

Human Rights Education in Kuwait: Perceptions, Experiences, and Beliefs of Student-Teachers in Kuwait University College of Education

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Abstract

Kuwait has made progress in promoting peace, humanitarianism, and human rights education (HRE), particularly with its Constitution and Human Rights (CHR) curriculum for high school students. Despite modest progress in this area, Kuwaitis seem to lack knowledge of human rights and HRE. This study focuses on Kuwaiti student-teachers in the College of Education at Kuwait University to better understand the current perceptions of, experiences with, and beliefs about human rights and HRE among them. To address this purpose, this study adopted a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional descriptive survey design using a questionnaire based on a modified and translated version of the Human Rights Education Attitude Scale (HREAS) (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 1999). A sample of 292 Kuwaiti student-teachers completed the questionnaire, and the results showed that the students were most aware of rights relevant to them (e.g., right to education), but less aware of those that were less relevant to them perhaps because of their age and lack of real-world experience (e.g., worker, property, and political rights). Additionally, almost half of the student-teachers reported not being aware of the United Nation World Program for Human Rights Education. Moreover, around one-fifth of student-teachers reported being unaware or unsure of the right to life and surprisingly 5.5% found the right to life to not be important, which is considered a fundamental right related to the security of person. These findings have implications for future HRE-based curricula for Kuwait, which are discussed at the end of the study.

Keywords: Kuwait University, Human Rights, Education, Student-teacher