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Social Studies Education in Turkey and Islam

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ABSTRACT

Religion is one of the important factors that affect the human life. The concept of religion has a significant place within the scope of social studies education. Religion is a concept closely related to citizenship and value educations. As for the studies conducted in the field of social studies in Turkey, there have been few studies on Islam. The reason is that curriculum of social studies do not cover Islam sufficiently. However, religious elements are emphasized in the social studies course in many countries including the US. Within this context, the aim of this research is to evaluate the relationship between social studies and Islam. First, the concepts of social studies and Islam were addressed, and then mutual concepts and values of social studies and Islam were discussed.

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Keywords:
Social Studies, Religion, Islam, Citizenship Education, Good Morals

Introduction

No matter what their religions, cultures and living conditions are, the world is where all people live and the land of the humankind. Human is a great potential that needs to be educated regardless of the diversity. Developments of past and today were and are possible through the people of the world. Accordingly, human can be defined as a being which is eternal between plus and minus. Indeed, alongside the better developments, phenomena that have negative impacts on humankind such as world wars, colonialism, and genocide are the disasters brought by the human.

Religion is one of the important factors that affect the human life (Singer, 2009). As in the past, religious faiths are effective in the world today (Keskin, 2004). Religion affects individuals, and therefore nations and governments. It is known that there have been religious wars, and even nations of the same religion have fought each other for a long time in the past.

Religion is one of the concepts used to define social studies (NCSS, cited from 1994: NCSS, 2015a; Ogle, Klemp and McBride, 2007). In this connection, raising effective citizens, which is the primary goal of social studies, and Islam's ideal of raising individuals with good morals show parallelism. Although values that Islam cares about are addressed through the dimension of value in the social studies program that went into effect in 2005 in Turkey, it mentions Islam only with regard to its birth. The aim of this study is to evaluate the relationship between socials studies and Islam, which is considered to be lacking in the literature in Turkey and reveal their common points. Hence, the relationship between Islam and social studies was discussed in terms of raising effective citizens. The definitions, principles and values of social studies and Islam were primarily emphasized, and then they were discussed in terms of some common points.

Social Studies and its Aim to Raise Good Citizens

Governments provide education-teaching at their formal education institutions with their own fair hands to educate their people and give them a national consciousness (Safran, 2011). To achieve this, first, the needs

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are identified, and then courses to meet those needs are chosen and the courses are included in various stages of the education. Especially with the downfall of Ottoman Empire and with the new Turkish country founded in Anatolia accepting Republic as the new regime in 1923, there was a transition from the concept of subject to the concept of nation, and the concept of citizenship became important on the basis of government (Üstel, 2009). Hence, citizenship education started to gain importance in the Turkish educational system as of 1923. Since the first years of the Republic, courses related to citizenship education have been given place under various names, citizenship education has been gathered under the concept of "social studies" over time and social studies has become a course that focuses directly on citizenship education (Öztürk, 2009). Indeed, in many definitions made both in USA and Turkey, it was emphasized that the social studies course contributes to raising effective citizens (Kabapınar, 2014; Ross, 2006).

The individual living in a society has a large variety of needs to be able to maintain his/her life. Science and technology have been working to meet those needs as quickly as possible. One of those needs is that the individual acquires the ability to live among the society (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). The individual learns the rules, improve his/her abilities and adapt to his/her society with this ability (Senemoğlu, 2013). Citizenship education has a great importance at this point since it both contributes to the socialization of the individual and helps him/her to realize himself/herself, exist in the society as an individual and acquire democratic values (UNESCO, 1998). That is why the social studies course is important in terms of helping students to socialize and acquire democratic values on primary and secondary school levels in Turkey.

Interest and scope of social studies starts being formed as soon as the individual establish a relationship with another individual or the society. The individual joins several groups and institutions in the various stages of his/her life and starts to establish relationship with people. This relationship in a sense forms the essence of social studies (Barr, Barth and Shermis, 1978). Social studies are considered as a course created by preparing the information and findings obtained from the disciplines of social sciences in accordance with the pedagogical principles in Turkey (Kabapınar, 2014; Dönmez, 2003).

The social studies programs applied in USA have been significantly effective in the mentality of social studies in Turkey. This effect is especially evident in the curriculum of social studies that entered into force in 2005. Some of the themes emphasized in the social studies course in USA are as follows:

- Culture
- Time, continuity and change
- People, places and environments
- Individual development and identity
- Individuals, groups and institutions
- Power, authority and administration
- Production, distribution and consumption
- Science, technology and society
- Global relations
- Ideas and applications concerning the citizenship (NCSS, 2015a).

In Turkey, similar learning fields were generated except some little changes started being applied in school programs as of 2005 (TTKB, 2015). The social studies course in Turkey aims to achieve the following goals from 4th grade to 8th grade.

- Knowing oneself
- Having a national consciousness
- Knowing, using one's rights and discharging one's responsibilities
- Adhering to Atatürk principles and reforms
- Being aware towards one's culture and cultural heritage

- Being sensitive towards natural environment
- Using and developing information
- Knowing the occupations
- Perceiving the change and the continuity
- Using the information and communication technologies
- Being able to think scientifically
- Comprehending the individual-society-state relationship
- Believing in the importance of participation
- Believing in democracy
- Being sensitive towards the events within the society and across the world (TTKB, 2015).

As for the general purposes given above, it can be seen that the social studies program renewed in 2005 attaches importance to the interdisciplinary relationship. Indeed, it is understood that there are elements related not only to history and geography, but also disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

Social studies aim to help democratic values in the society to develop and improve. Citizenship education depends on democratic values in this sense. Social studies' interests include using information obtained socially and globally; conducting research; developing the ability to analyze, cooperate, solve problems and decide. The purpose of this is to ensure that youngsters healthily participate in the social life (NCSS, 2015a). When it is considered that democracy is a body of values, it is foreseen that an effective social studies course will increase the democratic attitudes and behaviors of individuals.

The ultimate goal of training programs is to make students good citizens of society, region, country and the world. Schools, on the other hand, are responsible for transferring the cultural heritage and preparing students for the future. Social studies lesson is related with acquiring knowledge, attitudes and skills concerning the concept of responsible citizenship and Social Studies lesson is expected to help in raising good citizens (Barth and Demirtaş, 1997). This help is generally received under the title of citizenship education within social studies.

Considering the subjects regarding the citizenship education; it is observed that the citizenship education involves subjects which enable students to be raised as individuals who are equipped in a society, know their rights, adopt democratic values, are sensitive to social events in their environment and love their country (Tonga, 2013).

In addition to this, the legal and political principles of a country are tried to be taught within the scope of citizenship education. This education comprises the well-being of community, personal rights, justice, equality, righteousness, patriotism and relevant values. Citizenship education contains knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors that are convenient for the political and legal system of a country (Cited from Kirschenbaum, 1995 by: Akbaş, 2011). Citizenship education can not be thought differently from the concept of value in terms of efficiency. Indeed, the ideal of efficient citizen that is tried to be reached via the citizenship education is used for individuals who reflect certain values.

Islam and its Ideal of Raising Individuals with Good Morals

There have been many definitions to religion. Some of them are as follows: Religion is defined in the Dictionary of Turkish Language Association (TDK) as "An institution that systemize believing and worshipping God, supernatural powers and various sacred beings." (TDK, 2015). In a more common definition, religion is considered to be the rules sent by a creator to people.

Religion is a natural disposition of human nature (Dewey, 1908). For Islam, religion is the body of rules that separates human from animals with regard to way of living (Duru, 2011). Due to the difficulty of making a mutual definition of religion (Keskin, 2004), the concept of religion has been considered to be a belief system. Believing is a need for people (Duru, 1995; Burn et al., 2001). Human intrinsically wants to believe in and

worship a superior power. That is why moon, sun, fire, mysterious powers and even cows have been regarded as gods since the dawn of the earth.

Religions are classified according to many aspects. Islam takes religions as divine and non-divine religions. The measure here is the idea of monotheism and faith in Allah. According to Islam, Christianity and Judaism are included in divine religions.

Religion is the body of divine laws which are suitable for human nature and enable him/her to live as a human (Duru, 2011). The aim of Islam is to beautify the human morals. When one asked Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, "What is religion?", he answered "Religion is good morals." For the Prophet, people who believe in Islam set the good morals as a goal for them. Indeed, Muhammad, who is the leader and role model of Islam said "I was sent to complement the good morals" (Cited from Muvatta, Ünal, 2014) and "The most benevolent of the Muslim is that who has the best morals" (Cited from Camiüs Sağir, Derin, 2013). This subject is mentioned in the Holy Quran, the holy book of Islam as the following: "Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model ..." (Quran, Surat Al-Ahzab, Verse 21). Muhammad invited people to be with good morals. When one asked the Prophet "What is being with good morals?", he give answers on various occasions such as "It is to respect your parents, to be reliable; not to lose your temper; to desire something that you do for yourself for others too, to be patient, to believe in Allah, to be clean."

Social Studies and Islam

As mentioned above, the ideal of social studies to raise good citizens and Islam's ideal to raise people with good morals show parallelism in terms of goals. Therefore, using religions elements in the social studies course may help students be raised to be good people and good citizens. Indeed, NCSS stated that social studies benefit from religion in the most valid and most cited definition of social studies (NCSS, 2015a). For example, social studies course in USA includes religions effect on topics such as history, art, culture, and politics. While teaching Islam, its contexts of history, geography and government are addressed rather than the controversial topics (Moore, 2012). History, music, literature and contemporary subject have religions origins too (Risinger, 1993). For example, according to Haynes (1998), it is necessary to understand the concept of religion to understand the history of USA.

There is a close relationship between citizenship education and religion. Religions freedoms in USA are guaranteed by the First Amendment (Risinger, 1993) because the subject of religion and of citizenship education too, is human even if religions and religious understandings are different. Since the social studies course aims to make students acquire citizenship consciousness (Tonga, 2013), social studies is in close relationship with religion and citizenship education by the nature of its scope.

In Table 1, it can be seen that Islam was not utilized sufficiently while preparing the social studies teaching program in Turkey. Here it may remind "Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge" course that is taught at schools in Turkey. However, given the interdisciplinary mentality of social studies, it is thought that utilizing Islam will contribute to raising good people and good citizens.

Table 1. Gains concerning Islam in social studies units (TTKB, 2015)

Unit	Gains
6th Grade- Turks on the Silk Road	1. It examines the birth and expansion of Islam by benefiting from visual and written materials. 2. It notices the changes in political, social and cultural areas with the acceptance of Islam by Turks. 3. It makes inferences concerning the political, social and cultural characteristics of the first Turkish-Islamic states by benefiting from the lives of statesmen and significant Turkish figures at that time.
7th Grade- Science Through Time	1. It evaluates the contribution of scholars raised in Turkish and Islamic states to the scientific development process.

In Table 1, the gains within the context of the birth of Islam, the acceptance of Islam by Turks and Islam's effect on socio-cultural and state structure in the Turks on the Silk Road unit. The gain in the 7th grade is

related to scholars' contribution to the scientific development (TTKB, 2015). In the study by Keçe and Merey (2011), it was found that gains related to religion within the social studies gains are inadequate.

Alongside these exemplary gains, there are values concerning Islam within the values to be given either in textbooks or in the social studies course directly. The point here is actually that many of the values which form the purpose of social studies are universal human values. These may include respect for emotions and ideas, cleanliness, being scientific, helpfulness, independences, responsibility, hardworking, honesty, peace, being just, respect for rights and freedoms (TTKB, 2015). These values are also featured by Islam. Hence, Islam and social studies course convene on universal human values. Common points of social studies course and Islam are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Common points of social studies course and Islam

Social Studies Course	Islam
Good citizen	Good morals
Values	Values
Being scientific	Science
Honesty	Trust
Patriotism	Love of country
Women's rights	Importance given to mothers
Human rights	Human honor
Respect for differences	Tolerance
Being sensitive towards natural environment	Love of nature
Democracy	Consulting, (consulting, freedom, freedom of thought and expression and so on).

It was abovementioned that the aim of social studies course contributes to raising good people and good citizens. The aim of Islam is to raise individuals with good morals. The concepts of good citizenship and good morals show some parallelism in terms of the values they possess here. For the sake of example; being scientific, honesty, patriotism, women's rights, human rights, respect for differences, being sensitive towards natural environment and democracy (consulting, freedom, freedom of thought and expression and so on) in Table 2 are values that a good citizen should have in terms of social studies. These values are mentioned by Islam directly or with their synonyms. Hence, many of the concepts that are crucial for social studies are given importance by Islam too.

The value of being scientific is mentioned in the "I'm Learning Social Studies" unit in 6th grade and "Science Through Time" unit in 7th grade as a unit value directly provided to students (TTKB, 2015). Islam's perspective of science can be understood from Muhammad's statement "If a human enters a path for science, Allah eases paradise way for a human. (Cited from Müslim, Yiğit, 2010)" In addition, the first verse of Quran is "Read!" (Quran, Surat Al-Alak, Verse 1).

In 7th grade, honesty is a unit value in the "Economic and Social Life" unit in the social studies course (TTKB, 2015). Trust is the first value that a Muslim should first acquire for Islam because trust is an extremely important concept according to Islam. Here are some statements of Muhammad concerning trust: "Those who cheat are not one of us. Those who lie are neither. Muslim is a human who is trusted other people (Cited from Müslim, Sarıçam, 2014)." In Quran, there are verses related to trust such as "So remain on a right course as you have been commanded ..." (Quran, Surat Hud, Verse 112) and "And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive," (Quran, Surat Mu'minun, Verse 8).

Patriotism is a unit value in the "Population in our Country" unit in in 7th grade social studies course (TTKB, 2015). One of the statements that Mohammed may have made on patriotism is "Patriotism is next to godliness." And one of the deeds Muhammad first did when he migrated to Mecca from Medina is the agreement he made with Jews for the defense of Medina (Sarıçam, 2014).

Women's rights in the social studies course are addressed under the title of human rights. One of the gains related to this topic in the social studies course can be exemplified with the statement "Examples of

women's position throughout Turkish history are interpreted in terms of the development of women rights" in the "Journey of Democracy" unit in 6th grade. Muhammad summarized the importance attached to women by Islam as "Paradise lies at the feet of the mother."

In the "Communication and Human Rights" unit in 7th grade social studies course, respect for differences is among the values to be given (TTKB, 2015). And Islam advises "Make it easy, not difficult. Herald it; do not make one hateful. Get along with each other. (Cited from Tırmizi, Ünal, 2014)." "And do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption" (Quran, Surat Ash-Shu`ara', Verse 183). Muhammad said "Those who do not have pity on people are not showed mercy by Allah" (Cited from Buhari, Karagöz, 2014).

Rights, responsibilities and freedoms are among the main topics within the scope of citizenship education in the social studies course. Muhammad said "Everyone's honor is sacred (Cited from Ahmet Bin Hanbel, Ünal, 2014)". In the Holy Quran, the value given to human is stated as follows: "... whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely (Quran, Surat Al-Mā'idah, Verse 32)." "We have certainly created man in the best of stature;" (Quran, Surat At-Tîn, Verse 4)

Being sensitive towards natural environment was determined to be the unit value for 6th grade "Life on Earth" unit (TTKB, 2015). Islam's take on being sensitive towards natural environment as follow: "It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth." (Quran, Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse 29) "... and eat and drink, but be not excessive. ..." (Quran, Surat Al-'A`rāf, Verse 31)

Social studies itself exist to help individuals to gain democratic values. There are gains, values and units related to democracy in the social studies course in Turkey (TTKB, 2015). This is addressed in Islam with verses in Quran such as "... and consult them in the matter. ... (Quran, Surat 'Āli `Imrān, Verse 159)" and "... and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves. ... (Quran, Surat Ash-Shūraá, Verse 38)". With regard to this topic, fellows of Muhammad said "We have not seen anyone who counsels his friends more than the prophet."

It is understood that Islam's concepts such as human, community, private living space, free commercial environment, council, justice, rightness, and law may coincide with the concepts such as individual, social group, civic life, private life, free enterprise, political participation, choice, rights, and law in the democratic mentality that represents the civic society, and therefore Islam is in a significant conformity with the society model prescribed by the civic society (Cited from Çaha, 1999: Erkan, 2012).

Many concepts can be mentioned concerning the process of raising good people and good citizens; however, a classification was accordingly performed, and the relationship which is thought to exist only between social studies, Islam, values and morals education is given in Figure 1. The relationship between these four concepts is evaluated in terms of raising good people and citizens.

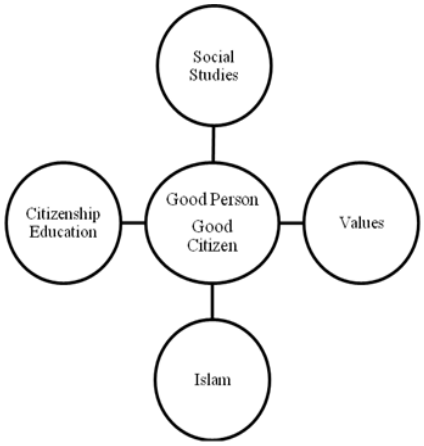


Figure 1. The Social studies-İslam relationship in raising good people and good citizens

Conclusion and Discussion

Consequently, although Islam may importantly contribute to the process of raising good citizens, it is seen that religions values are not utilized adequately in the social studies curriculum in Turkey (Table 1).

Islam attaches importance to values such as rightness, honesty, helpfulness, and sharing and gives advices for the followers to adopt these values. If looked closely, these are the important values included in the definitions of a good citizen (Tonga, 2013) because these are universal values for all humankind. Hence, as discussed within the theoretical framework under the scope of the research, it is thought that benefiting from religion during the process of raising good citizens may have positive consequences in terms of the goals desired to be achieved. Indeed, religions have impacts both on the behaviors of individuals and nations and many fields including art, literature, music, and architecture since religion is considered as being important for an individual to know himself/herself, his/her nation and the world. Therefore, elements and activities related to religion should be included in the social studies curriculum (NCSS, 2015b).

In fact, as for the studies performed domestically, it is seen that the more piety improve, the less the perception of discrimination is experience, and the increased will to live comes along with the sense of belonging to the country (Bilgiç, 2013). As referred to several resources by Kurt (2009), it is observed as shared results of different studies that the acts of violence are less common and rates of divorce are lower in families with strong religious beliefs.

As referred to several resources by Moore (2012), for example, controversial topics are avoided while telling about Islam although the dominant religion in USA is Christianity, and what is emphasized is that Islam is a monotheist religion, was started by Muhammad the Prophet in 610 and Islamic Civilization has made important contributions to the world history, even affected the Western Civilization. When Islam is included in the social studies course in Turkey, there are several topics to be able to be addressed that are not disputable, that no one, even those who have no sensitivity towards religion, can object. The best example of this may be the "trust" value. Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, had been known as "al-ameen" (trustworthy) before the prophecy (Sarıçam, 2014). The trust value is of great important not only for religion but also for the social order. Therefore, the trust value can be included in the scope of social studies course and while teaching this value, it can be reinforced with examples from Turkish history and Islamic history.

It is seen that most of the terrorist actions across world that seems to be religion-based are actually perceived to be religious terror in public due to the religious identities of terrorist or the effect of press. This not only applies to Islam but also other religions. However, some of the terrorist do abuse religion for their political purposes while others seem to have learnt and interpreted religion wrongly (Bilgiç, 2013).

In the literature, there are studies revealing that the relationship between social studies and Islam cannot be established sufficiently. In the study by Koçoğlu (2015) on 100 social studies teachers in Turkey, although 80% of them thought that religious education is important for a democratic and effective citizenship education, most of the participants answered no to the question "Should social studies include religious education?" by saying that it would be falling wide of the mark and social studies teachers are inadequate in the field of religious education. It was stated that the participant social studies teachers could not establish an adequate relationship between social studies and Islam. Indeed, no course and course content related to the connection between social studies and religion is included in the teacher training in Turkey.

A precise agreement has not been able to be made on the content of raising good citizens within the social studies education for a long time (Barr, Barth and Shermis, 1978; Ross, 2006). As for the literature related to the main aim of social studies, that is, raising good citizens, there have been studies rather on determining the views and perceptions of students, teacher candidates, families and teachers concerning the characteristics of an effective citizen. In a sense, there has been an effort to measure the good citizen perception (Tonga, 2013; Ersoy, 2012; Sarı and Sadık, 2011). In addition to these, the concepts of "good citizen" or "good person" should be investigated in depth, and it should be determined what element is effective to what extent and what duties fall to the stakeholders in this process. As emphasized in this study, one of those concepts is religion. It is believed that the contributions to be made to the social studies course content in the light of the Holy Quran and the trustworthy hadiths will positively affect the citizenship development of students.

Here, the regulations could be made in three areas as social studies curriculum, school books and social studies teaching undergraduate program. In order to benefit from Islam and the values of Islam in social studies lesson, it is primarily required to make various additions to the social studies curriculum. For instance, religious stories or religious epigrams could be used in the values to be contained in the curriculum and taught directly. As a result of their study, Tonga and Uslu (2015) determined that majority of values and acquisitions to be directly taught in the social studies lesson were not compatible with each other. Considering the fact that school books are written according to acquisitions, it could be concluded that values are not sufficiently reflected on school books. Thus, it is recommended to increase the relationship of acquisitions and values and use religious patterns in the school books where these values are involved.

In addition to this, the Social Studies Teaching Undergraduate Program does not involve any lessons that are directly taught in relation to Islam (Tonga, 2012). It is believed to be useful for preservice social studies teachers that would teach social studies in the future to take a lesson where they could learn how to use Islam in their lessons in the teaching education. Thus, preservice social studies teachers will not only learn how to use social sciences in social studies, but also will be conscious and educated about how to use Islam.

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