

# Global Themes in Singaporean Secondary Social Studies Textbooks

Reima Al-Jarf, Ph.D.  
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

## Abstract

*This study aimed to find out whether Singaporean secondary social studies textbooks contain global themes, in which grade level those global themes are introduced, the percentage of global themes in each textbook, and which global themes are emphasized. A checklist consisting of four main global themes was developed. Those are (1) global systems such as cultural, political, economic, ecological, technological, social, educational and healthcare systems, international organizations and international law; (2) global issues such as peace and conflict resolution, refugees; (3) human values like tolerance and cooperation, and (4) global history such as ancient civilizations, history of world religions, the industrial revolution, colonization and liberation movements. It was found that 33 % of the social studies themes in the four high school grades combined were global. Global themes constituted 16% of the first secondary grade textbook, 1.5% of the second secondary grade textbook, 65% of the third secondary grade textbook and 39.5% of the fourth secondary grade. It was also found that the first and second secondary textbooks mainly focus on world history. In the third secondary textbooks, 14% of the themes were allocated to global systems and 17% to human values, 27% to global issues, 7% to global history. In the fourth secondary grade textbook, 7% of the themes were allocated to global systems, 16% to global issues and 17% to global history. It was concluded that Singaporean secondary school social studies textbooks develop global awareness in Singaporean students through a theme-based approach and a selection of a variety of current global issues in well-designed textbooks that develop independent and critical thinking skills and participation goals.*

## Introduction

Today, the world has become a small village due to technological progress and the information and communications revolution. The environmental, economic, political, cultural, and technological systems in different countries in the world, and societies with different cultures, have become connected to each other and dependent on each other. The student is no longer a citizen of his local community but has become a citizen of the international community. He is now living in a rapidly changing era that requires skills and information that help him live in the information age. Hence, interest has increased in offering courses in international or global studies or adding a global dimension to various courses such as languages, social studies, literature, commerce, business administration, economics, agriculture, geography, and history at various levels (from kindergarten to

university), especially in the past few years. Studies by Werner (1996), Zevin (1993), Patrick (1990), Bushell and Dyer (1994), Fleming (1990), Powell (1992), Bender-Slack, and Nash. Nash (1997), Kruzel (1992), Moss (1988), Branda (1991), Crawford (1993), Peters, (1991), Debeauvais (1992) have recommended the adding of a global dimension to many courses.

To highlight the importance of incorporating a global dimension into the social studies curricula, the results of a number of studies have shown that adding a global dimension to the social studies curricula has resulted in enhancing students' information, skills, and achievement, and has led to the development of positive attitudes in them. Sperrazza (1992) designed a training program that aimed to develop global awareness among first-grade primary school students using an integrated central approach that clarifies other cultural differences through linguistic experience tables. The results of the training were positive and were reflected in the students' attitudes, new friendships, and positive behaviors towards other students. After the training, the students became more aware of their needs and the similarities and differences between them and others.

Demovsky and Niemuth (1999) designed a program that aims to increase global skills and raise awareness of racial diversity in the classroom among sixth grade and high school students with learning disabilities. The program focused on the use of direct teaching based on the skills of using maps, current events, cooperative education and tolerance, and putting students in situations that help them understand global issues. The results of the training showed an increase in students' respect for cultural differences. They became better able to communicate with each other, and their understanding of human geography improved.

In a third study, Angry (1992) used a training program to increase global awareness among middle school students. He trained students on the location skills that students need to learn about global issues and where they occur. The students collected facts about the dependence of the countries of the world on each other, wrote reports and articles based on references from the library, and followed global events in a special notebook throughout the training period. The results of the training showed an increase in students' knowledge about the dependence of the countries of the world on each other. They became more interested in global affairs and current events in the world.

Hollander (2002) integrated international dimensions into selected courses from several specializations and used the module approach. Each professor determined the length and topic of the unit in proportion to the content of the course. The results showed an increase in the amount of new information students at Jefferson College in Missouri had about other cultures, peoples and ideas. All professors noticed an improvement in the level of discussion during cross-cultural comparison and analytical discussions among students.

Given the importance of teaching global topics and integrating them into social studies courses, many education departments, researchers, and specialists in many countries, such as Nelson, Monsen, and Nordkvelle, 1999, Randall, 1990, Sutton and Hutton, 2001, and Powell, 1992, have presented McDaniel and Petrie, 1992, Sypris, 1993, Johnson and Others, 1994, Curtis & Fleming, 1986, Hartoonian, 1997, Collins, Czarra and Smith, 1996

prepared guides for teachers, authors, and parents on basic universal themes which can be selected and integrated into social studies courses. They also laid out the foundations for selecting global topics, the objectives of teaching them, the methods, activities and educational resources that can be used in teaching those topics, methods of evaluating them, examples of assignments and models for preparing lessons, the foundations of successful teaching, methods for designing global social studies courses, and methods for improving the teaching of global social studies. Others developed visions, plans, and standards for teaching the global dimension in social studies at different levels. Some conferences on global education were also held.

Adding a global dimension to social studies courses will help develop students' global awareness, help them understand the world as a set of human and natural systems that are connected and dependent on each other, learn about the culture and customs of other peoples, recognize the similarities and differences between different peoples and cultures, and analyze and study international organizations, focusing on the mutual connections among people, introducing students to contemporary problems, challenges and issues that transcend borders among countries, and the links that connect their home country with other countries, providing them with information about global political, social, economic and environmental issues, and helping them respect cultural differences within one country and among countries, learning different topics, with a focus on highlighting the similarities and differences between them.

### **Need For Study**

Given the importance of global education in developing global awareness among students, it is important to analyze the content of the courses used in developed countries to learn about their experiences in this field and to learn about the global topics they teach and how they teach them. Integrating a global dimension in social studies contain is imposed by the nature of the era in which we live and the rapid political, economic, social, cultural and technological changes that the world has witnessed and is witnessing at the present time, therefore the current study will establish a general framework for global topics that can be included in social studies curricula, and will show textbook authors and social studies teachers the universal topics that social studies textbooks should focus on and those that they should ignore.

### **Purpose of the study**

The current study aims to analyze secondary school social studies courses in Singapore to determine the extent to which they contain global topics.

### **Questions of the Study**

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

- What are the objectives of teaching social studies at the secondary level in Singapore?
- Do social studies courses in Singapore for secondary school students in different grades introduce global topics?
- In which class do you teach global topics?

- What is the ratio of global topics to local topics in each grade?
- What axes do global topics focus on in social studies books, and what is the degree of their focus on each axis?

### **Importance of Study**

Singapore is a small country on a small territory. However, it has come a long way in various fields, reaching the level of developed countries. Learning about the goals of teaching social studies in Singapore, the content of its courses, the skills that they develop among students, the methods of integrating and teaching global topics, and the Internet, audio, and visual resources accompanying course books will give authors and those responsible for developing curricula in the Kingdom the opportunity to benefit from the way textbooks are designed in Singapore at a time when the Saudi Ministry of Education is working on developing curricula in various subjects and levels.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to analyzing the content of Social Studies textbooks for the secondary grades in Singapore that are equivalent to the first middle school grade to the first secondary school grade in Saudi Arabia, i.e, grade 7 to grade 10. The content of the basic book (which presents the material only) will be analysed. The activity books, evaluation, teacher's guide, transparencies, and educational films accompanying the basic book will not be analysed. The author analyzed the content of the textbook for the first, second, third, and fourth grades of secondary school, edition of 2003.

### **Literature Review**

The researcher searched the databases of King Fahad National Library, the Arab Education Bureau for the Gulf States, the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, and the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies for Arabic studies that analyzed the content of social studies books in the Kingdom and other Arab countries to identify the extent to which they teach the global dimension. She found a number of studies which focus on developing teachers' programs in the light of the idea of citizenship, or polling teachers' opinions on teaching issues of world peace, or trying to define global education, its nature and goals, or developing the concepts of international education among geography students. However, studies that have analyzed the content of social studies textbooks in light of the dimensions of international education are few. These included a study in which Brahmeh (1997) analyzed the content of social studies textbooks for the secondary level in Jordan to find out whether they contain principles of international education.

Another study by Abdel Moneim (1993) evaluated social subject curricula at the secondary level in light of the dimensions of international education and students' attitudes towards it. There is no doubt that there are other Arab studies conducted in other Arab countries, but the lack of a unified information base for Arab educational research, such as the ERIC database, makes the issue of obtaining the full text of these researches, including the studies of Brahma and Abdel Moneim, or at least their summary, impossible. If it is

possible, obtaining it from various Arab universities requires travel and will be an expensive process and take a long time more than the time needed to prepare the research, especially since we are in the information age and obtaining foreign research and studies from anywhere in the world has become possible within minutes without the researcher leaving his home.

Moreover, the author searched the ERIC database, Wilson Web, and the Google search engine for studies that analyzed the content of social studies textbooks to determine the extent to which they contain global topics. She found a limited number of studies conducted in a number of countries compared to the number of studies that provide perceptions, evidence, and standards for teaching global education and integrating the global dimension into social studies curricula. These studies can be divided into two groups: the first group has a few studies in which the curricula do not contain a global dimension. A study conducted by Nakayama (1988), where she found that the teaching of social studies in Japanese schools has declined due to its failure to keep pace with the changes that have occurred in Japanese society and its future trends. Japanese society has become an international society.

The second group includes studies whose curricula contain a global dimension, as in the study of Flouris (1997), in which he found that curricula of Greek social studies and educational policy contain global topics, but those topics were not adapted (adapted) to a sufficient degree to suit the goals of education in Greece and the new reality in Europe and the world.

Another study by Booker and Others (1985) found that the middle school social studies curricula in Michigan aimed to develop civic responsibility and global awareness. They found that elementary students study the beginnings of modern civilization and world culture, while the middle school curriculum focuses on the international society, where first year intermediate students study contemporary geography and the dependence of peoples on each other. Second year middle school students study the history of the United States and its emergence and development as a democratic country.

The integration of global topics into social studies curricula was not limited to the primary, middle, and secondary levels, but has been extended to the university level. Crawford (1993) stated that the University of North Dakota integrates global concepts into economics courses that revolve around consumer issues, individual and family finances, and household management. Among the topics that study values, patterns of managing family resources, interdependence, global issues and problems, critical thinking, and global factors.

Cole and McCormick (1987) described the attempts of two universities in Canada to integrate global dimensions into teacher preparation programs for undergraduate students, to develop teachers' understanding of the world, as it develops students' understanding and appreciation of cultural, social, economic, and political differences in the world.

It is clear from the prior studies that the interest of other countries in the world, in integrating the global dimension into social studies curricula varies, and the global topics included in the books vary according to the educational goals of the country.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### ***Definition of social studies***

It is one of the specializations that focuses on studying social issues and problems and includes topics from various social sciences and humanities such as history, geography, economics, law, philosophy, sociology, psychology, social psychology, anthropology, and political science (Hartounian, 1997, Hoge, 1996).

#### ***Definition of the global dimension in social studies:***

The global dimension refers to everything that revolves around other countries in the world (other than the home country) in terms of topics, pictures, and illustrations in the textbooks prescribed for different grade levels. Global topics can focus on social, political, economic, historical, geographical, environmental, cultural and religious aspects of other countries in the world (beyond the country to which the student belongs).

Several guides have emerged identifying global topics that can be added to social studies curricula. For example, Kniep (1989) and Johnson and Others (1994) identified four basic themes around which global social studies topics should revolve: (1) global economic, political, ecological, and technological systems; (2) universal human values; (3) pressing issues in the world; and (4) World history. Collins, Czarra & Smith (1996) stated the need for international and global studies to include global issues, challenges and problems, culture and world regions, and global connections. They added that studying each aspect requires setting knowledge objectives that indicate the information that students should acquire and understand, a list of skill objectives, and participation goals that indicate the actions that the student should take toward the challenges presented by each axis. Nelson (1997) and Thorne and others (1992) identified five types of systems around which global issues should revolve: (1) Cultural systems (2) Ecological systems (3) Economic systems (4) Political systems (5) Technological systems.

#### ***Population***

This study was based on an analysis of the objectives of teaching social studies at the secondary level in Singapore, as stated on the Ministry of Education's website, and as stated in textbooks. It also relied on an analysis of the topics included in the social studies textbooks prescribed for students in the first to fourth grades of secondary school (the equivalent of the first grade of middle school to the first grade of secondary school in the Kingdom). The analysis process was based on the publications mentioned in the "Limitations of the Study."

#### ***Instrument***

To inventory and classify the global topics included in the social studies teaching objectives and the content of social studies textbooks for secondary school grades in Singapore in a valid and objective manner, a list of global topics that can be included in social studies textbooks was prepared based on a number of guides.

***List of global topics in social studies:***

The list of global social studies topics consists of the following:

1) Topics focusing on global systems include:

- Topics focusing on cultural systems, such as topics that present genealogies, folktales, arts, language, clothing, food, customs, holidays, methods of building houses, religions, raising children, family patterns, sports, games, and medical practices in different societies.
- Topics focusing on the ecological system such as air and water pollution, waste disposal, deforestation, the effect of greenhouses, city planning, endangered species, forest fires, and changes in the weather.
- Topics focusing on economic systems such as international and economic trade, tourism, professions, and natural resources.
- Topics focusing on political systems, such as democratic, communist, and socialist systems, and political processes to develop the skills necessary to contribute as responsible citizens.
- Topics focusing on technological systems, including the use of video, laser discs, computer programs, electronic knowledge circles, electronic books, and communication systems.
- Topics focusing on international organizations such as the United Nations and its subsidiary organizations, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the European Union, the African Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference... etc.
- Topics focusing on judicial systems and international laws.
- Topics focusing on health care systems.
- Topics focusing on educational and pedagogical systems.
- Topics focusing on social systems such as social security, care for the elderly, retirement, dismissal from service, social insurance, care for the disabled, and juvenile care.

- 2) Topics that focus on common human values, such as: tolerance, acceptance, cooperation, human rights, understanding, conflict resolution, recognition of others, teamwork, volunteer work, and others.
- 3) Topics that focus on urgent and persistent issues such as: political and economic conflicts among countries, world peace, border disputes, management of global water resources, drought and famines, poverty, drug spread, refugees, famines, overcrowding, and terrorism.
- 4) Topics that focus on global history, such as historical eras in the world, ancient civilizations, empires, religions and other faiths, human migrations, the most important wars in the world, colonialism and liberation and independence movements in the world, expeditions, and the history of science and technology, the industrial revolution, political revolutions, political and economic alliances and blocs, conflicts in history, contemporary international issues, political, social, economic and technological changes and the emergence of the new world order.

### ***Validity***

The researcher presented the list of global topics to a number of colleagues specialized in social studies, social studies curricula and teaching methods. They were asked to review the topics contained in the list, and indicate the degree of importance of each of them to the global dimension in social studies books using a Likert scale consisting of very important, moderately important, and not important. She also asked the to make the necessary amendments. After reviewing the reviewers' comments, she deleted the topics that did not fit into the global dimension which the reviewers considered "unimportant" or "moderately important". Only the topics that were considered "very important" or "important" were maintained.

### ***Data Analysis***

Using the definition of the global dimension and the list of themes and global topics and their operational definitions, the researcher examined the goals of teaching social studies issued by the Singaporean Ministry of Education, and the instructions contained in the introductions to social studies textbooks, to search for everything that could indicate teaching global topics to secondary school students.

Before starting the analysis of the content of social studies textbooks, introductory pages, lists of contents, and indexes were excluded. She calculated the number of pages of the texts that were allocated to global topics and the accompanying maps, pictures, illustrations, and diagrams. Then, she examined the main headings and subheadings within each chapter in each book for each grade into local topics (revolving around Singapore being the students' home country) and global topics (revolving around other countries in the world). The total number of pages devoted to local topics and global topics were entered in each row separately and then the grand total of the rows together, regardless of the topic the textbooks focus on. The percentage of topics for the local and global



dimensions in social studies textbooks was calculated for each grade separately and the grand total of the grades combined.

To classify the global and local topics that the books focus on according to the themes of systems, human values, contemporary issues and world history, the author examined the main headings and sub-headings in each chapter in each textbook again. She read the lessons in full, then she classified them according to these themes and their operational definitions. He calculated the number of pages allocated to each topic in each textbook separately and then in the textbook together. The percentage of pages allocated to each topic in each textbook and in the textbooks combined was calculated. The appendix shows the reader a list of topics contained in each of the four social studies textbooks, according to the main heading and sub-headings contained in each chapter of the textbook. The author used the numbers 1, 2, 3 next to the main headings and small circles next to the sub-headings under each one.

### ***Reliability***

To verify the accuracy and consistency of the process of analyzing the content of social studies textbooks assigned to secondary school grades in Singapore, and the categorization of the topics contained therein into global and local topics, a second analyst who holds a Ph.D. in social studies curricula and methods of teaching participated in analyzing the topics. A sample of 20% of social studies lessons in each textbook was chosen. The analyst analyzed these samples according to the definition of the global and local dimensions used in this study, and the 4 themes of global topics included on the list. After completing the analysis and classification process, the results of the two analysts were compared, and the points of agreement and difference between the two analysts in analyzing each lesson of the sample were determined. Then the degree of agreement between the two analysts in determining the proportion of global and local topics and the themes around which they revolve was calculated. The agreement rate was 95%. Points of disagreement were agreed upon through discussion.

### **Results**

#### **(1) Results of the analysis of the objectives of teaching social studies at the secondary level in Singapore:**

Social studies courses in Singapore aim to develop a sense of national identity, knowledge of national heritage and the basic issues that Singapore faces as a small island nation. It aims to help students acquire content, skills, and values. It aims to raise students to become educated citizens and thinkers capable of taking responsibility and actively participating in shaping the destiny of Singapore in the twenty-first century. Given the economic globalization in Singapore in the twenty-first century, education leaders see the need to develop a sense of belonging to the homeland among students. They aim to teach the student how Singapore builds its prosperous economy, maintains its safety and national security, and achieves coexistence among Singaporeans, given that Singaporean society is a multi-ethnic society (Malay, Indian, and Chinese) and multi-lingual (English being the official language of the state, in addition to Malay, Tamil, and Chinese languages). The ethnic groups that make up Singaporean society are multicultural and multireligious

(Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Christianity). Although Singapore is a secular state, it allows the freedom to practice religion. Social studies courses there aim to introduce students to how other countries try to solve their issues, such as ethnic and religious differences, economic development, health care and housing, and to draw lessons from those attempts. It aims to introduce the student to Singapore's contributions to the international community, exchange its experience with other countries, how and why East Asian countries were colonized, how they gained independence, the causes of conflict between different groups within one country and between countries, how different groups and different countries work to resolve disputes and conflicts between them, and how it is dealing with its social and economic problems.

We conclude from the above that developing the global dimension among secondary school students in Singapore is an integral part of its educational policy and of the goals of teaching social studies there. International topics were chosen and lessons, activities and educational resources were designed to ensure the achievement of these goals.

***(2) Results of The Content Analysis Of Social Studies Books***

The results of the content analysis showed that secondary school social studies textbooks in Singapore contain global topics in varying proportions. Table (1) shows that social studies textbooks for the secondary school grades in Singapore combined have allocated 33% of their topics to global topics and 67% to local topics. Textbooks for different grades focus on global topics to varying degrees. The first year secondary school textbook focuses on it by 16%, the second year secondary school book focused on it by 1.5%, the third year of secondary school book by 65%, and the fourth year of secondary school book by 39.5%. These results indicate that social studies textbooks prescribed for secondary school classes in Singapore give sufficient attention to the global dimension. This result is consistent with the results of studies by Floris (1997), Booker and Others (1985), Crawford (1993), and Cole and McCormick (1987), which showed the interest in developed countries such as the United States and Canada in integrating a global dimension into Social studies courses at different levels.

**Table (1)  
The Number Of Pages Devoted To Local And Global Themes In Social Studies Textbooks in Each Grade Level and Their Percentages**

Grade level	Total Textbook Pages	Local Dimension		Global Dimension	
		pages	%	pages	%
First Secondary	122	103	%84	19	%16
Second Secondary	136	134	%98.5	2	%1.5
Third Secondary	176	62.25	%35	113.75	%65
Fourth Secondary	176	106.5	%60.5	69.5	%39.5
Grand Total	610	405.75	%67	204.25	%33

The global themes that social studies textbooks in Singapore focus on are shown in Tables (2) and (3). It is clear that social studies textbooks together focus on contemporary

international issues by 12%, on world history by 10%, on global systems by 6%, and on universal human values by 5%. Table (3) shows the four themes in each row. It is noted that the local dimension occupies 84% of the first year secondary school textbook, and 98.5% of the second year secondary school textbook. As for the third and fourth secondary grade textbooks, there is an increased focus on the global dimension. It occupies about two-thirds of the topics of the third year secondary school textbook and more than a third of the fourth year of secondary school textbook. It is noted that the third grade book contains a global dimension in all themes in varying proportions. It focuses on contemporary international issues by 27%, on values by 17%, on global systems by 14%, and on world history by 7%. The textbook for the fourth year secondary grade contains a global dimension in three themes: world history at 17%, contemporary international issues at 16%, and global systems at 7%. It is noted that all books contain topics from world history in varying proportions. It is also noted that human values are presented in only one category in the third secondary grade. The higher proportion of global topics in the third and fourth secondary grade textbooks than in the first and second secondary grades may be due to the fact that the students are older, more mature, and better able to comprehend the global topics covered.

**Table (2)  
The Local And Global Themes Contained In The Social Studies Books**

Themes	Grade level	Local dimension		Global Dimension	
		pages	%	pages	%
Systems	1	-	-	-	-
	2	60	-	-	-
	3	22	-	24	-
	4	48	-	12	-
	Total	<b>130</b>	<b>% 21</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>%6</b>
Current Global Issues	1	-	-	-	-
	2	-	-	-	-
	3	25.8	-	47.75	-
	4	58.5	-	27.5	-
	Total	<b>66.75</b>	<b>%11</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>%12</b>
Hyman Values	1	-	-	-	-
	2	36	-	-	-
	3	-	-	30	-
	4	-	-	-	-
	Total	<b>36</b>	<b>%6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>%5</b>
World History	1	103	-	19	-
	2	38	-	2	-
	3	32	-	12	-
	4	-	-	30	-
	Total	<b>173</b>	<b>% 28</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>%10</b>
Grand Total		407.5	%67	202.5	%33

**Table (3)**  
**The Local And Global Themes That Each Textbook Focuses On**

Grade level	Topics	Local Themes		Global Themes	
		pages	%	pages	%
first secondary	Systems	-	-	-	-
	Values	-	-	-	-
	Contemporary issues	-	-	-	-
	History	103	%84	19	%16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>%84</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>%16</b>
Second secondary	Systems	60	%44	-	-
	Values	36	%26.5	-	-
	Contemporary issues	-	-	-	-
	History	38	%28	2	%1.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>%98.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>%1.5</b>
Third secondary	Systems	22	%12.5	24	%14
	Values	-	-	30	%17
	Contemporary issues	8.25	%4.5	47.75	%26
	History	32	%18	12	%7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>%35.5</b>	<b>113.75</b>	<b>%64.5</b>
Fourth secondary	Systems	48	%27	12	%7
	Values	-	-	-	-
	Contemporary issues	58.5	%33	27.5	%16
	History	-	-	30	%17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>106.5</b>	<b>%60.5</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>%39.5</b>
<b>Total pages in all textbooks combined</b>		<b>407.5</b>	<b>%67</b>	<b>202.5</b>	<b>%33</b>

In addition, the results of the content analysis of social studies textbooks in Singapore revealed that the authors relied on a theme-based approach in organizing the content, whether the topics were chosen from history, human geography, politics, or economics. There is a balance in the number of pages devoted to different topics, and the number of pages devoted to Singapore and the country chosen for comparison with it (for example, when comparing the educational system or health care in Singapore and another country). There is a balance in the distribution of information presented in the textbook about the three ethnic races that make up Singaporean society without bias towards one race or another. The textbooks present global issues and topics that have occurred in the past few years such as forest fires in Indonesia, oil spills, oil pollution of ocean water, the hole in the ozone layer, and refugees, making students feel that what they study in the textbooks is complementary to what they see in the media. The text is also supported by excerpts from newspaper articles about the story under study. Past events were used and applied to contemporary issues, such as in the topic of "The World War" or "The History of Venice in the Roman Era." That is, the textbooks tried to show students how they can benefit from historical events in the present.

The results of the content analysis demonstrated that the textbooks' information is focused and pays attention to specific details. The information is presented in a serious and objective manner, devoid of emotions and bias. The author does not express his opinion on the topic at hand. Rather in each chapter, he gives the students an opportunity to think and make judgments and introduces them to the role they can play towards the issue under study. The textbooks rely on the method of questioning and develop in students higher-level-thinking processes and skills such as critical thinking skills and study skills, which focus on organizing and comparing information, and linking events and issues to each other. It also develops social participation skills, i.e. the role of the student. In each chapter, the textbooks provide the students with Internet website that show them where they can read more about the issue under study.

Furthermore, the results of the content analysis indicated that Singaporean social studies textbooks are excellently designed. The information read is supported by photographs, tables, illustrations, geographic maps, and conceptual maps. They are all in attractive natural colors, on a colorful background, and written in elegant colorful typographic fonts. Graphics occupy more than half of the pages. No page is without graphics. Each page in the textbook contains several pictures.

### **Recommendations and conclusion**

The current study analyzed the content of social studies textbooks in Singapore with the aim of identifying the global topics they contain. The results of the analysis showed that social studies textbooks in Singapore are an ideal model of what curricula should be in terms of the good selection of local and global topics, the goals they seek to achieve, the skills they develop in students, the balance between local topics and global topics, and the good selection of global topics. Contemporaneity, good writing and presentation of information, the degree of its diversity and excitement, good layout and production, and the use of pictures and illustrations to support the topics. In short, it is an interesting educational film on paper.

The current study recommends that the educational authors and those responsible for developing history and geography books for primary, middle, and secondary levels in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia follow the example of Singaporean social studies textbooks in topic selection, goal setting, and the skills that the textbooks develop in the students, the writing style, organizing and presenting the content, and the degree of diversity, attractiveness, and the types of pictures and illustrations that can be used to support the information in each chapter.

### **References**

1. Brahma, Nabil Musa (1997). The extent to which social studies textbooks at the secondary level pay attention to the principles of international education in light of the analysis of their content and the point of view of their teachers. Unpublished master's thesis, College of Education, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.
2. Abdel Moneim, Mansour Ahmed (1993 AD). Evaluating social subject curricula in the secondary stage in light of the dimensions of international education and students' attitudes towards it. Record of proceedings of the Fifth Scientific Conference of the

- Egyptian Association for Curriculum and Teaching Methods entitled "Towards Better Secondary Education." No. 14, pp. 65-99.
3. Angry, R. (1992). *Developing and Implementing a Model for Improving Global Awareness in the Secondary School with Collaborative Learning Groups through the Aid of a Multimedia Approach*. ERIC ED406245.
  4. Bender-Slack, D. (2002). Using Literature to Teach Global education: A Humanist Approach. *English Journal*; 91, 5, 70-75.
  5. Boocker, S. & Others (1985). *Social Studies Curriculum, K-8*. ERIC ED285817.
  6. Bushell, Brenda; Dyer, Brenda (1994). *Coherence and Continuity in the Task-Centered Language Curriculum: Global education as a Framework for Task-Based Language Teaching*. ERIC ED386047.
  7. Cole, D. & McCormick, T. (1987). *Infusion of International Perspectives into Undergraduate Teacher Education Programs*. ERIC ED289855.
  8. Collins, H. T.; Czarra, F. R. & Smith, A. F. (1996). Guidelines for Global and International Studies Education: Challenges, Culture, Connections. *Issues in Global Education*; June- July, 135,136.
  9. Cortes, C. & Fleming, D. (1986). Introduction: Global Education and Textbooks. *Social Education*; 50, 5, 340-44.
  10. Crawford, G. (1993). Developing student global perspectives through undergraduate family resource management. *Journal of Home Economics*; 85, 2, 9-15.
  11. Debeauvais, M. (1992). Outcasts of the Year 2000: A Challenge to Education in Europe. *Comparative Education*; 28, 1, 61-69.
  12. Demovsky, S. & Niemuth, J. (1999). *The Global Classroom: A Study in Appreciation, Awareness, and Acceptance of Different Cultures and People in Our Ever Changing World*. ERIC ED440901.
  13. Fleming, D. (1990). *Social Studies Reform and Global education: California, New York, and the Report of the National Commission on Social Studies*. ERIC ED340631.
  14. Flouris, G. (1997). Global Dimensions in the Educational Legislation, Social Studies Curriculum and Textbooks of Greek Compulsory Education (Grades 1-9). *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*; 2, 2, 17-39.
  15. Hartoonian, H. (1997). *A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Social Studies*. ERIC ED440030.
  16. Hoge, J. (1996). *Effective Elementary Social Studies*. ERIC ED423209.

17. Hollander, L. (2002). *Jefferson College—Internationalizing the Curriculum: Global Education*. ERIC ED464678.
18. Johnson, J. & Others (1994). *Global Issues in the Middle School Grades 5-8*. ERIC ED381470.
19. Kniep, W. (1986). Defining A Global Education by Its Content. *Social Education*; 50, 6, 437-46.
20. Kniep, W. (1989). Social Studies within a Global Education. *Social Education*; 53, 6, 399-403,385.
21. Kruzel, S. (1992). *Incorporating International Business Concepts into the High School Curriculum*. ERIC ED349915.
22. McDaniel, R. & Petrie, J. (1992). *A Two Way Approach to Understanding: Issues in Global education*. ERIC ED381346.
23. Moss, J. (1988). *A Review of activities in internationalizing the curriculum in agricultural education*. ERIC ED307384.
24. Nakayama, S. (1988). Dateline: Japanese social studies for the 21st century. *Social Education*; 52, 4, 238,305.
25. Nash, B. (1997). Internationalizing the business school--responding to the customer's needs. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*; 9, 1, 73-85.
26. Nelson, J. (1997). Global Connections: Infusing a Global Perspective into Our Schools. *Social Studies Journal*; 26, 52-57.
27. Nelson, M.; Monsen, L. & Nordkvelle, Y. (1999). *Reform and change in social studies: 1998 ssec annual conference*. Research Report. ERIC ED440017.
28. Patrick, J. (1990). *Social studies curriculum reform reports*. ERIC ED322021.
29. Peters, Richard O. (1991). *Living in Our Global Society--New Directions for Social Studies Education in the 21st Century*. ERIC ED338528.
30. Powell, Lynne M. (1992). *The Development and Implementation of an Interdisciplinary Global education Program at Seacrest Country Day School*. ERIC ED365577.
31. Randall, R. (1990). *Global education: Educating for our common future*. ERIC ED354206.

32. Sperrazza, S. (1992). *Increasing global awareness in the first grade classroom by advocating the awareness of self and the cultural differences of others*. ERIC ED347606.
33. Sutton, M. & Hutton, D. (2001). *Concepts and trends in global education*. ERIC ED460930.
34. Sypris, Theo, Ed. (1993). *Internationalizing the curriculum*. ERIC ED393496.
35. Thorne, B., Baker, Comp. & Others (1992). *Model for infusing a global perspective into the curriculum*. ERIC ED367575.
36. Werner, W. (1996 ). Starting Points for Global education. *Canadian Social Studies*; 30, 4, 171-73.
37. Wisconsin State Dept. of Public Instruction (1998). *Wisconsin model academic standards for social studies*. ERIC ED433293.
38. Zevin, J. (1993). World studies in secondary schools and the undermining of ethnocentrism. *Social studies*; 84, 2, 82-86.



Appendix

Table (4)

The main and sub-topics in the social studies textbooks for the four secondary school grades in Singapore, as mentioned in the books and the number of pages allocated to each of them.

Textbook	Topic	Pages
First secondary	1. Singapore in the past	8
	2. Founding of Singapore	10
	3. Singapore's development in the early stages	8
	4. Contributions of the pioneers (ancestors) o Contributions of Arabs and Malays	-
	o The actions of the Indians	4
	o Works of Europeans and Eurasians	4
	o Chinese business	4
	5. Trade	4
	6. How was Singapore ruled?	8
	7. Law and order	4
	8. Education and health services	8
	9. The World at War (World War)	10
	o It started in Europe	2
	o Britain standing alone	1
o Why did Japan enter the war?	2	
o Japan joining the Axis powers	1	
o Sunrise in Southeast Asia o Read more	4	
10. Invasion of Malaysia and Singapore	2	
o Invasion of Malaysia	12	
o Invasion of Singapore	16	
11. Japanese occupation	4	
12. The end of the war	1	
o Allied victory	3	
o Everyone's suffering	122	
o return of the British the		
total		

<b>Second secondary</b>	Post-war Singapore o deficiency o Communists o The war on the communists 2 The path to self-government 3. Joining and separating from Malaysia 4. Building our nation 5. Our multicultural society 6. Our elderly population 7. Our workforce 8. Living in Singapore: Housing 9. Entertainment in Singapore 10. Singapore - our dear island the total	2 2 4 16 8 8 6 10 24 10 16 30 136
<b>Third secondary</b>	1. Southeast Asia: from colonies to states 2. Singapore: from a British colony to an independent state 3. Divided states 4. The ties that bind: a case study of Switzerland 5. Conflicts between countries 6. Peacekeeping: Diplomacy and its obstacles (other countries) o Singapore 7. Industrial development in Singapore: 1960-1980 8. The story of industrial development in Japan <b>Total</b>	12 32 22 30 14 11.75 8.25 22 24 176
<b>Fourth secondary</b>	1. Providing education and health services to people o Education in Singapore o Education in Switzerland o Health services in Singapore o Social Security in Britain The people: the nation's most precious resources o Population growth in Singapore o Seniors in Singapore o Elderly people in Japan o Housing problem in Singapore o The housing problem in Hong Kong Keeping Singapore moving forward into the 21st century o Other countries 4. What makes Singapore's system of government good 5. Venice: The rise and decline of a great city and state the <b>Total</b>	13 4 7 8 2 8 11 7 18 12 19.5 8.5 28 30 176
<b>Total textbook pages combined</b>		<b>610</b>