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Designing a Model for Digital Citizenship Education Curriculum for Mental Retarded Students

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to model a citizenship education curriculum for students with special needs for digital citizenship education.

Method: The qualitative methodology of the grounded theory approach has been used. The statistical population is experts and specialists in special curriculum planning and experts of exceptional organizations. Sampling was performed using the non-probabilistic judgmental (targeted) method. Interviews were conducted with

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research samples. To sample, the snowball method was used and the interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner with open and general questions for up to 15 people to saturate the data, but for more assurance, up to 24 people were interviewed. Finally, the factors were identified using the foundation data technique using Atlas software. An in-depth interview was used as the main data collection tool at this stage.

Findings: Based on the obtained results, a total of 106 concepts and 21 categories or open-source codes were identified and extracted. The 21 identified categories were divided into 6 main datasets of the foundation.

Among the identified factors, the axial coding paradigm was performed, and accordingly, the linear relationship was determined amidst research categories including causal conditions, axial categories, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences.

Conclusion: The results show that the importance of the content of citizenship education and training methods. Regarding teaching and learning methods, the formation of informal groups and monitoring of the activities of groups, learning in practice, and student-centered and participatory teaching methods are emphasized.

Keywords: curriculum, citizenship education, students with special needs, mentally retarded children, digital citizen.

Introduction

Today's citizens need to learn and acquire information about e-citizen skills to be able to use e-services and act as trained e-citizen (Örtegren, 2022). Familiarity with the basics of e-citizen education and using the opinions of experts and specialists in the field of education and technology can help understand this issue , and the education system can see to it that we get properly educated as e-citizens. (Tapingkae et al., 2021).

The role of those in charge of education in the field of concerns and problems of using information technology and cyberspace and e-citizen training seems more significant and decisive, and it should be explained with scientific insight and exploration. Electronic citizen education paid and outlined the correct and principal ways to use it in education for the three target groups of parents and families, teachers, and students. The growth and development of information and communication technology in society and its integration into people's social life has turned our society into an electronic one (Starkey, 2020).

Children with special needs, despite their limitations and inadequacies, also have considerable abilities and capabilities, and (Behpajooh et al., 2019) such a fact has led them to be referred to as children with various abilities (Koh et al., 2017).

Children with special needs are a significant vulnerable group in societies that, according to studies in each community, they form 11.6% of children (Kauffman et al., 1998).

Students with special needs need special education and services (Nesayan et al., 2016) to be able to develop their potential capabilities (Araayesh et al., 2019). These students due to significant differences with most students in one or more areas of mental retardation, learning or attention deficits, behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, communication disorders, autism, acquired brain injury, etc. need special education. (Hallahan et al., 2009).

One of the significant groups in the category of children with special needs is children with intellectual disabilities (Hornby et al., 2015). Clinicians diagnose people with intellectual disabilities if they have intellectual disabilities and the problem first appears in childhood. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) uses the term "developmental intellectual disability", so the DSM-5 encloses the term after the term "intellectual disability" in parentheses for the

DSM-IV-TR. This group of disorders used the term "mental retardation" (Ahangar et al., 2020). The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) uses the term "developmental intellectual disability", so the DSM-5 encloses the term after the term "intellectual disability" in parentheses for the DSM-IV-TR. This group of disorders used the term "mental retardation" (Ahangar et al., 2020). However, the authors of the DSM-5, in line with the recommendations of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), are among the other groups that adopted the term "intellectual disability" (Sincer et al., 2019).

In the United States, the inclusion of every child with special needs in the process of general education and the implementation of different models of joint education ,as well as social and educational adjustment to integrate the child into society constitute some of the main goals of inclusive education (Afrooz et al., 2021). Traditionally, a common type of education for children with intellectual disabilities is special (corrective) education (Sobhani et al., 2018). At the same time, in practice, the process of integrating children with disabilities into public education institutions is intensifying, various models and forms of interaction between special and mass education have been tested, and efforts have been made to create the right conditions for the most complete social adjustment and personal development. (Bezlivandi et al., 2019).

Children with mild mental retardation have immaturity in social interactions and have difficulty in regulating emotions and behavior proportionate to their age. At the intermediate level, they can make social and emotional connections with others but may not be able to understand the social symptoms of individuals (Capri et al., 2019). At a high level, these people can realize simple speech, gestures, and gesticulations and have the ability to have satisfying interpersonal relationships.

At a deeper level, too, they have a limited understanding of speech and gestures in social relationships. They have satisfying relationships with others, but physical and motor disorders may not allow them to participate actively in society (Halgin et al., 2014).

The e-city needs the e-citizen (Mattson, 2016). These two concepts are necessary for each other. An e-citizen is someone who has the minimum essential knowledge about the basic concepts of information and communication technology, including the ability to

communicate with the Internet and the World Wide Web, the ability to exchange e-mails through e-mail technology, sufficient ability to obtain information required by effective web searches, ability to deal with the adverse and destructive consequences of the Internet, ability to find information about how to do various things over the Internet, ability to complete online forms as well as doing daily tasks over the Internet (Lindfors et al., 2021). Therefore, children with special needs require education to continue their lives and social activities; But before that, we must see to what extent their level of learning is and how it can be improved; "Ziegler believes that children with intellectual disabilities are faced with emotional and social problems" (Garrote et al., 2015). In their view, these people have high expectations of failure in terms of their experience, and this expectation affects how they approach situations that involve cognitive skills" (Ziegler, 1999). In this regard, to achieve high educational goals, it seems necessary to develop curricula by the mental and physical abilities of different groups of students with intellectual disabilities, so that they will be prepared to live independently.

In Iran, Behrad (2005), in a study on the educational content and education of children with intellectual disabilities in the attitude of teachers and parents, concluded that both primary and secondary teachers have a positive effect on independent living skills in children with intellectual retardation. Therefore, the need to design and provide a model for citizenship education in the curriculum for these students (mentally retarded) that also have the necessary credibility, is strongly felt. This education is "a multidimensional concept that includes moral, environmental, cultural, economic and political concepts. Citizenship education prepares children and adolescents to accept their roles and responsibilities as citizens.

Citizenship education refers to that part of educational activities that formally prepares individuals of society for membership in the political society and becomes socialized (Ghiyasvand, 2015). In this regard, "special education schools have an important role in preparing students with intellectual disabilities for active citizenship in different communities."

The citizenship model, which aims at full participation of people with special needs in society and optimizing satisfaction and well-

being, is the most important paradigm for planning for students with special needs based on digital developments (Alevriadou, 2011).

Because "by teaching civil rights, students can develop valuable skills such as critical reasoning, decision making, and problem-solving skills." Therefore, teachers in these centers should emphasize the development of students' citizenship capabilities and make them mentally safer. "This can support the acquisition of the necessary skills for an active citizen." In today's world where science is advancing minute by minute, joining the world of electronics and information technology is the only way to enter this vast and busy highway. Based on the above-mentioned issues regarding the necessity of citizenship education for students in general, especially students with special needs, and neglect of this matter, the present study, after designing an appropriate model of citizenship education curriculum for this group of students, seeks to answer this question: What are the dimensions, components, and indicators of a valid and appropriate model for a citizenship education curriculum for students with special needs in digital citizenship education?

Theoretical Foundations

Curriculum

The curriculum is, in fact, the proposed curriculum, which indicates that the learner is drawn to the one that is preferred for his or her development; It relies on the system of values and is a means to achieve ideals, and to accomplish educational goals. According to Eisner, the curriculum of a school, or a class, or a course can be considered as a set of pre-predicted events that are considered for one or more students in order to achieve educational results. It has been taken and various elements such as: purpose, content, method and evaluation as the essence of any educational system guarantee its quality, efficiency and effectiveness. Today, the concept of curriculum is not only seen as a subject, content, learning outcomes or lesson plan, but also goes way beyond the scope (Ghiyasvand, 2015).

Digital Citizen

A digital citizen is generally defined as a person who has acquired life skills in the information society and can gain the benefits of this type of life (Jæger, 2021). An e-citizen is someone who has the minimum necessary knowledge about the basic concepts of information and

communication technology, the ability to communicate with the Internet and the World Wide Web, the ability to exchange e-mails through e-mail technology, the ability to provide the required effective information aspects of the web, the ability to deal with the negative and destructive consequences of the Internet, the ability to find information about how to do different things through the Internet, the ability to complete online forms as well as doing daily tasks through the Internet (Rahm, 2019).

Citizenship Education

Educating good citizens is one of the most significant tasks of the formal education systems of countries. In many developed and developing countries, education officials have put appropriate citizenship education at the forefront of their actions and activities by creating a variety of educational programs.

One of the most noteworthy topics in the world today is citizenship rights and citizenship education, and related topics have grown exponentially over the last century.

The history of citizenship education in western societies dates back to the time of the great Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. However, it seems that in light of profound social and communication changes and transformations that have played a significant role in raising public awareness, the need is felt to address this issue in current societies, especially in Islamic societies (Hu et al., 2018).

In this regard, a historical look at education suggests that in the past around the world, the education system for exceptional children in the form of educational separation has been the dominant thinking;

But today, designing, planning, and implementing educational and social integration programs for such students is considered common thinking, while in recent years, the most important public issue that has attracted the attention of education professionals is "the education of students with special needs, all-round development and their special educational needs" among which we can mention "citizenship education" (Alkahtani and Et al., 2017). Unfortunately, it is observed that "although citizenship is a right of every person, regardless of health status, people with intellectual disabilities are often deprived of equal citizenship rights." Providing equal citizenship rights to people with disabilities is only possible by providing them

with access to education and employment opportunities so that they can reveal their talents and be active in society. Digital developments in education are a good platform for educating digital citizens based on citizenship education.

Method

The present research method is qualitative. The qualitative methodology of the grounded theory with Strauss-Corbin's approach has been used (Creswell, 2012). In terms of research philosophy, it is in the category of the applied positivist paradigm. In terms of qualitative and quantitative, the research has an inductive and deductive approach and a survey strategy (Creswell, 2012). This research is exploratory in terms of purpose and explores variables and their causal relationship. The required information was collected through interviews, and Atlas software was applied qualitatively. The statistical population is made up of experts and specialists in special curriculum planning and experts of exceptional organizations. Sampling was performed using the non-probabilistic judgmental (targeted) method. Interviews were conducted with research samples. For sampling, the snowball method was used and the interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner with open and general questions for up to 15 people reaching saturation, but to be doubly sure up to 24 people were interviewed.

Findings

The qualitative part of this study is based on the views of 24 experts and specialists in special curriculum planning and experts of the exceptional organization. In terms of gender, 19 are men and 5 are women. Finally, 5 people have 10 to 15 years of working experience and 13 people have more than 15 years of working experience, which is specified in Table 1 by their frequency.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of experts

Gender	Man	Female	Working Experience	< 30 years	> 31 years	Total
Number	19	5	Number	19	5	24
Percentage	79%	21%	Percentage	79%	21%	100%

In the first stage, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with a group of experts. In the open coding process, many

themes were obtained and during the reciprocal process of data analysis, the collection of this initial qualitative data was reduced to fewer categories. Then, each of these categories obtained in the qualitative stage was examined. The following is a review of the interviews and also the indicators extracted from the texts and interviews.

In open coding, first, the data obtained from the interviews is carefully studied and analyzed, then the conceptualization operation is performed and the data conceptually similar to each other, is labeled with appropriate letters.

This step offers more complex and comprehensive cases for comparing and distinguishing codes and concepts. At this stage, by identifying patterns within the findings, the initial clusters were formed. Also, in this stage of data analysis, while collecting new data, the researchers, by being involved in the continuous matching process, paid attention to the amount of new information received in the categories and to their saturation. A category represents units of information about events, happenings, and instances (Farrell, 2009).

Phenomenon-centered is typically a group of collected data that is widely mentioned during interviews or, theoretically, emerges in a central and fundamental conceptual form.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) include the types of categories that can be placed around the central phenomenon: causal conditions (factors that cause the central category to emerge), contextual and intervening conditions (internal and external factors influencing the implementation of model policies and strategies), They enumerated the strategies (strategies proposed in response to the central phenomenon) and finally the consequences (results of applying the strategies).

An in-depth interview was used as the main data collection tool at this stage. Based on the results obtained in the fourth chapter, a total of 106 concepts and 21 categories or open-source codes were identified and extracted. The 21 identified categories were divided into 6 main datasets of the foundation. The following is dedicated to the study of open coding for the components of the foundation data model:

Table 2: Identified codes of the main category

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open code
Main Category	Citizenship education for students with special needs	Lifestyle training
		Integration and cosmopolitanism
		Teaching life rights
		Teaching life responsibilities

In the qualitative stage among the qualitative research strategies, the data theory of the foundation was used and a comprehensive model was developed including causal factors, intervening factors, contextual factors, strategies, and consequences of providing a citizenship education model for students with special needs in an e-city. In this study, the category of citizenship education for students with special needs (mental retardation) was selected as the central category because the traces of this category can be seen throughout the data and in almost all interviews they are mentioned and play a pivotal role.

Table 3: Identified codes of causal conditions

Selective coding	Axial coding	Frequency of open code
Causal conditions	participation	4
	Needs assessment	5
	Social capital	4
	Modelling	5
	Life lessons	7

Modeling has codes of personality development, imitation of reference people (parents, educators, adults), and the desired model based on national and international standards, and modeling. Life lessons have codes of basic education, economic education, civil law education, political law education, waste management and waste segregation training, environmental protection training, and energy consumption pattern training.

If a series of specific conditions containing strategies and interactions takes place, managing, controlling and responding to the phenomenon, should be regarded as contextual conditions.

Table 4: Identified codes of contextual conditions

Selective coding	Axial coding	Frequency of open code
Contextual conditions	Individual characteristics of students with mental retardation	6
	Social situation	6

In this study the category of social conditions and individual characteristics of students with mental disabilities have been considered contextual conditions. Individual characteristics of mentally retarded students have gender codes, individual limitations, physical vulnerability, five senses, physical characteristics, and lack of skills.

Social conditions have codes of characteristics of the region of life, lifestyle updates, keeping pace with global changes, social status, religious conditions of society, and the institutionalization of citizenship education in an e-city in Iran.

Table 5: Identified codes of intervening conditions

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open code
Intervening conditions	Psychological features	5
	cultural factors	6
	Facilities and equipment	4
	The role of teachers	5

Intervening conditions are factors that facilitate or interfere with causal conditions. In other words, the intervening condition itself does not lead to behavior alone but can affect behavior due to causal conditions. In this study, cultural factors and the role of educators, facilities and equipment, and psychological characteristics are considered as intervening conditions. Psychological characteristics have codes of individual attitude, personal motivation, self-confidence, self-management, and sense of self-worth. Cultural factors have codes of family and adult behavior, the behavior of teachers and principals of schools , the behavior of community members, encouragement, appreciation and gratitude, and respect and acceptance of student citizenship behavior. Facilities and equipment include codes of providing the necessary facilities for educating students, creating special facilities according to the special conditions of students, simulation with the correct facilities, school facilities, and

home and family facilities. The role of teachers include codes of the patient teachers and parents, being a good listener, and understanding the special circumstances of students with intellectual disabilities

Table 6: Identified codes of strategies

Selective coding	Axial coding	Frequency of open code
Strategies	Educational techniques	5
	Educational evaluation and evaluation in general	3
	Culture building	4
	Ethics	6
	Government support	5

The strategies of the present research model are educational evaluation and evaluation in general, government support, culture building, educational techniques, and ethics. The training techniques have codes for using integrated methods in education, providing face-to-face training, holding a special recycling festival for citizens, providing training in the form of field visits, training with photos, videos, clips, and educational brochures.

Educational evaluation and assessment includes codes of initial, diagnostic, formative, and cumulative assessment, estimating the amount of learning and comprehension of students and formulating educational goals, conditions, resources, and learning outcomes.

Culturalization has training codes of different guilds about respect for the mentally retarded, social context for the life patterns of the mentally retarded, the use of public and national media, and social networks. Ethics has codes for promoting Iranian Islamic life, promoting spirituality, adapting religious teachings to the principles of citizenship education, and religious motivations as part of the motivations for cooperating with waste management. Religious beliefs and components of piety, the practice of religious rules and teachings, and religious dimensions are extravagance and reform consumption patterns. Government support has codes and rules for citizenship education from an early age, government support for schools with citizenship education programs, funding, law enforcement, and improvement of education-related laws for citizenship education.

Table 7: Identified Codes of Consequences

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open code
Consequences	Quality of Life	8
	Psychological consequences	6
	Social consequences	4
	Improvement of skills	4

Ultimately, the consequences, results, and outcomes of strategies or actions are reactions. In other words, there are consequences whenever a certain action/reaction is taken in response to an order or issue or to manage or maintain a position by a person or persons. Some consequences are desirable and some are unintended. In this study, the consequences of research strategies were classified into four categories: skills improvement, quality of life, psychological consequences, and social consequences. Quality of life with independent living codes includes, increasing courage, clarifying the future, accepting and adapting one's circumstances to life, the ability to defend individual and social rights, a sense of vitality, learning to use appropriate clothing, the ability to meet personal needs and the ability to communicate properly in a community. Psychological consequences with codes include increase of self-confidence, reduction of aggressive behaviors, and maintenance of mental health. Providing mental health increases motivation and life expectancy. Social consequences have codes for improving collective attitudes, increasing trust in society, increasing collective participation, and increasing social responsibility. Skills improvement includes conversational skills codes, collaboration skills, teamwork skills, law enforcement skills, and discipline

In this step, to evaluate the reliability of the extracted categories, four quantitative criteria of Holsti's coefficient, P-Scott's coefficient, Kappa Cohen index, and Krippendorff's alpha have been used to evaluate the validity, transferability, verifiability, and reliability. All reliability assessment indicators were confirmed. Krippendorf alpha is a reliability coefficient developed to measure agreement between coders in qualitative analysis. But it is also used for agreement among experts on a phenomenon. Scott’s pi reliability coefficient is a measure of the validity of qualitative analysis. This index modifies a kind of chance of agreement on coding. Scott's reliability coefficient estimates the odds using a moderate distribution approach. Holsti’s

coefficient of reliability is used to measure the validity of qualitative analysis. This index was provided by Holstie, a content analysis expert. In other words, for a code, they choose two different quotes in the text.

Table 8: Quality control

	Holsti's coefficient	P-Scott's coefficient	Kappa Cohen index	Krippendorff's alpha
Measure	0.83	0.79	0.84	0.86
Number of categories	106			

By analyzing the data collected in the research, in the initial stage (open coding), 106 concepts were extracted from the transcribed content of the interviews. Selective coding and axial coding were also performed. Among the identified factors, the axial coding paradigm was performed, and accordingly, the linear relationship was determined between research categories including causal conditions, axial categories, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. Figure 1 shows the paradigm of coding, or in a manner of speaking, the model of the qualitative research process.

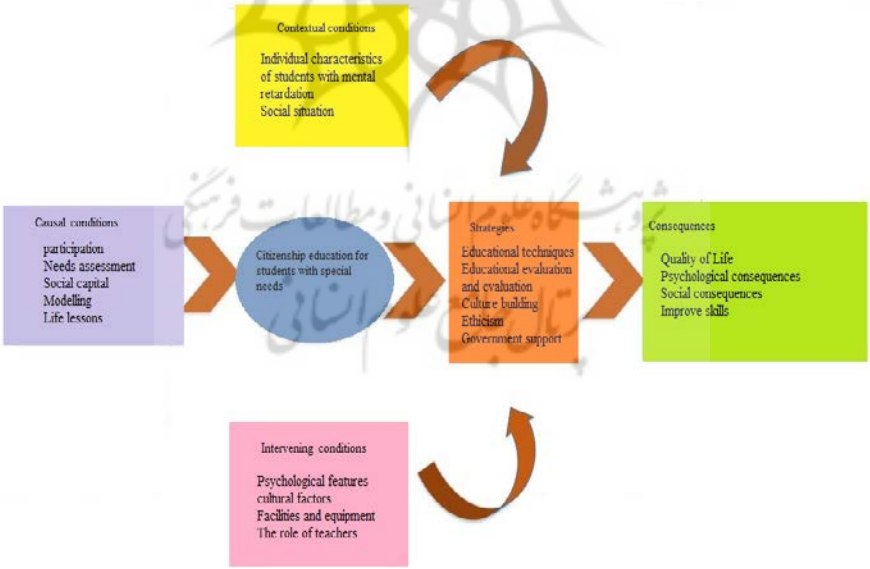

Figure 1: Citizenship education for students with special needs in an e-city in Atlas ti

Conclusion

Due to the complexities and major changes in the world today and the rapid changes resulting from the growth and development of technology, in various fields, citizenship is out of its traditional form and the need to provide a new definition of citizenship as an e-citizen is quite noticeable. The survival and quality of life of citizens in the age of globalization require the empowerment of citizens to achieve a healthy lifestyle in the 21st century and to contend with the crises and challenges they face. Today's children need to learn and obtain information about e-citizen skills to be able to use e-services and act as a trained e-citizen.

Abbaszadeh Shahri et al. (2020), based on the model of professional citizen education in education-based data theory, showed that the most effective code of any criterion of citizenship social education strategies was to evaluate the performance of educational elements in the education system and observe educational standards.

Also, the three dimensions of knowledge, attitude, and ability (skill) are the most important dimensions of citizenship education. A special curriculum should be developed for citizenship education. Incorporating specific citizenship education content into regular programs may not meet the needs of the community. Rather, it is important to pay attention to all aspects and elements of the curriculum in citizenship education. At the general level, the curriculum design or model is responsible for deciding on the value principles or curriculum pattern of the source or sources of information and is chosen by the planner to identify the views that govern the curriculum. Goal setting, content selection, learning teaching strategies, and assessment methods are key elements of the curriculum. Golshan et al. (2016) stated that despite the importance of citizenship education, it is necessary that such training be in the form of organized and organized curricula. For this purpose, it is necessary to design a curriculum model. Bruce et al. (2019) showed that their views on the idea of the citizen have been unknown, they have sought harmony and a desire for equality in relationships, and they accept the ethnocentric, patriarchal, and salvation views (Bruce et al., 2019). Alipour et al. (2020), showed that only one teaching method can not meet the comprehensive needs of mentally retarded children, so teachers can use different teaching methods and the method of functional assessment along with the evaluation of the reference

criterion is the most effective method of evaluating knowledge (Alipour et al., 2020).

Modeling a citizenship education curriculum for students with special needs for digital citizenship education can help to understand this issue, as well as a lack of knowledge and lack of explanation of the philosophical foundations of e-citizenship education, which can cause major problems for those involved in educational issues. Given the complexity of the technologies of the last century in cyberspace, attention should be paid to social development and the ability to use these technologies, and experts should work on the electronic readiness of citizens. Therefore, attention to e-development, e-government, e-city, and e-citizen is an important category and requires the comprehensive efforts of governments, managers, and citizens. The school as an educational environment plays a key role in educating digital citizens. Citizenship education at educational levels requires the containment of different topics in all elements of the curriculum, including objectives, content, teaching methods, etc.

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