



Tarlan Orujova

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1594-5555>

Associate Lecturer, Khazar University, Department of Political Science and Philosophy, Azerbaijan, torucova@khazar.org

Atıf Künyesi | Citation Info

Orujova, T. (2025). The Analysis of Multicultural Concept in Azerbaijani Medium Secondary School “Knowledge of World” Textbooks. *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 12 (1), 506-520.

The Analysis of Multicultural Concept in Azerbaijani Medium Secondary School “Knowledge of World” Textbooks

Abstract

This study explores how multiculturalism is represented in Azerbaijani-medium secondary school "Knowledge of the World" textbooks for grades 5 to 9. Azerbaijan presents itself as a multicultural society, but how well does this identity reflect in its education system? Through qualitative content analysis, this research examines key multicultural concepts—such as race, ethnicity, diversity, and discrimination—and how they are integrated into these textbooks. The findings show that while the textbooks emphasize tolerance and national unity, they provide only limited coverage of ethnic minorities, cultural diversity, and the complexities of inclusion. Islam is prominently featured, while other religions and cultures receive little attention. Critical discussions on discrimination and prejudice are largely absent, missing an opportunity to encourage deeper thinking about social justice. Overall, the study highlights that while Azerbaijani textbooks promote a positive view of multiculturalism, they could benefit from a more inclusive and detailed approach to better reflect the country's diverse society.

Keywords: *Multiculturalism, multicultural education, qualitative content analysis*



Azerbaycan Ortaokul “Dünya Bilgisi” Ders Kitaplarında Çokkültürlülük Kavramının Analizi

Öz

Bu çalışma, Azerbaycan'da ortaokul 5 ila 9. sınıflar için hazırlanan “Dünya Bilgisi” ders kitaplarında çokkültürlülüğün nasıl temsil edildiğini araştırmaktadır. Azerbaycan kendisini çok kültürlü bir toplum olarak tanıtmaktadır, ancak bu kimlik eğitim sistemine ne kadar yansımaktadır? Bu araştırma, nitel içerik analizi yoluyla ırk, etnik köken, çeşitlilik ve ayrımcılık gibi temel çokkültürlü kavramları ve bunların bu ders kitaplarına nasıl entegre edildiğini incelemektedir. Bulgular, ders kitaplarının hoşgörü ve ulusal birliği vurgularken, etnik azınlıklara, kültürel çeşitliliğe ve kapsayıcılığın karmaşıklıklarına sadece sınırlı bir şekilde yer verdiğini göstermektedir. İslam belirgin bir şekilde öne çıkarılırken, diğer dinler ve kültürler çok az ilgi görmektedir. Ayrımcılık ve önyargı üzerine eleştirel tartışmalara büyük ölçüde yer verilmeyerek sosyal adalet konusunda daha derin düşünmeyi teşvik etme fırsatı kaçırılmaktadır. Genel olarak bu çalışma, Azerbaycan ders kitaplarının çokkültürlülüğe olumlu bir bakış açısını teşvik etmekle birlikte, ülkenin çeşitlilik içeren toplumunu daha iyi yansıtmak için daha kapsayıcı ve ayrıntılı bir yaklaşımdan faydalanabileceğini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çokkültürlülük, çokkültürlü eğitim, nitel içerik analizi

Introduction

Currently, many countries, particularly in Europe, are experiencing a backlash against multiculturalism. In several European nations, multiculturalism is no longer seen as an effective strategy for managing ethnic, religious, and immigrant diversity. Prominent European leaders, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister David Cameron, have publicly argued that multiculturalism has "failed" (Smee, 2010; Cameron, 2011). While negative attitudes toward multiculturalism persist across Europe, Azerbaijan, a country in the Caucasus region, presents itself as a multicultural society and a center of diversity. To reinforce its commitment to this identity, Azerbaijan officially declared 2016 the Year of Multiculturalism in an effort to promote cultural harmony and inclusivity.

As stated by the 2009 census, the ethnic composition of Azerbaijan consisted of over 91% Azerbaijanis, 2% Lezgians, 1.3% Armenians (with nearly all residing in the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh), 1.3% Russians, 1.2% Talysh, 0.5% Avars, 0.4% Turks, 0.3% Tatars, 0.3% Tats, and 0.25% Ukrainians (World Population Review). Given Azerbaijan's ethnically diverse population and its official stance on multiculturalism as both state policy and a societal norm, this study aims to examine the extent to which the concept of multiculturalism is represented in Azerbaijani-medium secondary school “Knowledge of the World” textbooks.

According to the Multiculturalism Policy Index, "The adoption of multiculturalism in school curricula" is one of the key indicators of a multicultural policy (Kymlicka, 2012). The

objective of this study is to examine the representation of multiculturalism in Azerbaijani-medium secondary school "Knowledge of World" textbooks, utilized in grades 5 through 9, with the intent of assessing the extent to which these textbooks are responsive to multicultural considerations. As defined, "Multicultural education refers to any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds" (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). While Azerbaijan embraces ethnic and religious diversity, it is imperative that curricula and textbooks reflect the history, culture, values, and lifestyles of minority groups, while also integrating perspectives on ethnicity, race, language, religion, economics, and gender.

Textbooks hold significant influence in shaping students' personalities and their perceptions of society. As such, the content of school textbooks—and the information they impart to the younger population—wields considerable power (Evans & Davies, 2000). The role of textbooks is irreplaceable, as they serve as conduits for the transmission of national values, norms, and traditions, whether directly or indirectly. Secondary school textbooks, in particular, play a pivotal role in the formation of societal values, norms, and ideologies. The integration of multicultural education within these textbooks contributes to the development of students' attitudes towards tolerance and acceptance of ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity within society. Conversely, textbooks that perpetuate prejudice, discriminatory language, or hate speech will inevitably shape students' ideological frameworks and perceptions in a harmful direction. Furthermore, textbooks represent a vital source of information and serve as an essential tool for disseminating education to a broader audience due to their widespread availability. As noted by Brugelles and Cromer, "Textbooks are still the cheapest of available media, and they are easy to carry and use" (2009). It is important to highlight that Azerbaijan has yet to initiate research analyzing textbooks from a multicultural perspective. However, there are existing studies that have examined school textbooks from various other critical perspectives.

In her thesis "Gender Roles in Azerbaijani-Medium Secondary School Literature Textbooks", Aygun Dadashova critically examines the representation of gender roles in Azerbaijani secondary school literature textbooks for grades 5 through 9. Employing content analysis, she concludes that gender considerations were largely neglected during the development of these educational materials, resulting in an unequal distribution of gender roles. Her findings reveal a significant overrepresentation of male characters in both textual content and visual elements, while the presence of girls and women is markedly limited. Furthermore, the portrayal of women is confined to a narrow range of occupational roles, whereas men are

depicted in a more diverse array of professional capacities. The dominance of male figures in occupational contexts, she argues, may contribute to the social and professional marginalization of girls.

Shahla Sultanova (2012), in her study titled “Armenian Image in History Textbooks of Azerbaijan”, conducted a content analysis of two history textbooks intended for the 10th and 11th grades in Azerbaijani high schools. Her analysis indicates that the textbooks dedicate substantial space to presenting Armenia and Armenians as the primary adversaries of Azerbaijanis. The portrayal of Armenians is consistently negative, with the texts emphasizing conflict rather than fostering reconciliation. Sultanova concludes that Azerbaijani history education focuses disproportionately on promoting hostility toward Armenians, often at the expense of peace education and conflict resolution.

A growing body of international research has explored the representation of multicultural concepts in educational contexts. In her article “The Multicultural Curriculum: Education for Peace and Development”, Anita Lie investigates the 1994 Indonesian high school English curriculum, assessing whether English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks adequately reflect the diverse cultural environments of students. Through content analysis, she examines representations of gender, local cultural traditions, and community development levels. The findings indicate significant limitations, with the textbooks appearing overly centralized and restrictive. Of particular concern is the underrepresentation of women and a pronounced gender bias favoring males, evident in the use of discriminatory language and stereotypical portrayals. Additionally, non-Javanese cultural groups were significantly less represented than Javanese and international content.

In “Multicultural Education in Social Studies Textbooks in South Korea and the United States: A Comparative Analysis” (2013), Younghan Kim investigates the application of multicultural education theories, such as multiple identities, culturally responsive content, and critical cultural consciousness, in five textbooks. His study seeks to identify both effective practices and areas where theoretical principles fail to translate into curricular content. The analysis reveals significant shortcomings, with none of the examined textbooks from either South Korea or the United States sufficiently addressing core multicultural values, theoretical frameworks, or inclusive educational ideals. Persistent deficiencies identified in prior studies remain unaddressed in these materials.

Likewise, Eunyoung Ji (2015), in her study “An Analysis of Multicultural Education in Korean Elementary Schools”, employs content analysis and teacher interviews to explore how

multicultural education is interpreted and implemented in Korean elementary schools. Her findings suggest that multiculturalism is often presented through negative stereotypes and that both teachers' perceptions and curricular materials lack the depth and continuity necessary for fostering a comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity.

1. Methodology, research question

The purpose of this study is to examine how multicultural values, perspectives, and principles are implemented in educational practices in Azerbaijan. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the extent to which the concept of multiculturalism is represented in Azerbaijani secondary school “Knowledge of the World” textbooks used from the 5th to the 9th grade.

The “Knowledge of the World” textbook was chosen for this study because it is an integral subject aimed at helping students develop a comprehensive system of knowledge, skills, and values necessary for understanding themselves as whole individuals—biologically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. It fosters both national and universal values while contributing to personality development. Since textbooks often reinforce the perspectives of dominant groups and can perpetuate stereotypes while marginalizing minority views, this study explores whether minority perspectives are acknowledged or ignored in these textbooks. The primary research question guiding this study is: To what extent do Azerbaijani secondary school textbooks represent the concept of multiculturalism? The study specifically aims to assess whether and how multicultural principles are reflected in the selected textbooks. The study further aims to explore the following specific questions: Multicultural Responsiveness: How effectively do the “Knowledge of the World” textbooks represent multicultural values? Representation of Prejudice and Discrimination: Do the textbooks contain instances of prejudice or discrimination against any nation, religion, or language?

Concept Inclusion: To what extent do the textbooks incorporate the six core concepts of multicultural education—Race, Ethnicity, Discrimination, Prejudice, Assimilation, and Diversity—as identified by leading scholars (Banks, 2009; Bennett, 2007; Nieto, 2004). The questions which are mentioned above, state specifically the issues that should be to analyze in a textbook with regard multiculturalism concept. To address these research questions, six key concepts of multicultural education—Race, Ethnicity, Discrimination, Prejudice, Assimilation, and Diversity—were identified and examined through qualitative content analysis. Data were collected and analyzed based on both the manifest (explicit) and latent (underlying) meanings present in the texts. A qualitative content analysis approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of written materials and provides insights into how textbooks represent the histories, values, beliefs, and experiences of minorities. Content analysis is a research tool

used to determine the presence of specific words, concepts, and themes within texts. This method helps analyze textual content within its broader context.

Both manifest and latent content were analyzed. Manifest coding involved identifying explicit references to multicultural themes, while latent coding focused on uncovering deeper, implied meanings. As Babbie (2009) explains, "Coding manifest content involves identifying visible, surface-level content in concrete terms" (p. 338). However, manifest coding can lack depth in interpretation, so latent coding was also applied to capture more subtle meanings embedded in the texts. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, all textbooks from the 5th to the 9th grade were thoroughly reviewed. Texts were categorized and coded according to their subject matter, grade level, and representation of multicultural concepts.

Thematic analysis permits researchers to deepen their understanding of a given phenomenon by employing an interpretive approach. This methodology not only facilitates the acquisition of nuanced insights but also supports a more comprehensive exploration of complex issues through detailed investigation and analysis (Blumberg et al., 2011). In the subsequent phase of my narrative text analysis, I aimed to identify the themes and concepts most and least represented in relation to multicultural education. Six core concepts were drawn from the works of prominent scholars in the field of multicultural education, including Banks (2009), Bennett (2007), and Nieto (2004). These concepts are: Race, Ethnicity, Discrimination, Prejudice, Assimilation, and Diversity.

Racism, as conceptualized by Harrell (2000, p. 43), is defined as:

"A system of dominance, power, and privilege based on racial-group designations; rooted in the historical oppression of a group defined or perceived by dominant-group members as inferior, deviant, or undesirable; and occurring in circumstances where members of the dominant group create or accept their societal privilege by maintaining structures, ideology, values, and behavior that have the intent or effect of leaving non-dominant group members relatively excluded from power, esteem, status, and/or equal access to societal resources."

Applying this conceptual framework, the textbooks were examined for textual elements reflective of racial dominance, systemic inequality, or the dichotomy between the dominant "We" and the marginalized "They." The analysis revealed no explicit manifestations of racial dominance or dichotomous group portrayals within the materials. However, it was also observed that the textbooks did not provide a definition of racism, nor did they promote awareness or critical engagement with the concept.

Phinney and Ong (2007, p. 274) define ethnicity as:

"Ethnicity has been studied largely with reference to one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group, that is, a group defined by one's cultural heritage, including values, traditions, and often language."

Based on this definition, it was observed that the textbooks lack detailed explanations about ethnic minorities, their lifestyles, cultures, and traditions. For example, while historical figures such as Babek, Koroglu, Hezi, and Mehdi are mentioned, there is no information provided on heroes from other ethnic groups. Additionally, terms like "ethnicity" and "ethnic group" are rarely encountered in the texts.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines discrimination as: "Treating a person or a particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way than others, because of their skin color, sex, or sexuality" (Cambridge English Dictionary/Discrimination, 2024). According to this definition, no signs of discrimination against any national or religious groups, including Armenians, were found in the textbooks, which is a positive observation. However, the textbooks do not provide a definition of discrimination or raise awareness about the concept, which limits a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Prejudice is described in the Encyclopedia Britannica as:

"An adverse or hostile attitude toward a group or its individual members, generally without just grounds or before sufficient evidence. It is characterized by irrational, stereotyped beliefs. In the social sciences, the term is often used with reference to ethnic groups but can extend to biases based on factors unrelated to ethnicity, such as weight, disability, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation" (Encyclopaedia Britannica/Prejudice). According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Assimilation, in anthropology and sociology, refers to the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society" (Encyclopaedia Britannica/Assimilation).

Similarly, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines diversity as:

"The condition of having or being composed of differing elements: variety, especially the inclusion of people of different races, cultures, etc., in a group or organization" (Merriam-Webster/Diversity, 2024). The limitations of this study are acknowledged as inherent and unavoidable. The findings, while insightful, are insufficient for broad generalization, as the scope of the research is confined to the analysis of a single school subject. This restriction narrows the applicability of the conclusions and calls for further exploration across multiple subjects and educational contexts to achieve more comprehensive insights.

Description of textbooks

In Azerbaijan, the publication of textbooks is centrally regulated. Given the presence of two educational sectors in Azerbaijani schools, textbooks are published in both Azerbaijani and Russian languages. Despite the linguistic differences, the content, authorship, and structure of the “Knowledge of World” textbooks remain consistent across both sectors. These textbooks were published by the East-West publishing agency, and all editions have been made publicly accessible through the Electronic Textbooks Portal.

For the purpose of this study, the initial phase involved a comprehensive review of the “Knowledge of World” textbooks to identify texts with content relevant to multicultural education. Only texts with a clear multicultural orientation were selected for analysis, while texts addressing multiculturalism-neutral topics were excluded, as their generalized content did not contribute to the research objectives. The textbooks selected for analysis were published between 2014 and 2017.

Analysis of the “Knowledge of World” Textbooks by Grade Level

Fifth Grade

The “Knowledge of World” textbook for fifth grade was authored by Nushaba Mammadova, Konul Mahmudova, and Aynur Bakhmanlı, published in 2016 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and is designed for Azerbaijani-speaking students. The textbook comprises four sections: “Society,” “Environment,” “Nature,” and “Our Religion and Spirituality,” covering a total of 25 topics. Of these, five topics were examined, as they specifically addressed themes related to nations and religion. The remaining texts, which lacked direct relevance to multicultural education, were excluded from the analysis.

Sixth Grade

The sixth-grade “Knowledge of World” textbook, authored by Nushaba Mammadova and Konul Mahmudova, was published in 2017 in Baku, Azerbaijan. It consists of four sections: “My Spiritual World,” “I Rely on My State,” “From Living to Non-living,” and “Safe Life,” covering a total of 23 topics. Among these, only one topic was identified as containing a multicultural perspective.

Seventh Grade

The seventh-grade “Knowledge of World” textbook was authored by Nushaba Mammadova, Konul Mahmudova, and Sevil Bahramova, published in 2014 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The textbook is divided into four sections: “Healthy and Safe Life,” “Spiritual Life,” “Environment,” and “The Needs of Society,” comprising a total of 23 topics. One topic,

specifically discussing “Religion and Culture,” was selected for analysis due to its multicultural relevance.

Eighth Grade

The eighth-grade “Knowledge of World” textbook was authored by Nushaba Mammadova and Sevil Bahramova and published in 2015 in Baku, Azerbaijan. It consists of four sections: “The Laws of Nature,” “Society and State,” “My Spiritual World,” and “Live Safe and Healthy,” with a total of 21 topics. Only one section was identified as containing content relevant to multicultural education.

Ninth Grade

The ninth-grade “Knowledge of World” textbook, authored by Nushaba Mammadova, Konul Mahmudova, and Sevil Bahramova, was published in 2016 in Baku, Azerbaijan. It consists of three sections: “For Our Health and Security,” “Society and Its Prosperity,” and “Culture and Tolerance,” with a total of 18 topics. Notably, one entire section is dedicated to concepts of tolerance, including intercultural tolerance, religious tolerance in Azerbaijan, and multiculturalism.

2. Findings

In the 5th-grade textbook, pupils are introduced to the ethnic minorities of Azerbaijan, with an emphasis on the nation's historical reputation for tolerance. As part of the curriculum, students are encouraged to research the various ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan. This fosters a positive attitude toward diversity. However, the textbook lacks detailed explanations about the lives, cultures, and traditions of these ethnic minorities. Prominent national heroes, such as Babek, Koroglu, Hezi, and Mehdi, are discussed, but there is no mention of heroes from other racial or ethnic backgrounds. The next topic in the 5th-grade textbook addresses religion. It highlights the presence of monotheistic religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, alongside polytheistic traditions like Shamanism and Zoroastrianism. The text underscores the role of Islam in shaping religious tolerance in Azerbaijan. This point is supported by the words of Heydar Aliyev, the national leader, who stated:

"There are many religions in the world. Every religion has its own place. We Azerbaijanis are proud of Islam and have never been opposed to other religions, have not been hostile, and have not forced other people to obey our religion. We believe that people should respect all other cultures, religions, and spiritual values, regardless of their religion or culture, and must be tolerant of traditions they do not like." While the textbook reflects the significance of Islam in fostering tolerance, it provides only superficial information about other religions, such as Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Syncretism. Moreover, the tasks assigned to students

predominantly focus on research related to Islam, further emphasizing its centrality. In the 6th-grade textbook, one section titled "My Spiritual World" touches upon the spread of various religions in Azerbaijan. However, these religions are merely mentioned in passing, with Islam and its sacred holidays receiving in-depth attention. The dominance of Islam in the narrative remains evident.

The 7th-grade textbook features a topic titled "Religion and Culture" within the section on "Spiritual Life". The authors acknowledge the influence of religious values on moral and cultural development, yet the examples provided are predominantly drawn from Christianity and, especially, Islam. While it is noted that all religions encourage moral uprightness and honesty, the discussion subsequently focuses on the ethical teachings of the Quran. The promotion of Islam is particularly pronounced in this context. In the 9th-grade textbook, one section and six texts are explicitly based on a multicultural approach. This section, titled "Culture and Tolerance", underscores the importance of tolerance for societal development and security. The authors argue that without tolerance, it is impossible to achieve a comfortable and harmonious environment. Tolerance is defined as follows:

"A tolerant person is someone who respects their opponents, possesses the ability to tolerate opposing views, approaches them with patience, respects human rights, and honors the dignity of others. Tolerance also involves accepting people who are different from us."

The text includes a notable quote from Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

"Tolerance is the visiting card of Azerbaijan."

This statement highlights the high level of emphasis placed on promoting tolerance in Azerbaijan. The authors further stress that Islam, as a religion, promotes tolerance. However, they caution against equating Islam with extremism and terrorism, noting that individuals committing such acts under the banner of Islam do not represent the true values of the religion. This serves as a vital message to steer the younger generation away from radical and extremist ideologies associated with Islam. The textbook also provides an overview of Azerbaijan's ethnic and religious diversity. It highlights the presence of various places of worship, including mosques, churches, synagogues, and temples, not only in Baku but also in other regions of the country. Examples include the Russian Orthodox Church, representative offices of the Catholic Church, and functioning Jewish synagogues. Religious rituals and holidays are celebrated across the country, further illustrating Azerbaijan's historical commitment to tolerance. The

authors emphasize that, apart from the territorial disputes with Armenians, Azerbaijan has been free of religious or ethnic conflicts, fostering an environment of national and religious harmony.

The promotion of tolerance and multiculturalism is also embedded in Azerbaijan's legal framework. The textbook references the Constitution of Azerbaijan, adopted in 1995, which enshrines the principles of freedom of religion and conscience. Article 48 of the Constitution states:

Everyone enjoys the freedom of conscience. Everyone has the right to define their attitude to religion, profess any religion individually or collectively, or profess none at all. They can also express and spread their beliefs concerning religion. Religious rituals may be freely carried out, provided they do not violate public order or contradict public morals. Religious beliefs do not exempt individuals from abiding by the law. No one can be forced to express their religious beliefs, perform rituals, or participate in religious ceremonies. This legal foundation promotes tolerance and multiculturalism at a high level, fostering respect for ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.

The authors also reference Azerbaijan's participation in international events and conferences to highlight the durability and global recognition of its multicultural policy. For instance, a seminar titled "Coexistence of Religions in a Secular State: Positive Experience of Azerbaijan" held at the UK House of Lords in 2001 demonstrated the country's reputation for religious tolerance during its first decade of independence. Similarly, the 2002 Baku conference organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) acknowledged Azerbaijan as a model for tolerance and the coexistence of diverse cultures.

The textbook provides a concise definition of multiculturalism:

"Multiculturalism is a matter of respect for the rights and freedoms of all people, regardless of ethnicity or religion. In a multicultural society, every citizen has equal rights to develop their culture, language, traditions, ethnicity, and religion. This includes the right to establish schools in one's native language and to publish newspapers and magazines."

In the task section, students are encouraged to gather and analyze themes of homeland, elders, and motherhood as presented in the Dada Gorgud epic—a cornerstone of Azerbaijani literature. However, the absence of representation for the literatures of ethnic minorities is notable and diminishes the inclusivity of the curriculum. Moreover, six key concepts of multicultural education—ethnicity, race, diversity, assimilation, discrimination, and prejudice—are explored in the textbook. However, not all of these concepts are adequately defined or supported with relevant materials. The findings reveal varying degrees of integration of these seven concepts of multicultural education across the textbooks. Each concept is

addressed briefly and requires further elaboration to ensure a comprehensive understanding. Ethnicity- The terms "ethnic group" and "ethnicity" appear infrequently in the textbooks. When mentioned, these terms are used perfunctorily in discussions of diversity-related concepts but are not linked to broader topics like cultural change, cultural identity, multiculturalism, or traditional culture. A positive aspect noted in the textbooks is that minority groups are not referred to as "they," which helps avoid creating a sense of "otherness." Across the textbooks, there is a recurring statement that Azerbaijan has been a heterogeneous nation since ancient times. However, the discussion remains superficial, and the nuances of this heterogeneity are not explored in detail. Race- In comparison to "ethnic group" and "ethnicity," the term "race" and its related concepts, such as racial profiling and racism, are entirely absent from the textbooks.

Diversity- The authors highlight the presence of various minority groups in Azerbaijan. However, the treatment of diversity lacks depth, as comprehensive information about these groups is not provided. While the textbooks acknowledge that minority cultures exist and will persist, there is little explanation of how these cultures enrich Azerbaijani culture. The focus is largely on the assertion that Azerbaijan has been a culturally and ethnically diverse society since ancient times. It is emphasized that Azerbaijanis communicate with minorities on an equal footing, without discrimination or prejudice against their different cultures. Although the textbooks recognize and emphasize the value of diversity, the narrative remains predominantly centered on the concept of tolerance, leaving a deeper exploration of diversity underdeveloped.

Assimilation- The concept of assimilation is neither described nor addressed in any of the textbooks. Discrimination- Despite the prominence of discrimination as a critical concept when discussing issues faced by minority groups, the textbooks do not explain it. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of discrimination against ethnic minorities or diversity in the narratives presented. Prejudice- The concept of prejudice receives no attention in the textbooks. There are no texts or discussions that could be utilized to introduce or teach this concept to students.

Conclusion

This study analyzed five Azerbaijani school textbooks to assess the representation of multicultural education within the curriculum. The findings revealed several shortcomings in addressing multiculturalism comprehensively. While the textbooks emphasize ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, they lack sufficient examples and detailed discussions of these themes. The content is predominantly focused on Islam, leaving other religious and ethnic cultural identities underexplored.

Although the textbooks provide definitions for some concepts related to multicultural education, the treatment of these topics is inconsistent. Definitions of key ideas such as tolerance and multiculturalism are relatively detailed and include examples, yet other crucial concepts—such as ethnicity, diversity, discrimination, and prejudice—are insufficiently addressed or absent altogether. Despite these gaps, some chapters, particularly those focusing on religious diversity and democracy in contemporary society, hold potential for fostering multicultural education during classroom instruction.

The tasks assigned to students, such as gathering information about ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan, encourage awareness of the existence of minority groups and their associated issues. However, these activities often stop short of fostering critical thinking about the complexities and challenges faced by ethnic minorities in contemporary Azerbaijan. Celebrating cultural diversity is fundamental to building a truly multicultural society. While the textbooks touch upon concepts such as ethnicity and diversity, they fail to delve deeply into these ideas. The curriculum would benefit from incorporating more explicit and detailed explorations of cultural differences, including everyday life, food, music, and fashion.

Azerbaijan offers equal educational opportunities to all students, regardless of their gender, social class, ethnic, racial, or cultural backgrounds. The school curriculum favors safe and widely accepted themes, such as multiculturalism, tolerance, and intercultural harmony, while avoiding analytical discussions of more challenging issues, such as segregation, inequality, resistance, and injustice. These omissions limit students' ability to critically engage with social justice issues and to act as change agents beyond the classroom. The constitutional emphasis on tolerance has established a robust foundation for promoting multiculturalism in Azerbaijan. The high-level promotion of tolerance fosters a positive approach to ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. The textbooks also highlight national identity while promoting regional, cultural, and global identities. Based on this study, three broad conclusions about multicultural education in Azerbaijan can be drawn: Positive Representation: Multiculturalism is addressed through specific and positive approaches in the textbooks. Content Gaps: While the curriculum and textbooks avoid discriminatory or prejudicial attitudes, they lack comprehensive and ongoing programs that effectively address multicultural education. Curriculum Development: An integrated approach to curriculum development is necessary to enhance multicultural education in Azerbaijan.

References

- Babbie earl. (2009). *The practice of social research*. (14th edition). Wadsworth Publishing.
- Banks, J. A. (2009). *Teaching strategies for ethnic studies*. (8th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Bennett, C. I. (2007). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and Practice*. (6th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Brugeilles, C. & Cromer, S. (2009). *Promoting gender equality through textbooks. A methodological guide*.

Business Research Methods. (1March, 2011). (B. Blumberg, R. D. Cooper & P. S. Schindler). Paperback – *International Edition*.

Cambridge English Dictionary. (2024). Discrimination. In Cambridge English Dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/discrimination>.

Cameron, D. (2011). *Multiculturalism has failed in Europe*. <https://www.france24.com/en/20110205-multiculturalism-has-failed-britain-says-pm-cameron>

Dadashova, A. (17-21 February 2020). *Gender Roles in Azerbaijani - Medium Secondary School Literature textbooks*. GCRF COMPASS Early Career Researcher Training School.

Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). Assimilation. In Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/assimilation-society>

Encyclopaedia Britannica.(n.d.). Prejudice. In Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/prejudice>

Eunyoung Ji. (2015). *An Analysis of Multicultural Education in Korean Elementary Schools*. <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/6108vc972>.

Evans, L. & Davies, K. (2000). No sissy boys here: A content analysis of the representation of masculinity in elementary school reading textbooks. *Sex roles*, 42(3-4), 255-270.

Gay, G. (2001). Curriculum Theory and Multicultural Education. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.). *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*. (pp. 25-43). Jossey-Bass.

Great Schools Partnership. (2013). *Multicultural Education in the glossary of education reform*. <https://www.edglossary.org/multicultural-education>.

Harrell, S. P. (2000). A multidimensional conceptualization of racism-related stress: Implications for the well-being of people of color. *American journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 70(1), 42-57.

Kymlicka, W. (2012). Multiculturalism - Success, Failure and the Future [file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/TCM-Multiculturalism-Web%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/TCM-Multiculturalism-Web%20(2).pdf)

Lie, A. (2000) The Multicultural Curriculum: Education for Peace and Development. *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*, 6 (1), 81–102.

Məmmədova, N., Mahmudova, K. & Bağmanlı, A. (2016). *Həyat bilgisi fənni üzrə 5-ci sinif üçün dərslik*. Qərb-Şərq nəşriyyatı.

Məmmədova, N. & Bəhramova, S. (2015). *Həyat bilgisi fənni üzrə 8-ci sinif üçün dərslik*. Qərb-Şərq nəşriyyatı.

Məmmədova, N. & Mahmudova, K. (2017). *Həyat bilgisi fənni üzrə 6-cı sinif üçün dərslik*. Qərb-Şərq nəşriyyatı.

Məmmədova, N., Mahmudova, K. & Bəhramova, S. (2016). *Həyat bilgisi fənni üzrə 9-cu sinif üçün dərslik* Qərb-Şərq nəşriyyatı.

Məmmədova, N., Mahmudova, K. & Bəhramova, S. (2018). *Həyat bilgisi fənni üzrə 7-ci sinif üçün dərslik*. Qərb-Şərq nəşriyyatı.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2024). *Diversity*. In Merriam-Webster. <https://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversity>.

Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Longman, 10 Bank Street, White Plains, NY 10606.

Phinney, J. S. & Ong, A. D. (2007). Conceptualization and Measurement of Ethnic Identity: Current Status and Future Directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* Copyright 2007 by the American Psychological Association, 54 (3), 271–281.

Smee, J. (2010). Merkel's Rhetoric in Integration Debate is 'Inexcusable'. *Spiegel Online International*, 18.

Sultanova, S. (2012). Armenian Image in History Textbooks of Azerbaijan. *Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation*.

World Population Review. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/azerbaijan>

Young Han Kim. Multicultural Education in Social Studies <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/>