

Integration and promotion of attitudes and values in basic education textbooks in Kosovo

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Abstract

This study explores how attitudes and values are integrated and promoted in basic education textbooks in Kosovo. The main objective is to analyze how attitudes and values defined in the formal competency-based curriculum are reflected in the structure, content, and didactic apparatus of textbooks. A qualitative research approach is employed, using content analysis to examine 16 textbooks from different subjects and grade levels (III, V, VIII, and IX). The study is currently in progress and focuses on identifying patterns in the inclusion and representation of key values such as respect, responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, and equality. Particular attention is given to how these values are embedded in both textual content and learning activities. The expected findings will provide insights into the extent to which textbooks align with curriculum requirements and support values-based education. Furthermore, the study may contribute to improving textbook design and offer practical recommendations for curriculum developers, policymakers, and textbook authors in strengthening the integration of attitudes and values in educational materials..

Keywords: Kosovo, basic education curricula, textbooks, values, attitudes, content analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are considered key instruments in the implementation of curriculum reforms, particularly within competency-based education systems. In such contexts, they serve not only as sources of knowledge but also as tools that support the development of skills, attitudes, and values. In Kosovo,

where the curriculum integrates these components, textbooks are expected to play a central role in fostering students' holistic development.

Over the last decade, Kosovo has undergone a significant reform of the pre-university education system, transitioning from a content-based curriculum to a competency-based approach structured around learning outcomes (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MEST], 2016a). This reform aligns with the European Union key competencies framework, which has guided the definition of educational goals, principles, and learning outcomes (Saqipi, 2019; Tahirsylaj & Fazliu, 2021). Within this framework, attitudes and values are not treated as separate elements but are embedded across curriculum documents, including educational goals, learning outcomes, subject content, and methodological guidelines.

The development and implementation of the competency-based curriculum in Kosovo has been accompanied by the development of new textbooks for each subject and grade level. This highlights the integral role of textbooks within the curriculum system. Traditionally, textbooks have been the primary source of knowledge transmission in Kosovo's education system, used both in classroom instruction and in students' independent learning (Peffer et al., 2005; Azemi & Morina, 2013; Mehmeti et al., 2019). This central role continues to position textbooks as key mediators between curriculum intentions and teaching practice.

Textbooks contribute significantly to the teaching and learning process by supporting the achievement of curriculum requirements and shaping students' understanding of the world. Through content, examples, illustrations, and tasks, they create opportunities to promote positive attitudes and social values, including respect, cooperation, responsibility, and critical thinking. In the context of values-based education, textbooks play an essential role in fostering students' awareness of ethical principles such as honesty, tolerance, and justice (Hoti & Zylfiu, 2025).

Despite their importance, there is still limited empirical evidence on how attitudes and values are represented and promoted in textbooks in Kosovo. Existing studies point to challenges related to content quality, contextualization, and the integration of values in teaching materials. In response to this gap, the present study seeks to provide a systematic analysis of the inclusion and promotion of attitudes and values in basic education textbooks. As the research is currently in progress, it focuses on outlining the analytical framework, methodology, and expected contribution to the field of values-based education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of attitudes and values in education has become a central priority in contemporary curriculum reforms, particularly within competency-based systems. In this context, attitudes are understood as evaluative orientations toward people, objects, or situations, while values represent guiding principles that shape individuals' behavior and social interactions (Hanel et al., 2021; Schwartz, 1994; Karameta, 2014). These two components are closely interconnected and influence individuals' choices, judgments, and actions in personal, social, and environmental contexts (OECD, 2019, 2021).

The inclusion and promotion of attitudes and values in curricula and textbooks is widely recognized as essential for fostering moral development and responsible citizenship (Halstead, 2005; Berisha, 2025). Their integration is considered both an explicit and implicit educational process that supports the

acquisition of core societal values. However, the effectiveness of this process depends on how these elements are embedded in teaching and learning materials, particularly textbooks.

Textbooks are fundamental pedagogical tools developed in alignment with curriculum requirements and designed to support students' learning processes (Assembly of Kosovo, 2007; UNESCO, 2019). They function as structured resources that organize content, guide instruction, and facilitate learning through examples, tasks, and activities (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Graves, 2000). As such, textbooks act as intermediaries between intended curriculum and classroom implementation (Penuel et al., 2014; Oates, 2014).

Beyond content delivery, textbooks contribute to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning, while supporting the development of competencies (Boshtrakaj et al., 2019; Japelj Pavešić & Cankar, 2022; Xhomarra & Hasani, 2023). A key component of textbooks is their didactic apparatus, which includes tasks, questions, instructions, and explanatory elements that facilitate understanding and encourage student engagement (Tomlinson, 2011; Koliqi, 2022; Azemi & Morina, 2013). These elements play an important role in promoting attitudes and values through interactive and reflective learning activities.

International frameworks emphasize that textbooks should not only convey knowledge but also promote values, attitudes, and skills necessary for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence (UNESCO, 2019). In this regard, the integration of attitudes and values is closely linked to the design of learning activities and pedagogical strategies within textbooks (Stará et al., 2017; Mihaela et al., 2024).

However, research indicates that the inclusion of attitudes and values in textbooks is often inconsistent. Studies highlight challenges such as content overload, lack of contextualization, limited use of real-life situations, and insufficient promotion of critical thinking (Boshtrakaj et al., 2019; Mihaela et al., 2024; Thaçi, 2012). Furthermore, the presence of values in textbooks does not automatically ensure their internalization by students, as this depends on interpretation and teaching practices (Keisala, 2010).

In the context of Kosovo, textbooks are closely linked to curriculum development and are regulated by legal and institutional frameworks (Assembly of Kosovo, 2007; MEST, 2011). The competency-based curriculum explicitly includes attitudes and values within learning outcomes across different curricular areas (MEST, 2016b, 2016c). These attitudes and values are distributed across curricular areas, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Integration of attitudes and values in curriculum areas (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2)

Attitudes and values		Curriculum areas						
		<i>Languages and communication</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Natural sciences</i>	<i>Society and environment</i>	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Physical education, sports and health</i>	<i>Life and work</i>
<i>Belief and self-confidence</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Respect and care</i>	<i>for oneself</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	<i>for others</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

	<i>for environment</i>	√	-	√	√	√	-	
<i>Diversity</i>		-	-	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Personal and social responsibility</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Compassion - empathy and solidarity</i>		√	-	-	√	-	-	-
<i>Tolerance</i>		-	√	√	√	-	√	√
<i>Equality and integrity</i>		-	-	-	√	-	-	-
<i>Justice/righteous judgment</i>		-	-	-	√	-	-	-
<i>Cooperation and interaction</i>		√	√	-	√	√	√	√
<i>Willingness and readiness</i>		√	√	-	√	√	√	√
<i>Understanding, altruism and responsiveness</i>		-	-	-	√	-	-	-

Note: symbol “√” indicates inclusion, whereas symbol “-” indicates the lack of inclusion of attitudes and values in curricular areas.

As shown in Table 1, attitudes and values are not evenly distributed across curricular areas. While values such as responsibility, cooperation, and respect appear consistently, others such as justice and equality are more limited in their representation. This uneven distribution highlights the importance of examining how these values are reflected in textbooks and whether they are systematically integrated.

Despite the clear presence of attitudes and values in curriculum documents, empirical studies on their inclusion in textbooks in Kosovo remain limited. Existing research suggests that textbooks often lack sufficient contextualization, integration of real-life experiences, and meaningful representation of values (Mihaela et al., 2024). Moreover, there is limited evidence on how specific values defined in the curriculum are incorporated into textbook content and didactic structures.

Based on this context, there is a need for a more focused and systematic analysis of how attitudes and values are integrated and promoted in textbooks. Therefore, this study aims to examine their inclusion in both the content and didactic apparatus of basic education textbooks in Kosovo, in alignment with curriculum expectations.

STUDY PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In recent decades, significant developments have taken place in the field of textbook design, development, and use. These developments have generated new demands and opportunities for research, emphasizing the need for more systematic and evidence-based studies on textbooks and their role in education (Sammler, 2018). In particular, the importance of examining the inclusion of attitudes and values in textbooks has been highlighted, as values-based education is considered essential for promoting social cohesion, justice, and responsible citizenship (Hoti & Zylfiu, 2025).

Recent reports on textbook review in Kosovo (Mihaela et al., 2024), as well as initial analyses of the inclusion of attitudes and values in the formal curriculum, indicate the need for a more in-depth examination of how these elements are reflected in textbooks. While the curriculum clearly defines

attitudes and values as key components of competencies, there is limited empirical evidence on their actual inclusion and promotion in textbook content and didactic structures.

Therefore, the main problem addressed in this study is the lack of systematic and detailed evidence regarding how attitudes and values derived from the formal competency-based curriculum are integrated and promoted in basic education textbooks in Kosovo.

Study objective

The objective of this study is to identify, analyze, and interpret how attitudes and values defined in the formal competency-based curriculum are integrated and represented in the content and didactic apparatus of basic education textbooks in Kosovo, as well as to examine the forms and structures through which they are promoted.

The study focuses on textbooks from the following subjects: Albanian Language, Mathematics, Humans and Nature, Society and Environment, History, and Biology, in grades III, V, VIII, and IX. This selection is aligned with current national priorities related to curriculum and textbook review processes.

The study aims to explore how textbooks support the promotion of attitudes and values through their structure, content, and learning activities, as well as to identify potential gaps between curriculum expectations and textbook implementation.

Research questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

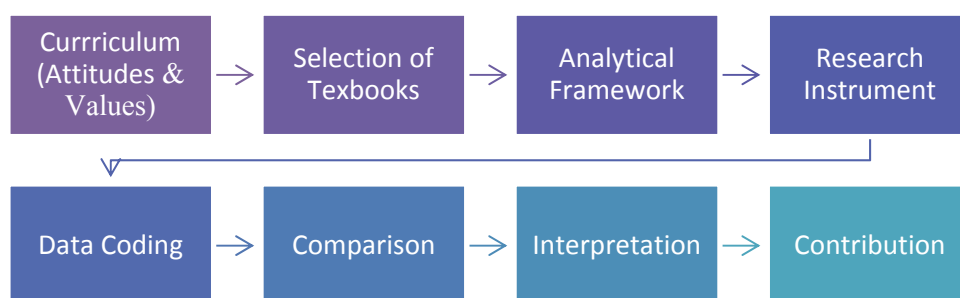
1. What core attitudes and values defined in the formal curriculum are included and promoted in current textbooks?
2. How are these attitudes and values integrated within the structure and organization of textbook content and learning units?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, employing content analysis as the main methodological framework (Mayring & Fenzl, 2019; Vogrinc & Saqipi, 2020). This method is particularly suitable for examining how attitudes and values are integrated and promoted within textbook content and their didactic apparatus. It enables a systematic and structured interpretation of textual data, in alignment with the research objectives.

Given that this research is currently in progress, the methodological design aims to provide a clear analytical framework for examining the relationship between curriculum expectations and textbook content. To ensure clarity and transparency of the research process, the methodological steps are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research methodology framework



The research process begins with the identification of attitudes and values defined in the formal curriculum. Based on this framework, a sample of textbooks is selected for analysis. An analytical framework is then developed, followed by the design of a coding instrument that includes categories and indicators for analysis. The data coding phase focuses on identifying attitudes and values in both textual content and didactic elements. The findings are subsequently categorized and compared with curriculum expectations, enabling the identification of patterns and potential gaps. Finally, the study aims to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to curriculum development and textbook improvement.

Data collection

Data collection is conducted through desk research. The sample consists of 16 textbooks from the following subjects: Albanian Language, Mathematics, Humans and Nature, Society and Environment, History, and Biology, across grades III, V, VIII, and IX. In addition, relevant curriculum documents for these subjects are used as a reference framework.

An analytical instrument was developed based on attitudes and values defined in the formal curriculum. This instrument includes:

- categories of attitudes and values
- forms of inclusion (explicit and implicit)
- location of inclusion (textual content and didactic apparatus)

This tool ensures a structured and consistent approach to data collection and analysis.

Data analysis

Data analysis follows the principles of qualitative content analysis (Mayring & Fenzl, 2019). The process focuses on identifying recurring terms, concepts, and patterns related to attitudes and values within textbook content and curriculum documents (Vogrinc & Saqipi, 2020).

The analysis involves:

- initial coding of data based on predefined categories

- categorization of attitudes and values
- comparison between curriculum expectations and textbook content
- interpretation of emerging patterns

This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how values are embedded in textbooks and the contextual messages they convey (Hoti & Zylfiu, 2025).

Research process

To ensure clarity and transparency, the research follows a structured and sequential analytical process. The first step involves the selection of the sample, which includes identifying relevant textbooks and corresponding curriculum documents for the subjects and grade levels under study. This step ensures that the analysis is grounded in materials that are directly aligned with the formal competency-based curriculum.

The second step focuses on the development of the analytical framework. At this stage, attitudes and values are systematically extracted from formal curriculum documents and organized into analytical categories that guide the study. This framework serves as the conceptual basis for examining how these elements are represented in textbooks.

The third step involves the design of the analytical instrument, which includes the development of coding categories and indicators. These categories are used to identify the forms and locations of attitudes and values within both textbook content and their didactic apparatus.

The fourth step consists of data coding, where textbook materials are systematically analysed to identify explicit and implicit representations of attitudes and values. This step enables a structured examination of how these elements are embedded in different parts of the textbooks.

The fifth step includes the categorization and comparison of findings. The identified attitudes and values are organized according to predefined categories and compared with curriculum expectations in order to assess alignment and identify discrepancies.

Finally, the sixth step involves the interpretation of results, focusing on identifying patterns, gaps, and forms of integration of attitudes and values within textbooks.

Overall, this structured research process enhances the transparency, reliability, and replicability of the study, while ensuring a systematic analysis aligned with the research objectives.

Limitations of the study

This study is limited to the analysis of textbook content and their didactic apparatus. It does not include classroom practices or the perspectives of teachers and students. Therefore, the findings will reflect only the level of integration of attitudes and values in written materials, rather than their implementation in educational practice. Future research is recommended to explore these aspects in classroom settings.

ASSUMPTIONS

The study is based on the assumption that the selected textbooks were developed following the approval of formal curricula and in accordance with established textbook standards (MEST, 2011). It is assumed that textbook authors and publishers have aligned their materials with curriculum expectations, including those related to attitudes and values.

The study is guided by the following assumptions:

- Textbooks are expected to promote key values such as self-confidence, respect, responsibility, equality, justice, and understanding.
- Attitudes and values are likely to be integrated through different structural elements of textbooks, including tasks, questions, activities, and discussion sections.
- Textbooks are expected to reflect elements of Kosovo's culture and traditions and contribute to achieving curriculum goals.
- Textbooks may promote democratic citizenship, multicultural understanding, and respect for diversity.

These assumptions guide the analytical focus of the study but will be examined critically during the research process.

CONCLUSIONS

As this study is currently in progress, the conclusions presented here reflect the expected contribution of the research. The study aims to provide a systematic and evidence-based analysis of how attitudes and values are integrated and promoted in basic education textbooks in Kosovo.

From a theoretical perspective, the study is expected to contribute to the growing body of research on values-based education by providing empirical insights into the relationship between curriculum design and textbook content. It addresses an identified research gap related to the lack of systematic analysis of attitudes and values in textbooks.

From a practical perspective, the findings are expected to inform key stakeholders in education. Policymakers may use the results to improve textbook standards and ensure better alignment with curriculum objectives. Curriculum developers may benefit from clearer insights into how attitudes and values are translated into learning materials. Textbook authors and publishers may use the findings to design more effective, contextualized, and pedagogically meaningful content that promotes values such as respect, cooperation, and responsibility.

Furthermore, the study is expected to support ongoing curriculum and textbook review processes in Kosovo by providing evidence-based recommendations for improving the quality and relevance of educational materials.

Future research should extend this analysis by examining how attitudes and values are implemented in classroom practice and how students and teachers engage with textbook content.

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