics. One of the participants noted that:

> *A spiritual citizen does not lie in the social space. He does not slander. He shows his true self. He does not gossip and takes action to promote morality, spirituality, and humanity.* (Participant No. 7)

9.3 Not being vulnerable to negative moral issues: Among the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is the reduction of moral vulnerability. One participant stated that:

> *Poisonous atmosphere pollutes the mind of spiritual citizens less, and these students can promote their own beliefs in this space.* (Participant No. 11).

10.1 Institutionalizing positive thoughts against the negative dimension: Among the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is the promotion of positive thinking. One participant admitted that:

> *When belief is ingrained in children, the negative atmosphere cannot easily question their belief. If we can internalize our trainings in the minds of students, they will become a strong tree that cannot easily be harmed.* (Participant No. 11).

10.2 Awareness raising: Among the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is awareness and enlightenment. One of the participants mentioned that:

> *A spiritual citizen is not easily influenced by negative behaviors in the first stage. If he has any doubts, he seeks to resolve them and seeks to inform others.* (Participant No. 9)

11.1 Healthy mental nutrition: One of the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is having healthy mental nutrition. One of the participants stressed that:

> *Just as the human body needs food, so does the soul need mental food. And while a person must be careful about his physical food, it is essential to be careful about his mental food as well. A spiritual citizen in society seeks healthy mental nourishment.* (Participant No. 13)

11.2 Healthy mental diet: One of the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is a healthy mental diet. One participant stated that:

> *A student who is educated as a spiritual citizen, if spirituality is internalized in hime, he will observe a mental diet and will be accurate and sensitive to various contents that serve as food for his soul and spirit.* (Participant No. 3)

12.1 Adherence to ethics in all aspects of society: One of the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is following ethics. One of the participants emphasized that:

> *Students who are educated in spiritual citizenship observe ethical principles in the society. Ethics such as respecting the rights of others, not encouraging violence and discrimination, respecting privacy, not disclosing of personal information without permission, not producing and spreading fake and incorrect news,*

respecting diversity and different opinions, and ensuring that information is reliable are essential for him. (Participant No. 5)

12.2 Critical thinking in society: Among the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is the development of critical thinking. One participant stated that:

A spiritual citizen approaches issues critically and constantly asks himself: Where is the origin issues in society? Why are some issues important while others are not? How does the interpretation of others differ from mine? (Participant No. 17)

12.3 Self-awareness and self-belief in society: Among the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education are self-awareness and self-fulfillment. One participant stressed that:

People who have good spiritual education have a better understanding of social anomalies; in fact, spiritual education acts like a filter in this regard. (Participant No. 5)

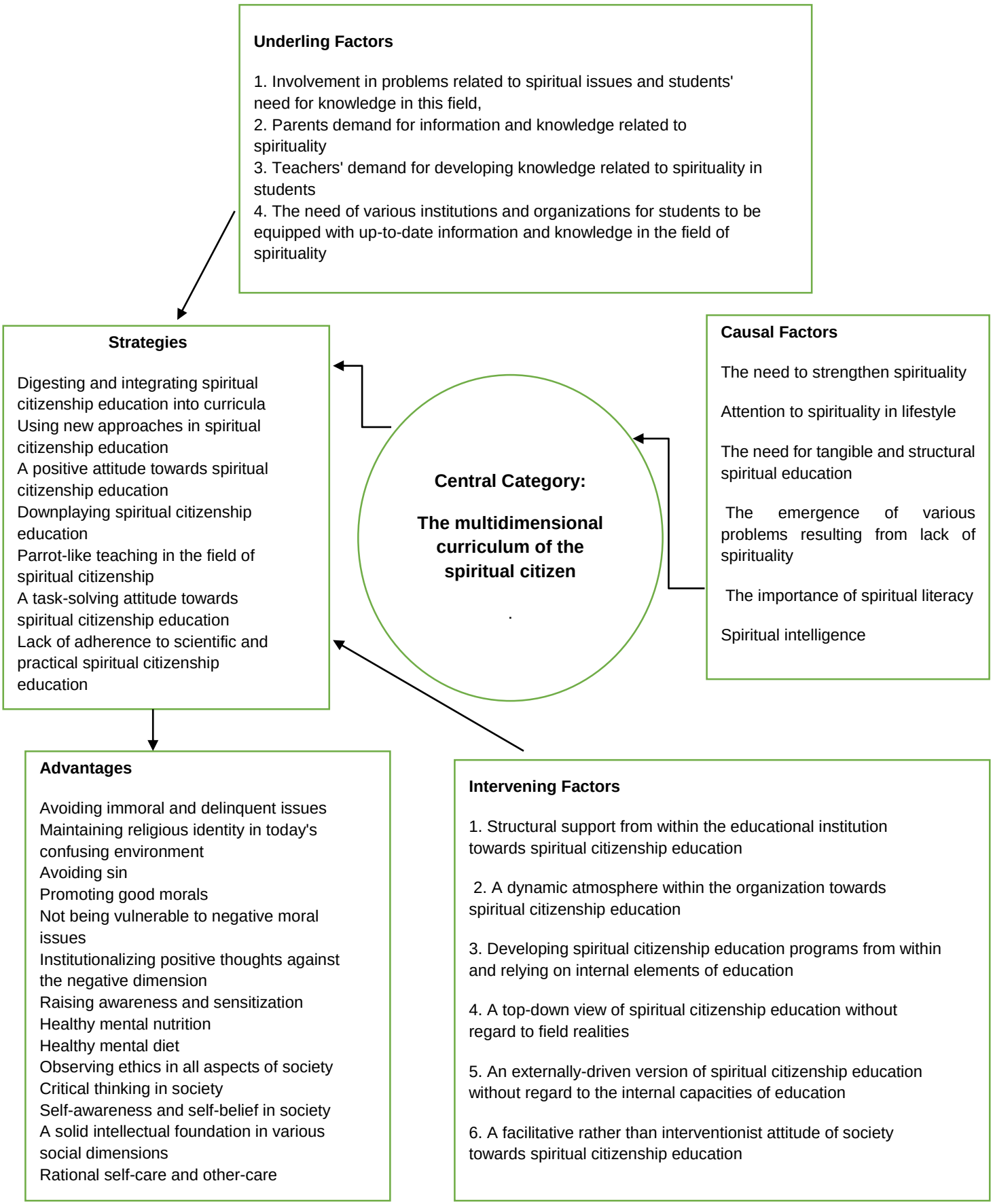
13.1 A solid intellectual foundation in various social dimensions: Among the advantages of spiritual citizenship education is having a strong intellectual foundation. One of the participants expressed that:

A student who has a proper religious and spiritual upbringing, when he enters the society, he avoids doing what he feels are not appropriate in terms of religion based on his beliefs. (Participant No. 1)

13.2 Wise self-care and other-care: Among the positive outcomes of spiritual citizenship education is caring for oneself and others. One participant remarked that:

A student with a spiritual upbringing will definitely take care of himself. In addition, he tries to take care of others based on religious and thoughtful insights. (Participant No. 4)

Based on the research findings, the conceptual model presented in the figure below shows the relationships between the main categories resulting from the qualitative analysis process.


Underling Factors
1. Involvement in problems related to spiritual issues and students' need for knowledge in this field,
2. Parents demand for information and knowledge related to spirituality
3. Teachers' demand for developing knowledge related to spirituality in students
4. The need of various institutions and organizations for students to be equipped with up-to-date information and knowledge in the field of spirituality
Strategies
Digesting and integrating spiritual citizenship education into curricula
Using new approaches in spiritual citizenship education
A positive attitude towards spiritual citizenship education
Downplaying spiritual citizenship education
Parrot-like teaching in the field of spiritual citizenship
A task-solving attitude towards spiritual citizenship education
Lack of adherence to scientific and practical spiritual citizenship education
Causal Factors
The need to strengthen spirituality
Attention to spirituality in lifestyle
The need for tangible and structural spiritual education
The emergence of various problems resulting from lack of spirituality
The importance of spiritual literacy
Spiritual intelligence
Central Category:
The multidimensional curriculum of the spiritual citizen
.
Advantages
Avoiding immoral and delinquent issues
Maintaining religious identity in today's confusing environment
Avoiding sin
Promoting good morals
Not being vulnerable to negative moral issues
Institutionalizing positive thoughts against the negative dimension
Raising awareness and sensitization
Healthy mental nutrition
Healthy mental diet
Observing ethics in all aspects of society
Critical thinking in society
Self-awareness and self-belief in society
A solid intellectual foundation in various social dimensions
Rational self-care and other-care
Intervening Factors
1. Structural support from within the educational institution towards spiritual citizenship education
2. A dynamic atmosphere within the organization towards spiritual citizenship education
3. Developing spiritual citizenship education programs from within and relying on internal elements of education
4. A top-down view of spiritual citizenship education without regard to field realities
5. An externally-driven version of spiritual citizenship education without regard to the internal capacities of education
6. A facilitative rather than interventionist attitude of society towards spiritual citizenship education

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In recent decades, attention to spirituality as the source of healthy human life has been the focus of many experts (Ramilan et al., 2024). Many of these experts believe that the responsibility of educating the spiritual citizen lies within the education system, which can address this issue through the curriculum (Siagian et al., 2023). But it should be said that the development of the spiritual citizenship curriculum has faced certain issues which was the main focus of the current research. The results of the current research indicated that the elements of the spiritual citizen curriculum can be explained in the form of factors such as causal, interventional, contextual factors, strategies and advantages. Such factors and their sub-components can play a significant role in facilitating or not facilitating spiritual citizenship education. For example, items such as the favorable attitude of teachers and students can be considered as driving factors in the curriculum of the spiritual citizen. However, items such as lack of efficient human resources and lack of up-to-date equipment can cause problems. In any case, developing the curriculum of spiritual citizenship requires paying attention to the above-mentioned five factors in a scientific and precise manner.

The first influential category in the curriculum of the spiritual citizen was the causal conditions, which include the need to strengthen spirituality, attention to spirituality in lifestyle, the need for tangible and structural spiritual education, the emergence of various problems resulting from lack of spirituality, and the importance of spiritual literacy and spiritual intelligence. Public and educational policies have a critical role in the success or failure of programs. The best programs are futile by inappropriate policies and programs. In this regard, Yeft and Shahar (2021) believe that the implementation of new educational programs, including citizenship education, should be properly planned through policy and planning, because any negligence in this field will have severe consequences. The next influential item is the nature of the school. Wilcox (2018) considers the school as a container that any type of education should be designed and formulated according to this container. Neglecting the nature of the school is one of the main obstacles in the successful implementation of the curriculum. On the other hand, the novelty and newness of educations such as spiritual citizenship also has a significant impact on how to formulate it. Vogelers (2019) believes that the novelty of spiritual citizenship education

leads to the conflict of stakeholders in this type of education with problems. Therefore, its explanation is very important.

The second influential category in the curriculum of spiritual citizenship is the underling factors, which include items such as involvement in problems related to spiritual issues and students' need for knowledge in this field, parents' demand for information and knowledge related to spirituality, teachers' demand for developing knowledge related to spirituality in students, and the need of various institutions and organizations for students to be equipped with up-to-date information and knowledge in the field of spirituality. The atmosphere of the school determines how to deal with and implement any kind of educational program. The curriculum of the spiritual citizen is also affected by these conditions. Walsh (2020) believes that the type of communication within the school and its underlying philosophy are very effective in developing the curriculum and its successful education. In fact, the communication and interactions that exist in every school determine the course of the curriculum. Of course, students and their interests also have a significant impact in this regard. Ayouzi et al. (2012) consider the way students encounter citizenship education are affected by the extent to which the curriculum reflects the students' interests. Teachers and their opinions are also one of the influential items in response to the spiritual citizen curriculum. In this regard, McGrath et al. (2022) introduce teachers as influential components of the curriculum and believe that the development a curriculum such as spiritual citizenship will not be effective without taking into account the opinions of teachers. The way teachers react to the curriculum of spiritual citizenship will be decisive, so clarifying the positions of teachers in this regard seems very necessary.

The third influential category in the curriculum of the spiritual citizen is intervention factors that include items such as the level of attitudes and beliefs, school and its culture, society and its culture. Individual and collective attitudes have a significant impact on how to develop a curriculum in general and spiritual citizenship in particular. Urban and Ward (2020) consider the ideologies and ideas of the society as the most important element in the formation of curricula in the current era. These two researchers believe that without the existence of individual and collective attitudes, it is impossible to develop a curriculum. On the other hand, culture and its various forms, such as school and community are also

very important in accepting or not accepting some curricula. The curriculum of the spiritual citizen is one of those programs that are strongly affected by the culture of the school and society. In fact, according to the findings of Yunal and Keegan (2019), it should be said that the culture that governs the school is one of the main fundamental issues in the design and implementation of a curriculum, the absence of which leads to a weak curriculum.

The next influential category in the spiritual citizen are strategies, which include items such as receptive approach, rejection approach, and neutral approach. The way an educational system deals with emerging phenomenon such as the spiritual citizen can be placed in a spectrum from acceptance to rejection. Tambek (2021) found that uncorrectable educational systems adopt traditional methods such as lectures and mere transfer of information to students when implementing new curricula. On the other hand, Sovasan and Gamal (2021) believe that leading educational systems prepare themselves to accept the new issues of the society by using new educational methods such as interdisciplinary curricula. Of course, there is a third group that ignores these issues completelt. How to adopt strategies to deal with new subjects by the educational system will determine the future of the educational system.

The final important dimension in the curriculum of the spiritual citizen was the advantages, which include items such as mental and psychological, social and cultural. Indeed, the formulation and implementation of the citizenship curriculum at the individual and collective level brings many benefits to the society. As many researchers such as Stein (2021), Starkey (2016), Rodrigues (2018), Sohrabi (2016) have pointed out, spiritual citizen training, while reducing social harms, leads to improving the way of life, increasing solidarity with others, avoiding crime, increasing healthy behaviors and overall improvement of individual and collective aspects of human being. It should be said that spiritual citizenship is an indispensable element in today's era, considering many problems such as war, pollution and poverty. If human societies seek to improve the current situation of human life, resorting to spiritual citizen education is an effective model. But in this difficult journey, the educational system and its key component (curriculum) should design and formulate effective education in this field, considering the prerequisites of spiritual citizenship.

The present study contains several implications related to spiritual citizenship education. Some of these implications, according to the research results, include:

- (1) Changing and modifying the curriculum from memory-centered to skill-centered and acquiring skills related to spiritual citizenship.
- (2) Reviewing the four elements of the curriculum (goal, content, method, evaluation) with regard to the realities of adolescent life and modern life and placing greater emphasis on spiritual citizenship.
- (3) Training appropriate instructors to teach students about spiritual citizenship in a way that properly develops knowledge and skills related to spiritual citizenship in students.
- (4) Promoting spiritual citizenship education. It is suggested that a specific course or courses are designed related to the subject of spiritual citizenship to familiarize students with this concept and, as a result, eliminate the problems related to lack of awareness in this field.
- (5) Considering a special program and time for spiritual citizenship education. It is recommended that special classes be considered for teaching students about spiritual citizenship.
- (6) Encouraging parents to get involved in educational issues, especially teaching students about spiritual citizenship. By getting parents involved in educational subjects, especially in the concept of spiritual citizenship, it will facilitate this type of education for students.
- (7) Developing and designing an extraordinary curriculum for students that specifically addresses spiritual literacy. This curriculum can be delivered outside of formal school hours by an experienced instructor.
- (8) The content provided to teach students about spiritual citizenship should take into account the context of each region.
- (9) Providing training workshops for teachers to familiarize them with spiritual citizenship issues and move from a knowledge-based mindset and traditional educational methods to a skills-based mindset and practical training in spiritual citizenship.

- (10) It is suggested that the implementation of the spiritual citizenship education program to be carried out not independently, but rather in an integrated manner and in connection with other curriculum subjects.

References

Azadmanesh, S. & Hosseini, A., S. (2014). Comparative analysis of the goals of moral education in elementary school in Iran and Japan (with regard to the principles of value cognition). National Conference of the Iranian Society of Philosophy of Education.

Butcher, J. (2017). Citizenship, global citizenship and Volunteer tourism: a critical analysis. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *31*(2), 35-62.

Chi-Kin Lee, J. (2020). Children's spirituality, life and values education: cultural, spiritual and educational perspectives. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, *25*(1), 1-8.

Cohen, P. (2019). A Framework for Building Strong School Culture: A Case Study on the Transformative Impacts of Ethics Education on High School Students.*British journal of educational psychology*, *77*(1), 1-24.

Eywazi, M., R., & Bab Goureh, S., H. (2013). The evolution of the concept of citizenship and the emergence of global citizenship, Politics Quarterly, *Journal of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences*, *42*(3), 187-205.

Ghaffari, M. (2013). Investigating the components of citizenship education in secondary school. *Journal of Education and Research in Education*, *11*(6), 77-94.

Hazeri, A. & Akhgar, D. (2013). Approaches and Methods of Spiritual Education. *Journal of Philosophical Education Research*, *12*(9), 112-138.

Heydari, J., Moradi Mukhlis, H., & Poti, N. (2014). The development of moral education by integrating critical thinking components. *Ethics in Science and Technology, 13*(3), 8-15.

Islamian, H. (2017). A study of the principles of moral education in Islamic ethics. *Islamic Education and Training Journal*, *16*(6), 63-84.

Jalalipour, Hossein. (2012). The role of the teacher in the moral education of students. *National Conference on New Findings in Educational Sciences*. Tehran.

Kartiwi, A. P. (2024). Leadership in Indonesian Islamic Schools: How Leader Spiritual and Motivational Styles Affect Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Employees' Religiosity. Nidhomul Haq: *Journal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, *9*(1), 67-78.

Mahipalan, M. (2023). The interplay between spirituality, compassion and citizenship behaviours in the lives of educators: a study. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, *39*(4), 804-819.

McGrath, R. E., Han, H., Brown, M., & Meindl, P. (2022). What does character education mean to character education experts? A prototype analysis of expert opinions. *Journal of Moral Education*, *51*(2), 219-237.

Millar, C., Chahda, L., Carey, L. B., Ly, A., McLaren, P. O., Drakopoulos, E., & Bhopti, A. (2024). Global Citizenship: Cultural, Religious and Spiritual—An Exploratory Scoping Review. *Journal of religion and health*, *63*(1), 63-88.

Mirfardi, A. (2014). Principles and techniques of training spiritual citizens. *Quarterly Journal of Sociology in Education*, *17*(7), 65-88.

Mohseni Tabrizi, H. (2013). *Fundamentals of Islamic Education*. Avae Noor Publications: Tehran.

Mousavi, F. (2011). Components of Moral Education in Elementary School. *Journal of Modern Advances in Educational Sciences*, *8*(4), 23-42.

Mousavi, M. & Mobaraki, Sh. (2016). Analysis of citizenship education approaches in the educational system. *Journal of Curriculum Planning*, *14*(3), 42-64.

Naqibzadeh, M., A., & Norouzi R., A. (2017). An analysis of the goals of moral and social education from Habermas' perspective. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, *21*(1), 48-61.

Niens, U., & Reilly, J. (2014). Education for global citizenship in a divided society? Young people's views and experiences. *In Youth citizenship and the politics of belonging* (pp. 103-118). Routledge.

Nikvarz, T., & Afrasiabi, F. (2016). Explaining the Effective Factors on Citizenship Ethics. *Ethics in Science and Technology Journal*, *13* (3), 40-47.

Qoltash, A., Salehi, M., & Mirzaei, H. (2014). Content analysis of the Iranian primary school social studies curriculum from the perspective of paying attention to the characteristics of global citizens, *Research in Curriculum Planning*, *2*(8), 117-131.

Ramilan, R., Mulyanti, R. Y., Koesmawan, K., & Wati, L. N. (2024). Role of workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in improving lecturers' performance. *People and Behavior Analysis*, *2*(1), 48-60.

Riabovol, L. T. (2025). Civic and citizenship education: essence and meaning in the context of the spiritual and intellectual formation of the individual (taking into account the European experience in Ukraine). *Spiritual and intellectual upbringing and teaching of youth in the XXI century*, 7, 22-26.

Rodríguez, N. N. (2018). From margins to center: Developing cultural citizenship education through the teaching of Asian American history. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *46*(4), 528-573.

Shamshiri, B. (2014). *Theoretical foundations and curriculum of moral education*. Baztab Farhang Publications: Tehran.

Sharifi, M., & Mirshah Jafari, E. (2015). Moral Education Curriculum in Several Countries of the World and Iran. *Ethical Knowledge Journal*, *7*(19), 115-131.

Siagian, N., Ridayani, A., Kamsinah, M. E., Fatmawati, E., & Fajri, I. (2023). The effect of environmental citizenship and spiritual norms as mediators on students' environmental behaviour. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *28*(1), 223-245.

Sohrabi. S. (2017). Analytical foundations of citizenship rights in Iran and Islam. *Studies in Political Science, Law and Jurisprudence*, *4*(2), 41-56.

Starkey, H. (2016). Human rights, cosmopolitanism and utopias: Implications for citizenship education. *In Human Rights and Citizenship Education* (pp. 21-35). Routledge.

Stein, S. (2021). Reimagining global citizenship education for a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *19*(4), 482-495.

Swanson, D. M., & Gamal, M. (2021). Global Citizenship Education/Learning for Sustainability: Tensions, 'flaws', and contradictions as critical moments of possibility and radical hope in educating for alternative futures. Globalisation, *Societies and Education*, *19*(4), 456-469.

Tambak, S. (2021). The Method of Counteracting Radicalism in Schools: Tracing the Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Learning. MIQOT: *Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, *45*(1), 104-126.

Taniguchi, K., & Nakano, E. (2017). Citizenship Education for Sustainable Development: Theoretical and Practical Approaches for Project ESICS. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, *7*(10), 763-767.

Thamrin, M., Samsuryaningrum, I. P., & Hassan, Z. (2024). Organizational Citizenship Behavior Based on Spirituality and Employee Performance: The Role of Communication and Engagement. *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen*, 22(3).

Ünal, F., & Kaygın, H. (2019). Citizenship education for adults for sustainable democratic societies. Sustainability, *12*(1), 56.

Urban, P., & Ward, L. (Eds.). (2020). *Care ethics, democratic citizenship and the state*. Springer International Publishing.

Veugelers, W., & de Groot, I. (2019). Theory and Practice of Citizenship education. In Education for democratic intercultural citizenship (pp. 14-41). Brill.

Walsh, G. M. (2020). Challenging the hero narrative: Moving towards reparational citizenship education. *Societies*, *10*(2), 34.

Wilcox, C. (2018). Onward Christian soldiers? The religious right in American politics. Routledge.

Yarmohammadian, M, H. (2013). *Curriculum and Spiritual Education*. Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht Branch Publications.

Yefet, K. C., & Shahar, I. (2021). Divorced from Citizenship: Palestinian-Christian Women between the Church and the Jewish State. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 1-41.