

Comparative Study of Legal Literacy Level of the Elementary and Secondary School Teachers

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Received: July 19, 2016 Accepted: August 30, 2016 Online Published: October 30, 2016

doi:10.5539/jpl.v9n9p119

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jpl.v9n9p119>

Abstract

The goal of research was the comparison of legal literacy level of elementary and secondary school teachers. The research design was a descriptive-correlational method. By using stratified sampling method 158 teachers were selected and participated in the study. Research tool was a researcher made questionnaire based on the dimensions of legal literacy. The results showed that the teachers of elementary and secondary schools have not appropriate legal literacy. The findings also indicate that there is a significant difference in legal literacy between male and female teachers, and there is no significant difference between the legal literacy of elementary and secondary school teachers.

Keywords: legal literacy, elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers

1. Introduction and Problem Statement

The development of every society is required the existence and continuous activity of various institutions such as family, religion, government, economics, and education. In this respect, educational institutions due to various scientific, economic, cultural, social, and political outcomes, has a basic and vital situation among the mentioned institutions. Therefore, nowadays political systems and governments perform fully political, financial and administrative supports from educational institutions. Because no society can develop without having a comprehensive and efficient educational institutions (Marzooghi, 2005). Moreover, regarding the complexities of current life in the globalization era, education should deal with topics like social, cultural and legal literacy.

Anyway, acquiring literacy for social and economic participation is an essential need and can also help human development and reduce social poverty. Moreover, literate people require special knowledge and trainings when there is a violation in their legal rights. Unawareness of legal rights, human rights, civil liberties, constitutional provisions and similar laws can result in serious deficiencies. In addition, human dignity requires having freedom and equality right in accessing justice and the protection of vulnerable factors. For this reason, most of the social corrective efforts require creating changes in the organizations that have deeper contact in people's levels. Because law and legal literacy education is the practical solution for strengthening and consolidating social life foundations. If people have awareness of their rights and duties, performing justice and balancing various interests in the community will be much easier. For this reason, legal literacy increase ultimately results in the development and consolidation of a transparency and responsive government based on the "Rule of Law" (Pulikuthiyil, 2012). In this respect, it can be said that legal literacy is an important means for creating qualitative change in people's life standard. Evidences also show that better awareness of rules in various working areas helps people effectively, and not performing some of the rules is somehow related to beneficiaries' unawareness (Pulikuthiyil, 2012). From this perspective, it seems that the first step in order to recognize the rights better is to text the education of them in the curriculum of different levelly schooling. Equipping learners with legal literacy will help them to be aware of these rights and acquire skills to be able to defend their rights and others properly, the literacy that can be realized in the curriculum forms. Power and Alison (2000) believe that one of the curriculum elements that is text books, particularly books of social studies can play important role in this respect, because such books are in a way a reflex to of students' social requirements and problems, so that these kinds of methods are internalized in their personality and they can be familiarized with their duties and responsibilities.

There are many research evidences indicate that the schools and university students go to this institution without learning knowledge, skill, and values that become the basis and foundation of citizenship life or persuade them

to recognize their rights. Soltanifar et al. (2011) believe that knowing the rights is one of the basic stages and the prerequisite of citizenship life. In a study Rivolli(2010) concluded that the level of interests and civil-political knowledge of students has strong correlation with curriculum content. He showed that 49.5 percent of students are not satisfied with the help of schools for growing civil and political awareness. Laird Hunter (2010) showed that the legal system should be able to lead people in a legal process, and it should also be able to give them the power of recognizing what legal problem or conflict exists, and be aware that at what time the legal solution is proposed, and to be aware and be able to perform required measures to prevent and prohibit problems, and when it is not possible know how to help themselves properly.

There fore, teaching legal literacy is an inevitable necessity for social and economic development and also improving life conditions of aggrieved . Moreover, people's lowness and not updated legal literacy is one of the most important problems existing in society, and this issue has caused a high files of cases in the judiciary. For this reason, the need to conduct researches in order to improve and promote legal literacy of community members is needed more than before. One of the factors that has important and many capacities in education to promote legal literacy of students are schools is teachers. The teacher is regarded as the main factor of education whom the executive and also excellent goals of educational system is ultimately realized and accomplished. Thus, teacher due to his/her superior role should be empowered in order to proper qualities and characteristics of every educational system. Teacher is the key element in implementing program who can play an important role in the legal literacy development and excellence, hence for this reason in the present research it is tried to answer the question that how much is the legal literacy awareness of teachers. Is there any significant difference between legal literacy and awareness of male and female teachers, and is there any significant difference between legal literacy and awareness of the teachers in elementary and secondary school levels?

2. Research Methodology

The research method was a descriptive-correlation type. The statistical population includes all teachers of elementary and secondary levels of the city of Marvdasht(Fars province,Iran) stratified random sampling 158 teachers were selected as sample. The tool of collecting data was researcher made questionnaire of assessing legal literacy. This questionnaire includes 55 items that are based on Likert's 5 points spectrum and 9 components of civil rights, political rights, economic and social rights, cultural rights, judicial rights, family rights, technology rights, commercial rights and environmental rights(tabale1).

In order to determine the reliability of questionnaire two types of reliability (split-half and internal consistency) were used. For this purpose, the questions were divided into two even and odd parts and the subjects scores were calculated in each part, then the correlation coefficient between two parts was calculated according to the Spearman-Brown corrective correlation coefficient. According to the internal consistency of tool, the desired research tool has appropriate reliability when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is higher than or equal to 0.7, and indicated the reliability of the research.

Table 1. Reliability coefficients related to the questionnaire and components

Components	Items	Internal Consistency	Split-Half
Civil Rights	1-4	0.770	0.712
Political Rights	5-7	0.711	0.696
Economic and Social Rights	8-15	0.874	0.834
Cultural Rights	16-20	0.811	0.803
Judicial Rights	21-29	0.909	0.890
Family Rights	30-40	0.888	0.775
Technology Rights	41-45	0.898	0.839
Commercial Rights	46-49	0.785	0.837
Environmental Rights	50-55	0.904	0.865
Total Scale	1-55	0.962	0.793

In order to determine the validity of the questionnaire, two types of measurement tools (content validity and structure validity) were used. The questions of questionnaire were modified for several times and finalized by the

viewpoint of the research supervisor and advisor and some of faculty members the experts of educational at university. Thus, the questions of questionnaire have content validity (Table 2).

Table 2. Correlation coefficients related to convergence validity and differentiation in the multi-question subscales of questionnaire

Components	Convergence Validity (Correlation Coefficient)	Differentiation Validity (Correlation Coefficient)
Civil Rights	0.705-0.854	-0.003-0.572
Political Rights	0.707-0.883	0.02-0.595
Economic and Social Rights	0.614-0.764	0.05-0.640
Cultural Rights	0.698-0.838	-0.03-0.733
Judicial Rights	0.873-0.646	0.07-0.662
Family Rights	0.586-0.807	0.03-0.659
Technology Rights	0.818-0.877	0.11-0.672
Commercial Rights	0.704-0.896	0.19-0.610
Environmental Rights	0.739-0.913	0.04-0.527

3. Research Findings

Data analysis was performed in two stages. In the first stage, before analysing the research questions, the normality of variables should be investigated. If P-value is less than 0.05 significance level, the assumption of variables normality is rejected and non-parametric tests are used to answer the questions, otherwise parametric tests are used. In this research by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test the data were analyzed (Table 3).

Table 3. Test results of the normality of variables scores

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	
	Statistics	Significance Level (P-Value)
Total Scale	0.823	0.5
Civil Rights	1.5	0.018
Political Rights	2.01	0.001
Economic and Social Rights	1.4	0.039
Cultural Rights	1.3	0.04
Judicial Rights	1.3	0.056
Family Rights	0.894	0.4
Technology Rights	1.52	0.019
Commercial Rights	1.4	0.028
Environmental Rights	1.2	0.07

As shown at the above table, it can be concluded that the significance levels of the scores of total scale and the components of judicial, family, and environmental rights are more than acceptable value (0.05), hence the normality tests of this variable are not significant. Therefore, the normality hypothesis is confirmed, and so in order to analyze, the parametric tests should be used, and about other components, significance levels are less than acceptable value (0.05), hence the normality tests of this variable are significant. Therefore, the normality hypothesis is not confirmed (P-value <0.05). For this reason, it is required to use non-parameter tests for analysis.

3.1 First Question: How Much Is the Level of the Teachers Legal Literacy ?

As it was said this questionnaire has 5 options as each question is numbered from 1 to 5 respectively. At first the questions related to each component are added to each other, and then the total obtained scores are divided to each component, so that all averages (with regard to Likert's scoring of questionnaire) are calculated on one spectrum from 1 to 5. The assumed average was 3, and the scores lower than it are not acceptable (Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of obtained averages with the assumptive average in the performance of human resources

Variable	Number	Scores Average	Assumptive Average	t-Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level
Total Scale	158	2.43	3.00	-12.4	157	0.0001
Judicial Rights	158	2.13	3.00	-14.10	057	0.0001
Family Rights	158	2.47	3.00	-9.41	157	0.0001
Environmental Rights	158	2.81	3.00	-2.70	157	0.008

As it is observed in the table 4 the t-value in all variables has become significant at 0.01 level ($P < 0.01$). Thus, there is a significant difference between the average of obtained scores and the assumptive average (3.00), and considering that the average of obtained scores from assumed average is less than 3, it can be concluded that the teachers have not had appropriate legal literacy in the fields of judicial, family, and environmental rights and the total scale.

Table 5. Descriptive data related to the scores of various items

Variables	Number	Average	Median	Standard Deviation
Civil Rights	158	2.71	2.75	0.7
Political Rights	158	2.50	2.33	0.8
Economic and Social Rights	158	2.53	2.37	0.7
Cultural Rights	158	2.43	2.40	0.7
Technology Rights	158	2.21	2.00	0.8
Commercial Rights	158	2.12	2.00	0.7

As it is observed in the table 5, the average and median of scores in all variables are smaller than the assumed average value 3.

Table 6. Results of median test of non-parametric variables

Variables	Category	Number	Observed Ratio (Percent)	Test Ratio
Civil Rights	Smaller or equal to median	110	0.70	0.5
	Greater than median	48	0.30	
	Total	158	1.00	
Political Rights	Smaller or equal to median	128	0.81	0.5
	Greater than median	30	0.19	
	Total	158	1.00	
Economic and Social Rights	Smaller or equal to median	122	0.77	0.5
	Greater than median	36	0.23	
	Total	158	1.00	
Cultural Rights	Smaller or equal to median	130	0.82	0.5
	Greater than median	28	0.18	
	Total	158	1.00	
Technology Rights	Smaller or equal to median	132	0.84	0.5
	Greater than median	26	0.16	
	Total	158	1.00	
Commercial Rights	Smaller or equal to median	146	0.92	0.5
	Greater than median	12	0.08	
	Total	158	1.00	

As it is observed in the table 6, the significance level in all variables values has been obtained 0.01. Among all variables, the number of smaller or equal to the median scores is more than 3, hence the teachers have not had adequate legal literacy about these variables.

3.2 Second Question: Does Legal Literacy Have Significant Difference between Female and Male Teachers?

Table 7. Legal literacy scores between female and male teachers

Gender	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	t	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level
Female	66	124.4	30.2	-3.4	152	0.001
Male	88	141.7	30.6			

Considering the above table and observing significance level it can be regarded that the t-value is equal to -3.4, that has become significant at 0.01 level ($P < 0.01$), and it means that the level of legal literacy has significant difference between female and male teacher.

3.3 Third Question: Does Legal Literacy Have Significant Difference between the Teachers of Elementary and Secondary School Levels?

Table 8. Legal literacy scores between the teachers of elementary and secondary school levels

Level	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	t	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level
Elementary	90	135.07	28.3	0.21	142	0.08
High School	54	133.96	33.9			

As shown in the table 8 it can be considered that the t-value has not become significant ($P > 0.05$), and it means that the level of legal literacy and knowledge does not have significant difference between the elementary and

secondary school.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

development of every society depends on transferring beliefs, knowledge, insights and political, cultural and social values to community members. The comprehensive development also requires active presence of citizens in political and social issues, and their presence in various areas. To education such citizens, basic and necessary measures should be done. Moreover, solving the issues of society and creating social change is only possible through active participation of community members. Additionally, without awareness of citizenship rights in civil, political and social dimensions, the theoretical support would not be created for active participation in public affairs, and the citizens would not be able to declare their requirements to the political governance properly. In this regard, the necessity of legal, cultural, social, political, and etc. awareness of adults is prominently observed, because they, in addition to their participation, have the responsibility of guiding their relatives as well. In this respect the legal literacy means creating public awareness about legal rights of duties that can be executed, and violations of these laws follows judicial summon and prosecution. The considerable point regarding the importance of rights is that in the current situation of communities, on the one hand globalization and expansion of world cultures, and on the other hand the impacts of modern phenomena on social and cultural domains resulted in the transformation of roles and awareness of community, and this point has followed the change of attitudes, and the increase of expectations and demands, as in various countries new legal claims have been proposed by various groups and classes.

Moreover, teachers' awareness of citizenship rights and their demands allocate special are to itself, because they are distinguished class of every society that most of the elites and leaders are among them. This group has effective role in forming people's awareness of their rights and has abundant ability to create movement and flowing public opinion and participation in community affairs. Hence they are regarded as a reference group that student adapt their attitudes and behaviors from them. However, in the current conditions, the students and all of society members on the one hand are exposed to changes occurred in Iran and world such as globalization, accessing information and modern technology, and on the other hand receive different teachings in educational arena. In this respect the educational system and its curriculums content will have considerable share in forming students' attitudes. Therefore, awareness of citizenship rights in the community of Iran particularly by teachers has special importance.

There force Legal literacy education are regarded as the most important concerns of most of the education a factory systems, because teaching rights causes people's awareness of their rights and duties and permits them to intervene in their fate consciously. It also results in the realization of their rights and better life for them and other community members. Social system takes a more growing trend to itself through teaching rights and it can be hoped that the community would be changed to a more active and dynamic ones and the students improve their social interactions with each other and with the governing political system. In this respect, although various formal and informal institutions try to teach rights, a great part of teaching duty is the responsibility of the educational system and one of its effective factor is the teacher. Teachers can play considerable role in reducing social damages and empowering student through teaching the rights.

Knowledge a bout the rights can expand social relationship and also make students to some extent safe from probable losses that might raise from other society members or the governance. Familiarity with the rights in addition to the applications individual make so empowerment, by legal literacy increasing, reduction of individual damages, etc., is useful for the community as well, that in addition to reducing social damages leads to the reduction of the files of cases in the judiciary. Thus, attention to the education of legal literacy with knowledge about rights can have considerable role in making community healthy, that teacher can have valuable role in this respect. Therefore, teachers' legal literacy and awareness is also very important and essential. As it is specified from the results of this research, the teachers do not have appropriate legal literacy in judicial, family and environmental fields. Legal literacy and awareness has significant difference between female and male teachers, while there is no significant difference of legal literacy and awareness between the teachers of elementary and secondary school levels. Therefore, considering the necessity of teaching legal literacy to the teachers, the following applied solutions and suggestions are offered:

- Developing curriculum for teaching legal literacy in all educational levels,
- Developing educational courses focusing on the legal literacy teachers' in-service training,
- Establishing legal consultation centers in the schools,
- Providing internship courses for law students in the schools and education centers,

- Informing people through the media, especially radio and television about legal education.
- Establishing seminars and scientific lectures on legal literacy, and

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