

**An Analysis of Educational Teachings in Azar Yazdi's
Stories Adapted from *Kalileh and Demneh* and *Marzban-
Nameh***

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Introduction

Education is a complicated, multifaceted and continuous process. The term is sometimes applied to just conducting acceptable social behaviors; however, it is more generally applied to all the existential aspects of human life such as the logical, social, ethical, emotional, economic, political and sexual dimensions. Education is considered an important subject in Persian language and literature, and educational teachings are presented in poetry and prose, especially in stories. *Kalileh and Demneh* and *Marzban-Nameh* are considered prominent masterpieces of Persian literature using imagination, allegory and

personification of animals. Choosing the stories from these two books which are proper and useful for children, Azar Yazdi rewrote them in two volumes of the eight-volume collection titled *Good Stories for Good Children*. Considering the popularity and usefulness of these volumes, the researchers attempted to find out whether the writer only focuses on the presentation of thoughts and meanings or he pays attention to education and its different aspects, too. It is also important to see whether the writer has been successful in teaching a set of principles to children which can create changes in their attitudes and values.

Methodology, Review of Literature and Purpose

The present research is meant to be practical, using content analysis of overt and hidden meanings in terms of data extraction and analysis. The forty-six stories were selected in a purposeful way from the story collection *Good Stories for Good Children*. The aim of the research is to present useful findings and suggestions to parents and teachers.

Many studies have been conducted on the educational elements in ancient texts such as *Kalileh and Demneh* and *Marzban-Nameh*. For example, Sabzipour and Hasani Rad (2011) discuss that the most significant aspect of these texts is the use of parables and anecdotes for education. Fouladi, Barani and Khalili (2020) compare the structures of *Marzban-Nameh* and *Kalileh and Demneh* and come to the conclusion that the former book is written in a purposeful, conscious and non-imitative way. Aktas and Beldag (2017) consider *Kalileh and Demeneh* as one of the traditional supports of the value classification of Western civilization. Sarmadi and Jangi Ghahraman (2019) describe the role and function of heroes and villains in the works of Mehdi Azar Yazdi. Sheikhoovand and Mostalizadeh (2016) identify ten management principles in *Kalileh and Demneh*. Also, Bagheri and Khosravi

(2016) show the positive effects of these stories on the internalization of moral values.

Although the rewritten stories of Azar Yazdi are widely used and generally popular between children and young adults in Iran, there is no study conducted on the educational aspects of these stories. Therefore, the present study tries to find answers to the following questions: What educational teachings are in these stories for children from social, moral, intellectual, emotional, political, sexual and economic aspects? What is the significant difference between the amounts of attention paid to educational teachings in the mentioned stories?

Discussion

Kalila and Demneh and *Marzban-Nameh* have been popular with the public because of their rich content, the use of fantasy elements and allegorical references. Azar Yazdi's rewriting is one of the most popular rewritings of these two collections for children and young adults in Iran. He recreated and added moral content to stories.

In this article, after a survey of previous theories and a study of internal and narrative similarities, 7 secondary topics (educational topics) and 61 primary topics (sub-topics) were identified. In the next step, 46 stories from *Kalileh and Demneh* and *Marzban-Nameh* which were rewritten in *Good Stories for Good Children* were analyzed in a parallel way.

Findings show that logical education with 202 teachings and using wisdom with 57 teachings are the most frequent teachings in these stories. On the other hand, the least attention is paid to economic education and saving (zero teachings). Also, sexual identity formation is referred to only once in these stories and there are no other references to other aspects of sexual education.

Chi-squared test was used in order to study the difference between the amount of attention given to each of the 7 topics of education in the selected stories. The findings showed that these educational topics have been more significant, respectively: logical education with 202 teachings (51.79 percent), social education with 57 teachings (14.61 percent), moral education with 53 teachings (13.58 percent), emotional education with 45 teachings (11.53 percent) and economic education with 23 teachings (5.89 percent). The least attention is paid to sexual education with 1 teaching (0.25 percent) and political education with 8 teachings (2.05 percent).

Conclusion

The findings of this research showed that Azar Yazdi has emphasized logical education more than other aspects; therefore, he includes many instances of decision-making and problem-solving, thinking before speaking, identifying good friends, sound judgement and avoiding hasty conclusions, using logic, taking advice from wise people, planning, identifying the problem and finding the right solution in these stories. It seems that acquainting children with challenging situations, and children's logical development have been the paramount aims of the author to the extend that this type of education has been viewed as the foundation of all other educational aspects.

Also, the stories cover other aspects of education such as intellectual, social, moral and emotional educations. However, the author has paid less attention to economic, political and especially sexual education of children. Some of the subjects of sexual education such as the process of reproduction and sexual behavior are intentionally omitted from the content of the stories. The omission of these topics for children and young adults is understandable; however, the lack of political and economic teachings in these stories is curious.

According to the findings of the research, it is recommended that the stories be used for the education of children in logical, social, moral and emotional aspects. Also, considering the effect of story-telling in the education of children, it is recommended that Azar Yazdi's collection of stories be more frequently used at home and in school.

Keywords: educational teachings, education, *Kalileh and Demneh*, *Marzban-Nameh*, Mehdi Azar Yazdi

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