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Identifying the Neglected Dimensions of the Citizenship Education Curriculum with a Future-Oriented School Approach in Primary Education

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study was to identify the neglected dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum for primary school students from the perspective of future-oriented schools.

Methods: This study was applied in purpose and employed a qualitative exploratory research design. The participants consisted of educational science experts with experience in citizenship education curriculum development, as well as primary school teachers from the provinces of Golestan, Mazandaran, and Tehran, Iran. Using purposive sampling, 33 participants were selected. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Data were analyzed using thematic coding in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The trustworthiness of the findings was established based on the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba.

Results: The study found that the primary-level citizenship education curriculum, viewed through a future-oriented school approach, neglects dimensions in three domains. In knowledge, gaps include psychology, digital teaching and learning, digital technologies, sociology of citizenship, networked communication, information management and knowledge orientation, citizenship rights, religious and humanistic values, international awareness, and financial and economic literacy. In attitudes, neglected areas include respect for students, national identity, democratic attitudes, desirable behavior, meaningful life, personal excellence, cosmopolitan outlook, and future-oriented thinking. In skills, the curriculum overlooks behavioral guidance, instruction, communication, teamwork, resource management, planning, digital and life skills, creativity and innovation, and internet information searching.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that effective citizenship education within future-oriented schools requires greater attention to relevant knowledge areas, the institutionalization of desirable attitudinal approaches, and the development and reinforcement of the identified competencies and skills.

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Introduction

Future-oriented schools will no longer function merely as places for knowledge transmission; rather, they will evolve into dynamic environments for fostering creativity, innovation, and social interaction—spaces in which emerging technologies and artificial intelligence interact with human values to transform the learning process. Given the rapid transformations in today's world, future-oriented thinking has become an unavoidable necessity in educational systems (Sarani & Adeli-Nasab, 2021). Traditional and unidimensional planning approaches are no longer sufficient to address the complex and multilayered needs of contemporary society. Therefore, adopting a future-oriented approach in schools is considered a prerequisite for achieving meaningful and sustainable educational change (Zakeri & Taheri-Demneh, 2020). In essence, future schools represent a redefinition of educational models—an innovative framework that, through comprehensive and forward-looking practices, supports high-quality education in a rapidly changing context (Drigas et al., 2023).

The concept of the future-oriented school has gained increasing attention in recent decades due to accelerating changes in educational systems. The future-school paradigm, based on the assumption that it responds to the evolving needs and expectations of learners, emphasizes the necessity of understanding the functions of schools and their impact on students (Sharifi et al., 2021). Education, by its very nature, is inherently future-oriented (Sarani & Adeli-Nasab, 2021). In the present study, "future-oriented schools" refer to institutions that, through the design of structures, learning spaces, and pedagogical processes aligned with future developments, aim to cultivate competencies that prepare students for effective life in complex, technological, and global societies (Sharifi et al., 2021; Zakeri & Taheri-Demneh, 2020). These schools leverage modern technologies and promote personalized, collaborative, and problem-based learning in flexible, multi-purpose environments, while redefining the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator, designer, and learning analyst (Drigas et al., 2023). According to the World Economic Forum (2020), future-oriented schools emphasize the development of global citizenship skills, creativity, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, lifelong learning, and inclusive education, aligning curricula with future individual and societal needs.

However, in many formal curricula, essential dimensions of citizenship education aligned with this approach remain underdeveloped or neglected. Therefore, the present study seeks to identify

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these neglected dimensions and provide a conceptual foundation for rethinking citizenship education at the primary level through the lens of future-oriented schooling. In connection with the concept of future-oriented schools, whose aim is to prepare students for effective participation in complex, technological, and global societies, the role of citizenship education in the primary curriculum becomes even more significant. These schools, by emphasizing personalized, collaborative, technology-enhanced, and problem-based learning, provide a context in which citizenship competencies can be institutionalized through meaningful and socially situated learning experiences (World Economic Forum, 2020). In this regard, the curriculum—as the main instrument for achieving educational goals—plays a key role in teaching and institutionalizing civic behaviors (Karimi & Rahmati, 2022; Cheraghi et al., 2023; Razaghi et al., 2018). Teachers, through interactive teaching methods, can effectively foster skills such as empathy, collaboration, and responsibility among students (Gultem, 2024).

Therefore, citizenship education has become a central concern of educational systems worldwide, and re-examining its neglected dimensions, particularly in relation to future-oriented schools, is both a theoretical and practical necessity (Tayebi Masouleh et al., 2023). In curriculum studies, the concept of the "Null Curriculum" refers to those knowledge areas and learning experiences that are omitted or implicitly transmitted within formal education (Mostafapour et al., 2020). This concept is considered one of the fundamental challenges in education systems, as a significant portion of citizenship formation occurs within these hidden and informal layers. Accordingly, the null curriculum can be both an opportunity for fostering social values and a risk if neglected. Moreover, civil society requires active, responsible citizens aligned with its cultural and value systems, while educational systems are expected to reflect these values and prepare future generations for effective participation in society (Babayi et al., 2020). Citizenship education, due to its contextual nature, is implemented differently across countries (Lee, 2012). In this regard, technological advancements and social transformations have significantly influenced the nature of education (Simsek, 2024). Contemporary education differs fundamentally from that of the past (Mathieu et al., 2022), and citizenship education in schools is a relatively emerging concept that has recently attracted increasing attention from educational systems (Andyang, 2023).

Historically, citizenship was primarily defined as membership in a political and geographical community, granting individuals legal rights and obligations upon entry. However, in

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contemporary discourse, the concept has expanded into a more comprehensive and modern understanding that emphasizes active participation, responsibility, social justice, and ethical living within society (Mostafapour et al., 2020). Citizenship education encompasses components such as human and ethical values, collective life skills, cultural reconstruction, political education, civic participation, social justice, and multicultural education (Golshani et al., 2020: 39). Within this framework, the school is not only a place for preparing students to enter social life, but also a setting for practicing and experiencing citizenship roles (Cho, 2018; Niazi et al., 2023). Accordingly, the continuous design and implementation of citizenship education content in primary school curricula is an inevitable necessity (Basian, 2023; Bombardelli, 2021; Hassanzadeh & Navaei, 2021).

However, evidence indicates that in the Iranian school curriculum, the share of citizenship education is not significant, and many citizenship-related topics are neglected in textbooks (Golshani et al., 2020: 41). In such circumstances, citizenship education falls within the category of the "Null Curriculum" (Hassanzadeh & Navaei, 2021; Bahramipour et al., 2016). Given that citizenship education is a fundamental mission requiring special attention and a rational, future-oriented approach (Goltash, 2019). Nevertheless, citizenship education within the education system, particularly in curricular contexts, faces serious challenges. Studies show that insufficient attention is paid to this domain in schools, and many of its dimensions are categorized as part of the null curriculum (Mostafapour et al., 2020). For instance, Karimi and Rahmati (2022) found that there is an imbalance in the content of textbooks, low attractiveness for learners, and neglect of key components of citizenship education. The study by Maqkar et al. (2023) also indicates that essential citizenship skills have been overlooked in schools. Razaghi et al. (2018) emphasize the important role of schools in developing citizenship competencies, whereas Fozouni et al. (2016) highlight shortcomings such as insufficient attention to social competencies, lack of alignment between educational goals and students' needs, weaknesses in designing participatory activities, and time and implementation constraints. Moreover, Mostafapour et al. (2020) warn that students, after years of formal education, often fail to acquire the skills and values that underpin social responsibility.

Therefore, the main problem of this study is that citizenship education in schools faces significant challenges and deficiencies and remains far from an optimal condition. This field has been

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considerably neglected, and its effectiveness requires substantial improvement. On the other hand, schools, in order to fulfill their specialized mission and play an effective role in educating future generations, must adopt a future-oriented approach. In this regard, institutionalizing citizenship education requires a reconsideration of the neglected dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum from the perspective of future-oriented schools. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the following question: What are the neglected dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum at the primary level from the perspective of future-oriented schools?

Sub-questions

What are the neglected dimensions of the knowledge domain in the citizenship education curriculum with a future-oriented school approach at the primary level?

What are the neglected dimensions of the attitudinal domain in the citizenship education curriculum with a future-oriented school approach at the primary level?

What are the neglected dimensions of the skill domain in the citizenship education curriculum with a future-oriented school approach at the primary level?

Research Background

A review of the research background shows that numerous studies have been conducted on future-oriented schools and citizenship education from different perspectives. Mirzapour (2025) emphasizes that participatory activities, classroom discussions, volunteer programs, and life skills education play an effective role in enhancing citizenship education and social responsibility. Ansari et al. (2025) also demonstrated that preschool education has a significant effect on observing citizenship components at the primary level.

Eskandari (2024), focusing on the role of Islam, reported a meaningful relationship between religious teachings and citizenship components such as tolerance, critical thinking, and responsibility. Mokhtari-Sula et al. (2024) emphasized the necessity of revising lower secondary curricula to better address educational needs. Bakhtiari et al. (2024), through document analysis of upstream policy documents, extracted the components and subcomponents of citizenship education. Saeidi et al. (2023) developed engineering and behavioral indicators for future schools in Iran.

Cheraghi-Kazoorani et al. (2023), in designing a citizenship education package, emphasized the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in students' social relations. Amiri et al. (2023)

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showed that students' attitudes toward the role of cyberspace in citizenship education are positive and favorable. Mousavi et al. (2023) synthesized the components of citizenship rights education based on national documents and international studies.

At the international level, Heather and Jeramy (2024), in a systematic review of 109 studies, demonstrated that citizenship education has a significant impact on active participation, political trust, social tolerance, and democratic literacy. They emphasize that participatory projects, even in short-term formats, can yield meaningful outcomes in citizenship education. Similarly, a report by the National Foundation for Educational Research in the United Kingdom (Kerr & Cleaver, 2004) indicates that citizenship education in schools—particularly through participatory learning and social activities—strengthens democratic attitudes and civic engagement in adulthood. In the same vein, the Citizenship Education Association report (2021–2025) highlights the impact of citizenship education on political knowledge, social participation, and public trust.

Despite these findings, citizenship education in Iranian schools faces significant challenges and shortcomings. Research indicates that students demonstrate weaknesses in certain citizenship skills, and the formal curriculum in this area—especially at the primary level—is not sufficiently effective (Fozouni et al., 2016; Karimi & Rahmati, 2022; Mostafapour et al., 2020). Among the main challenges are the mismatch between curricular content and social needs, weaknesses in designing participatory activities, and the lack of opportunities for practicing desirable social behaviors. Therefore, the present study is necessary as it seeks to identify the neglected dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum within future-oriented schools, offering effective strategies for improving the quality of citizenship education at the primary level and contributing to the enhancement of the citizenship education process.

Material and Methods

Participants and Procedure

The present study employed a qualitative research approach with an exploratory design. The participants included two groups: experts in educational sciences and curriculum studies at the university level, and primary school teachers working in schools with a future-oriented approach in Golestan, Mazandaran, and Tehran provinces. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Ultimately, 10 experts and 23 primary school teachers were selected, and interviews

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were conducted until theoretical saturation was reached. Given the subject area and research objectives, the criteria for selecting expert participants included familiarity and expertise in citizenship education studies as well as knowledge of future-oriented school components. At the teacher level, participants were selected based on the following criteria: teaching in schools that had partially adopted a future-oriented approach, having at least five years of teaching experience, holding a bachelor's degree or higher, familiarity with citizenship education issues, and willingness to participate in interviews.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants

Category	Sub-category	Frequency (n)
Gender	Male	6
	Female	27
Educational Level	Bachelor's degree	5
	Master's degree	21
	PhD	7
Role/Position	Teacher	23
	Expert	10

Given the nature of the research questions, the required data were qualitative and were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and educational experts. The data consisted of concepts, expressions, and statements relevant to the research topic. The interview protocol was developed based on the research objectives and theoretical foundations and was subsequently revised following expert feedback from the supervisors. The interviews began with broad, open-ended questions and gradually moved toward more specific and contextualized inquiries. Participation was based on informed consent and conducted in a collaborative and respectful manner. The time and location of interviews were determined according to participants' preferences, and each interview lasted between 45 minutes and more than one hour.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria were employed, including:

Credibility: Interview transcripts and preliminary findings were shared with some participants for member checking to verify the accuracy of interpretations.

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Dependability: The research process—including topic selection, proposal development, interview design, implementation procedures, and participant selection—was clearly documented and transparently reported.

Confirmability: Findings were compared with previous studies and interpreted in light of relevant theoretical frameworks. Consistency among objectives, research questions, and findings was carefully maintained.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic coding, with the paragraph serving as the unit of analysis, conducted in three stages:

Open Coding: Initial concepts were extracted from sentences and recorded in tables. Data were examined line-by-line, and initial codes were generated.

Axial Coding: Initial codes were categorized into related groups, and relationships among them were analyzed based on a paradigmatic model.

Selective Coding: Higher-order abstract categories were developed and labeled. At this stage, relevant literature was also used to refine category naming.

In terms of ethical considerations, participants were informed about the study objectives prior to interviews and provided informed consent. Interviews were recorded with permission, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. Each participant was assigned a numerical code to ensure anonymity throughout the analysis process.

Results

Findings from the Analysis of Research Question 1: What are the neglected dimensions of the knowledge domain in the citizenship education curriculum with a future-oriented school approach at the primary level?

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Table 1. Findings From Axial and Selective Coding – Knowledge Dimension

No.	Axial Concepts	Selective Categories
1	Self-assessment awareness; group work learning; spiritual and mental dimensions of human beings; psychology of self-control and teamwork; creativity and thinking; emotional intelligence; individual motivation; self-confidence; methods of avoiding stagnation; reasons for lack of deep learning; understanding critical thinking; self-knowledge awareness; teaching emotional intelligence; individual goal setting; teaching critical thinking methods	Individual Psychological Knowledge
2	Nutritional knowledge; self-care concepts and knowledge; individual and public health; mental health; self-care methods	Mental and Physical Health Knowledge
3	Familiarity with smart devices; online and mobile learning; self-protection in cyberspace; proper use of virtual space	Digital Learning and Education Knowledge
4	Technology literacy; robotics education; familiarity with artificial intelligence; emerging virtual professions	Digital Technologies Knowledge
5	Understanding culture; culture and society awareness; understanding human relations and values; intercultural relations; social protection mechanisms; friendship and social interaction; social problem analysis; empathy and honesty in life; civic responsibilities	Sociology of Citizenship Knowledge
6	Familiarity with professions; real-life issues; interdisciplinary knowledge	Disciplinary and Occupational Ecosystem Knowledge
7	Media literacy education; discourse development learning; communication and public speaking skills; interpersonal communication training; electronic communication learning	Networked Communication Science Knowledge
8	Knowledge-based thinking awareness	Knowledge-Oriented Thinking
9	Information analysis skills; problem-solving knowledge; task execution skills	Information Management Knowledge
10	Environmental awareness and sustainable development; environmental literacy; human–nature relationship	Environmental and Sustainable Development Knowledge
11	Citizenship rights education; civic literacy; cultural diversity and human rights; individual and social rights; respect for others' rights	Citizenship Rights Knowledge
12	Deepening belief systems; empathy and honesty in life	Religious and Humanistic Beliefs Knowledge
13	Familiarity with global cultures and values; foreign language learning; international scientific institutions	International and Global Knowledge
14	Financial education; financial literacy; savings and simple living awareness	Financial and Economic Education Knowledge

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate the neglected knowledge dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum for future-oriented citizenship education across multiple domains. Accordingly, the neglected knowledge areas in primary school curricula within a future-oriented education framework include psychology, mental and physical health, digital learning and education, digital technologies, sociology of citizenship, disciplinary and occupational

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ecosystems, networked communication science, environmental and sustainable development, religious and humanistic beliefs, international and global knowledge, and financial and economic education.



Figure 1. Neglected Curriculum Content of Citizenship Education Based on Future-Oriented Schools (Knowledge Dimension)

As illustrated in the figure, based on the findings of the study, it can be argued that the neglected curriculum in the knowledge dimension of citizenship education in future-oriented schools should address several key knowledge areas. These include individual psychological knowledge, physical health knowledge, digital learning and education knowledge, digital technologies knowledge, sociology of citizenship knowledge, disciplinary and occupational ecosystem knowledge, networked communication science knowledge, information management and knowledge orientation, environmental and sustainable development knowledge, citizenship rights knowledge, religious and humanistic belief systems knowledge, international and global knowledge, and financial and economic education knowledge.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

Question: What are the neglected dimensions of the attitudinal domain in the citizenship education curriculum with a future-oriented school approach at the primary level?

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Table 2. Findings From Axial and Selective Coding – Attitudinal Dimension

No.	Axial Concepts	Selective Categories
1	Respect for students; elimination of punishment and humiliation; ethical commitment toward students	Respect for Students
2	National pride; patriotism; preservation of authentic Iranian-Islamic values; sense of belonging to the country; preservation of national culture; understanding Iranian-Islamic society; Iranian culture; history of national culture and values; regional traditions; cultural and social tendencies; climatology awareness; attention to regional differences; familiarity with cities, customs, traditions, and national history	Attachment to National Identity
3	Democratic attitudes; acceptance of diversity and pluralism; civic mindset; consultation and collective decision-making; tolerance of others' views; political education	Democratic Attitude
4	Teachers' consistent behavior; responsible and ethical citizenship; civic responsibilities; ideal social behavior; life skills education; responsibility and teamwork; promotion of open-mindedness; peace and conflict resolution	Desirable Behavioral Orientation
5	Social responsibility enhancement; lifestyle awareness; social benevolence; family-centeredness; recognition of the importance of family; happiness and sense of success; strengthening human values	Meaningful Life Orientation
6	Legal claim culture; student personality guidance; personality development; self-knowledge approach; self-awareness development	Personality Excellence
7	Ethical values; strengthening spiritual feelings; patience and forgiveness; respect for law; attention to social justice and equality	Desirable Values
8	Global mindset; global–local awareness	Cosmopolitan Perspective
9	Engagement with uncertainty and complexity; inquiry-based approach; promotion of reflective thinking	Future Orientation

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate the neglected attitudinal dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum within future-oriented schools across several key domains. Accordingly, the neglected attitudinal areas include respect for students, attachment to national identity, democratic attitudes, orientation toward desirable behaviors, promotion of a meaningful life, personality development and excellence, desirable moral values, cosmopolitan perspectives, and future-oriented thinking.

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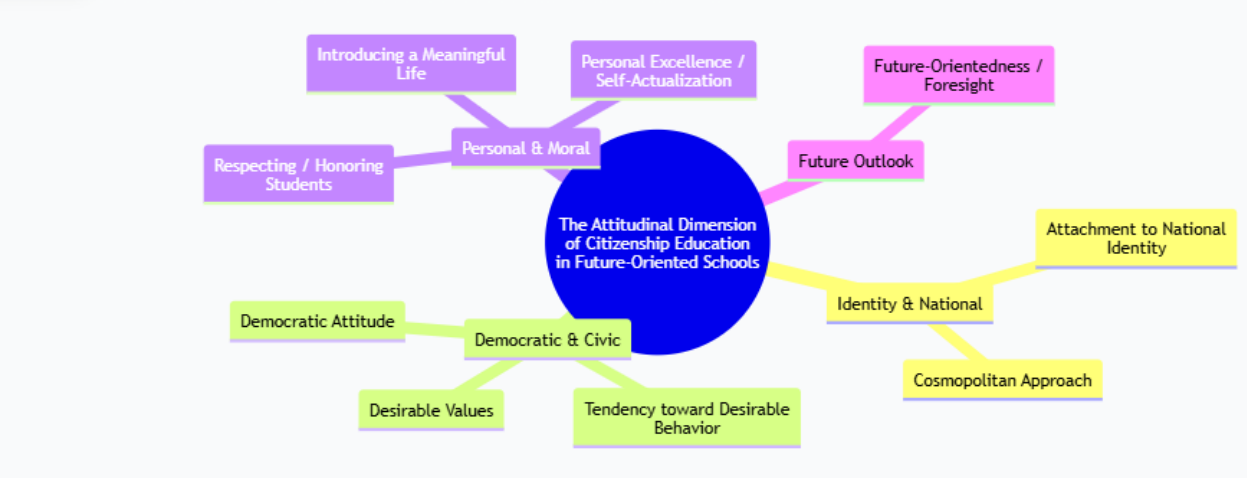


Figure 2. Neglected Curriculum Content of Citizenship Education Based on Future-Oriented Schools (Attitudinal Dimension)

As illustrated in the figure, based on the findings of the study, it can be argued that the neglected curriculum in the attitudinal dimension of citizenship education in future-oriented schools should emphasize respect for students, attachment to national identity, democratic attitudes, orientation toward desirable behaviors, promotion of meaningful life concepts, personality development and excellence, desirable value systems, cosmopolitan perspectives, and future-oriented thinking.

Findings from Research Question 3

Question 3: What are the neglected dimensions of the skill domain in the citizenship education curriculum with a future-oriented school approach at the primary level?

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Table 3. Findings From Axial and Selective Coding – Skill Dimension

No.	Axial Concepts	Selective Categories
1	Saying no skill; critical dialogue; reading skills; self-control; stress management techniques; anger management; friendship skills	Behavioral Guidance Skills
2	Teaching how to teach; content design	Instructional Skills
3	Collaboration skills; communication skills; negotiation; critical discussion skills; listening skills; English language skills	Communication Skills
4	Leadership skills; inquiry skills; teamwork skills; group projects; cooperation; task distribution; adaptability	Teamwork Skills
5	Data and information analysis; problem-solving skills; logical decision-making	Planning Skills
6	Time management; financial skills; cost management; financial management; financial goal setting; banking literacy; saving	Resource Management Skills
7	Digital skills; artificial intelligence use; simulation-based learning; mobile learning; participation in networked communities	Digital and Artificial Intelligence Skills
8	Basic repair skills for electrical appliances; entrepreneurship skills; hands-on skills; basic life skills (e.g., tying shoelaces)	General Life Skills
9	Creative thinking skills	Creativity and Innovation Skills
10	Internet use skills; use of electronic content; reading digital texts	Information and Digital Literacy Skills

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate the neglected skill dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum within future-oriented schools across multiple domains. Accordingly, the neglected skill areas include behavioral guidance skills, instructional skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, planning skills, resource management skills, digital and artificial intelligence skills, general life skills, creativity and innovation skills, and internet-based information literacy skills.

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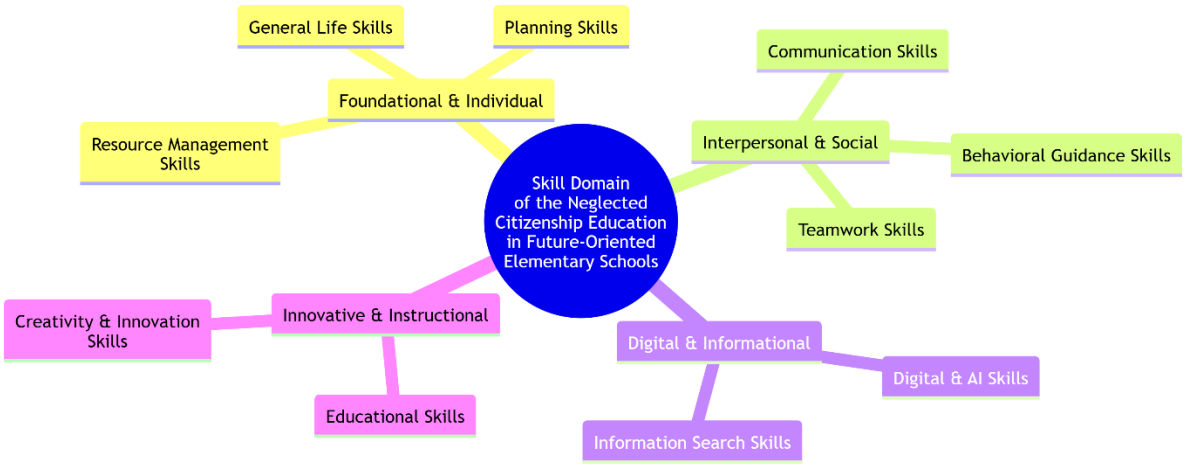


Figure 3. Neglected Curriculum Content of Citizenship Education Based on Future-Oriented Schools (Skill Dimension)

As illustrated in the figure, based on the findings of the study, it can be argued that the neglected curriculum in the skill dimension of citizenship education in future-oriented schools should emphasize behavioral guidance skills, instructional skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, planning skills, resource management skills, digital and artificial intelligence skills, general life skills, creativity and innovation skills, and internet-based information literacy skills.

Findings Related to the Main Research Question

Main Question: What are the neglected dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum with a future-oriented school approach at the primary level?

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Figure 5. Neglected Dimensions of Citizenship Education Curriculum Based on Future-Oriented Schools

As illustrated in the figure, based on the findings of the study, it can be argued that the neglected curriculum for citizenship education in future-oriented schools should be addressed through three interrelated dimensions: knowledge, attitude, and skill.

It is important to note that these dimensions are mutually interconnected and exert reciprocal influence on one another. In other words, they interact dynamically and shape each other in the educational process. Another important point is that these dimensions should be integrated and synthesized so that, through establishing coherence among the extracted concepts and educational elements, a unified and effective curriculum for citizenship education in future-oriented schools can be developed.

Discussion

The present study was conducted with the aim of examining the neglected dimensions of the citizenship education curriculum within future-oriented schools at the primary education level. The findings indicated that these dimensions can be organized into three main domains:

Knowledge-based learning: including awareness and information in technical, economic, social, and humanistic areas;

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Attitudinal learning: including dispositions, orientations, and value systems for interpretation and understanding at both individual and collective levels;

Skill-based learning: including applied competencies and abilities for performing specialized and functional tasks.

These findings are consistent with previous research, including studies by Cheraghi Kazoorani et al. (2023), Mousavi et al. (2023), Ahmadi Dastjerdi (2024), Gultem (2024), and Sirega & Kimala (2023). Cheraghi Kazoorani et al. (2023), in developing a citizenship education package, identified three main constructs—knowledge, attitude, and skill—as the foundation of citizenship education. Mousavi et al. (2023) also emphasized that citizenship education should encompass civil, political, cultural, educational, economic, judicial, health, and environmental dimensions to respond effectively to future societal needs. Ahmadi Dastjerdi et al. (2021) found that primary-level citizenship education consists of three main components: citizenship knowledge (political, social, cultural, and ethical education), citizenship skills (including interpersonal and macro-civic competencies), and implementation processes. This structure aligns with the findings of Gultem (2024), who considers citizenship education a fundamental basis for personality development and students' social participation in primary schools. Similarly, Sirega and Kimala (2023) demonstrated that citizenship education includes thematic, practical, and contextual elements manifested through skills, attitudes, beliefs, and values.

From a theoretical perspective, citizenship competencies are defined as a set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for active participation in society and for strengthening social cohesion. These competencies emphasize awareness of and respect for human rights, democratic values, understanding of historical and contemporary issues, and sensitivity to ethnic and religious diversity (Razaghi et al., 2018: 259). In line with this, contemporary theories have introduced new dimensions such as digital citizenship, media literacy, environmental citizenship, and civic engagement, which should be incorporated into future-oriented schools (Drigas et al., 2023; World Economic Forum, 2020; Irannejad et al., 2023). Therefore, the success of citizenship education curricula depends on the simultaneous attention to knowledge, attitude, and skill domains, enabling students to perform effectively in cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Jerome & Heater, 2024).

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Knowledge Domain Findings: The results showed that several key knowledge components of citizenship education in future-oriented schools remain neglected. These include individual psychology, physical health, digital education, emerging technologies, sociology of citizenship, networked communication, environmental sustainability, citizenship rights, humanistic and religious beliefs, financial literacy, and global information awareness. These findings are consistent with studies by Sula et al. (2024), Saadati et al. (2023), and Mathieu et al. (2022). From a theoretical standpoint, citizenship education aims to develop self-awareness, understanding of rights and responsibilities, and social perception among students (Basian, 2023; Tabibi et al., 2023). Contemporary theories also emphasize emerging domains such as digital, media, environmental, and civic citizenship (Irannejad et al., 2023). In this context, the null curriculum plays a crucial role in identifying knowledge gaps by critically examining what is included and what is excluded, thereby providing a foundation for curriculum revision (Akbarzadeh et al., 2021; Hassanzadeh & Navaei, 2021).

Attitudinal Domain Findings: The results indicated that several key attitudinal components of citizenship education in future-oriented schools remain neglected. These include respect for students, attachment to national identity, democratic attitudes, orientation toward desirable behaviors, promotion of meaningful life perspectives, personality development, human values, cosmopolitan orientation, and future-oriented thinking. These elements play a fundamental role in shaping students' social identity and civic responsibility. These findings are consistent with studies by Siomys (2021), Saeidi et al. (2023), Saadati et al. (2023), and Lee et al. (2024). Citizenship education is a context-dependent concept shaped by social dynamics (Lee, 2012). It encourages students to participate in social discussions, collective decision-making, and respect for national, religious, and ethnic identities (Tabibi et al., 2023). The null curriculum may also operate in affective domains, particularly when the values and attitudes of textbook authors influence content selection (Hassanzadeh & Navaei, 2021). Therefore, attention to attitudinal dimensions in future-oriented citizenship education is essential, as these dimensions form the foundation of students' ethical, social, and participatory behaviors in future society.

Skill Domain Findings: The results revealed that several key competencies in citizenship education remain neglected in future-oriented schools. These include behavioral guidance skills, instructional skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, planning skills, resource management

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skills, digital and artificial intelligence skills, creativity and innovation skills, and internet-based information literacy skills. These competencies are essential for empowering students to assume active social roles and participate effectively in society. These findings are consistent with studies by Saeidi et al. (2023), Cheraghi Kazoorani et al. (2023), and Simsek (2024). Citizenship education aims to develop self-awareness and prepare students to become active local and national citizens (Basian, 2023). It strengthens both general and specialized competencies and plays a vital role in students' social lives (Tabibi et al., 2023). Citizenship skills are particularly relevant in domains such as environmental awareness, cyberspace engagement, urban culture, and social relations, and should therefore be prioritized in future-oriented curricula (Kazoorani et al., 2023). In democratic citizenship models, competencies such as evaluating diverse perspectives, reflecting on justice and equality, social participation, and responsibility are central educational goals (Razaghi et al., 2018). The null curriculum refers to content whose absence creates gaps in learners' knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills (Zare & Marzoghi, 2023). Therefore, addressing skill-based dimensions is a strategic necessity for fostering students' practical and social development.

In conclusion, future-oriented citizenship education represents a fundamental and comprehensive necessity for educational systems. It not only influences students' knowledge and skills but also shapes their social, ethical, and professional attitudes. This type of education, through its integration of knowledge, attitude, and skill domains, must be designed within a coherent and operational curriculum framework to support the individual and social development of future generations. Achieving this goal requires attention to the pivotal role of teachers, provision of appropriate infrastructure, and rational interaction among key institutions including families, educational systems, policymaking bodies, and school management. Since future-orientation is a relative and interconnected concept across all schools, citizenship education must be systematically and universally implemented and continuously revised through complementary research.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that due to the existence of neglected knowledge dimensions in future-oriented citizenship education curricula, scientific prioritization should be considered in implementation. In addition, structured training programs should be developed to empower teachers and educators. To strengthen attitudinal dimensions, indirect educational

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approaches such as seminars, ceremonies, celebrations, and social interactions are recommended. Furthermore, citizenship education concepts should be integrated into various school subjects such as Social Studies and Persian language. Key concepts such as cooperation, empathy, acceptance of diversity, conflict resolution, critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving should be embedded within curricular content. Finally, effective collaboration between families and schools is essential to achieve future-oriented citizenship education.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

The first author was responsible for extracting the article from the thesis and drafting the manuscript. The second author, as supervisor, contributed to revising and improving the manuscript. The third author supervised the methodology section and ensured the accuracy and validity of the findings.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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