

# Difficulties in Achieving the Goals of Secondary Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Course

Yasemin Akkuş<sup>1</sup>

## ARTICLE INFO

*Article History:*  
Received 01.12.2019  
Received in revised form  
21.05.2020  
Accepted  
Available online 01.01.2021

## ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative research aiming at identifying the difficulties faced by the teachers at the process of making the students achieve the Religious Culture and Ethics course objectives at secondary education. The research has been figured as case study, which is one of the qualitative reesearch methods, while the descriptive analysis method has been used in the analysis of the data. Suitable samples were chosen among the sample types and the sample of the research was formed by 11 volunteer Religious Culture and Ethics teachers working at secondary schools at the 2019-2020 academic year. At the end of the research, religious background of the family, negative family attitudes, religion perception of the social surrounding, inefficiency of the subjects in the curriculum and the repetition of the subjects outcomes have emerged.

©TUARA Journal. All rights reserved

### Keywords:

Religion Education, religious culture and ethics teachers, curriculum objectives

## INTRODUCTION

In general, education is the process of educating people for a specific purpose. In the curriculums developed by the National Ministry of Education, there are planned objectives and subjects that carry reflections of the official ideology and the students are educated in accordance with this program. (Yüksel, 2002) If the profile of the person that the country wants to raise has features related to religious education, then National Education Policy and Religious Education Policy become two elements that have to act together (aktaran Karaağaç, 2013). According to these ideas, it is possible to say that Religious Education Policy is the method, way and the set targets and programs and qualities in the person profile that the country wants to train. With this feature, religious education policies appear as subtitles of national education policies (Karaağaç, 2013) The purpose and objectives of the Religious Culture and Ethics course were determined in this direction. This course was made compulsory with the 1982 Constitution. The general objectives have been stated as the following in 2018 Religious Culture and Ethics Curriculum: The students are aimed at to have values like justice, friendship, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, patriotism and helpfulness. In this respect, it is aimed that the students should comprehend basic values, adopt them and behave in accordance with the values they have (MEB, 2018). "In the curriculum, it is aimed to teach basic concepts related to religion and ethics, to form the conceptual basics related to religion and ethics and to make connections among the concepts. In this way it is targeted to make the students comment on religious and ethical concepts and improve some basic skills like research and questioning, problem solving, communicating and etc" (MEB, 2018). Hüseyin Atay, who is a distinguished person in the field of religious education, prepared a report on compulsory Religious Culture and Ethics course at schools in 1980 and stated these facts: "Our youth is under the influence of two negative mentalities. One of them is the impact of representatives of religion, science and idea they have that are the ruins of 17th and 18th centuries. The other one is the influence of the mentality of the people who are against religion in the 19th century. There is no dialogue between these two views. The solution we need is to teach true religion and this solution is outside the two negative mentality that misunderstand religion (Günaydın, 2009). It is seen that the objectives of the religious culture and ethics course match up with the report prepared by Mr. Atay. It is also clear that the objectives of the curriculum have an important position in shaping the individuals of the society.

In the curriculums Religious Education and Ethics course has sometimes been elective and sometimes compulsory at each education level by being shaped according to the existing political situation (Dirimeşe, 2015). As the discussions about the position of the religious education in the education systems continued, identification of the needs and the development of the suitable teaching methods and principles to the field were hindered (Dirimeşe, 2015). Because of this reason the curriculums of Religious Education

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, Turkey, yasminakkus.ya@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0002-0556-4521

and Ethics should be renewed and developed by following changing global problems and human understanding. Because of the current period, “the difficulties faced by the teachers in the process of achieving the objectives of secondary school religious education and ethics course” was chosen as the subject of the research. It is seen that religion has been an important factor both in the past societies and in the lives of today’s people. This fact creates the need for religious education in societies. And it is the duty of religious education and teaching to meet this need (Zengin, 2010). Religious Education and Ethics course has been a compulsory course starting from the 4th grade till the last grade of the secondary education. In 2007- 2008 academic year “constructivism” was applied and from time to time it was updated according to the changing needs. Today the curriculum which was renewed in 2018 is being carried out at the schools. The teachers’ ideas about the difficulties faced in applying the curriculum are extremely significant. In this research, it is aimed to identify the difficulties faced by the teachers in the process of achieving the objectives of Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics course.

### **The Problem of the Research**

The difficulties faced by the teachers in the process of achieving the objectives of secondary education religious culture and ethics course.

### **Subproblems**

- Do you think learning by the family have an impact on achieving the objectives of Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics course?
- What do you think about the effects of students’ social surroundings in the process of achieving the objectives of Religious Culture and Ethics course?
- According to you, what kind of an education method should be used against different denomination and belief groups among the students?
- What kind of an effect do the trainings you received for your personal and professional development have in achieving the course objectives?
- What are the difficulties you are facing in the process of achieving the objectives of Religious Culture and Ethics course and what do you think can be done to remove these difficulties?
- Repatriation and Problems of Adaptation

## **METHOD**

### **The Model of the Research**

This study is a qualitative one aimed at investigating the difficulties experienced by the teachers in the process of achieving the targets set in the new Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Course Curriculum that started to be implemented in 2018. It has been designed with case study model which is one of the qualitative research methods. Within the framework of this research the following questions were asked to the teachers: Do you think learning by the family have an impact on achieving the objectives of Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics course? , what do you think about the effects of students’ social surroundings in the process of achieving the objectives of Religious Culture and Ethics course? ,According to you, what kind of an education method should be used against different denomination and belief groups among the students? ,What kind of an effect do the trainings you received for your personal and professional development have in achieving the course objectives? ,What are the difficulties you are facing in the process of achieving the objectives of Religious Culture and Ethics course? The given answers were interpreted by descriptive analysis method and presented as a table.

### **The Universe and the Sample**

While the universe of the research is composed of Religious Culture and Ethics teachers who work at secondary schools at 2019- 2020 academic year, the samples are 11 volunteer Religious Culture and Ethics teachers working at secondary schools.

### **Data Collecting Tools**

The research data has been collected through semi-structured interview form. Semi-structured interview technique is one of the qualitative research methods in which the researcher prepares an interview

form including the questions prepared before. However the researcher may affect the course of the interview with different questions formed according to the flow of the interview and thus can provide more clarification to the answers given by the interviewer (Türnüklü, 2000). A semi-structured interview form was prepared according to the subject of the research and an expert opinion was asked. After the expert confirmation, four appointments were made with 4 interviewers. At their availability, the interview was made and recorded by a tape. As there was no chance to have a face to face meeting with 7 interviewers, the interview forms were e-mailed to them and they filled the forms.

### The Analysis of Data

The analysis of research data was made by using the descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that aims to interpret the data collected by various techniques according to the determined themes. In this analysis technique, the main target is to present the obtained results to the addressee in an interpreted and summarized manner (transferred, Özdemir, 2010). Frequency and percentage distributions of the answers given by the interviewers were calculated and remarkable answers were quoted. In the quotations, the code names given to the teachers were used. For example, the first teacher was presented as T1.

### FINDINGS

The findings in the study were reached through the answers given by the Religious Culture and Ethics teachers working at secondary schools. 11 volunteer teachers took part in the study. The given answers were collected under the heading of themes at the end of the interview and the themes were divided into subject headings within themselves.

#### The Ideas of the Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers About the Effect of The Family Learnings on Achieving the Objectives of the Curriculum

The Ideas of the Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers about the effect of the family learnings on achieving the objectives of the curriculum are presented in Table1.

**Table 1. Distribution of views on the impact of learning by the family**

Theme (Categories)	Codes	n	%
The Impact of Learning by the Family	The Religious background in the family (T1,T2,T3,T4,T5,T6,T7,T8.T9,T10)	10	91
	Negative family attitudes (T1,T2)	2	18

According to the Table 1, the secondary education Religious Culture and Ethics teachers think that 'family background' is extremely important in achieving the objectives of the course. This view takes the first place with the rate of 91 %. 'The negative family attitudes towards the Religious Culture and Ethics course' view takes the second and the last place with the 18% . The interviewers' own views are given below:

(T1): *"The most important factor is the family. When the family gives the basis of the course, it is not difficult to teach the objectives to the student. Then the student listens carefully. But if the family does not teach religion at home in any way, the student is not interested in the course. In such situations it becomes very difficult to attract his attention to the course. Sometimes even the subjects in the curriculum are criticized by the parents."*

(T2): *"In my opinion, family learning is the main reason of students' positive or negative attitude towards the course. When the family is against the religious culture and ethics course, the student does not want to learn and it becomes very hard for us to achieve the objectives."*

(T4): *"The impact of the family is extremely important. The religious education starts at childhood and in the family. But we do not get benefit from the family impact in this respect."*

## The Ideas of the Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers About the Impact of the Social Surroundings on Achieving the Objectives of the Curriculum

The ideas of the secondary education religious culture and ethics teachers about the impact of the social surroundings on achieving the objectives of the curriculum are expressed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Distribution of opinions about the impact of students' social surroundings**

Theme (Categories)	Codes	n	%
Impact of the social surrounding	Social surrounding's religion perception (T3,T5,T6,T7,T8,T9,T10)	7	64
	Wrong learnings in the social media (T3,T4)	2	18
	Adolescence friendship relations (T2,T11)	2	18

According to the Table 2, when we examine the interviewers' views about the impact of the social surroundings in achieving the secondary education religious culture and ethics course objectives, it is seen that 'social surrounding's religion perception' is number one at the rate of 64 %. Then comes the 'wrong learnings in social media and adolescence friendship relations' at the rate of 18%. One-to-one quotes from participants' opinions are given below:

(T2): "As the secondary education students are adolescents, their friend circles affect their attitude towards religious culture and ethics course. There are some students behaving improperly to become popular among their friends."

(T4): "Social surrounding is more effective than what we teach in the class. As a religious education and ethics teacher you should spare time to correct the false information especially they learn from social media."

(T8): "The students start learning first in the family and environment, and then this process continues at school. Each student can behave according to the information they get from their social surrounding. Furthermore they get more information when it comes to religious education and ethics course."

## The Ideas Of The Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers About What Kind Of An Education Method Should Be Used Against Different Denomination And Belief Groups Among The Students In Achieving Course Objectives

The ideas of the secondary education religious culture and ethics teachers about what kind of an education method should be used against different denomination and belief groups among the students in achieving the objectives of the curriculum are expressed in Table 3.

**Table 3. Distributions about what kind of an education method should be used against different denomination and belief groups among the students**

Theme (Categories)	Codes	n	%
What kind of an education method should be used against different denomination and belief groups	Differences are wealth (T3,T5,T6,T8,T10)	5	45
	Freedom of thought and expression (T1,T2,T4,T11)	4	36
	Meeting in common values (T9,T4)	2	18

According to Table 3, when we examine the participants' views about what kind of an education method should be used against different denomination and belief groups among the students in achieving the objectives of the religious culture and ethics curriculum, it is seen that 'differences are wealth view takes the first place at the rate of 45%. Then comes 'freedom of thought and expression' at the rate of 36 %. Finally, number three is 'meeting in common values' at the rate of 18 % . One-to-one quotes from participants' opinions are given below:

(T3): "As I am working at a cosmopolitan school, there are very different belief groups. I narrate the denominations in general and thus I do not have any difficulty or problem in the class. There are different philosophical trends in the curriculum and this makes things easier for us. Seeing a teacher while describing atatism breaks the students' prejudices."

(T4): "During the classes, my students always feel free to ask questions. We meet in common values and I teach them the course."

(T8): "Differences reveal beauties. When this point is being narrated to the students, I think induction method should be used. In this way from the specific to the general denomination and belief subject is expressed and understood in a better way."

### **The Ideas Of The Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers About The Effect Of The Trainings They Received For Their Personal And Professional Development In Achieving The Course Objectives**

The ideas of the secondary education religious culture and ethics teachers about the effect of the trainings they received for their personal and professional development in achieving the course objectives are conveyed in Table 4.

**Table 4. Distributions about the effect of the trainings they received for their personal and professional development**

<b>Theme (Categories)</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>The Effect Of The Trainings Received For Personal And Professional Development</b>	Making lecture more effective (T1,T3,T4,T5,T8,T9)	6	54
	Importance of psychology trainings (T10,T11)	2	18
	Transfer of experience (T7)	1	9

According to Table 4, when we examine the ideas of the secondary education religious culture and ethics teachers about the effect of the trainings they received for their personal and professional development in achieving the course objectives it is seen that 'making lecture more effective' takes the first place at a rate of 54 %. Number 2 is 'importance of psychology trainings' at a rate of 18 %. Finally, number three is 'transfer of experience' at the rate of 9 %. One-to-one quotes from participants' opinions are given below:

(T8): "Yes, I receive trainings. These trainings maket he teacher reac the students in a more effective and short way."

(T10): "The trainings have an excellent impact. Each teacher should seminars or take parts in the projects especially in the field of psychology."

(T11): "I received a training about adolescence. This training affected my point of view to the children. I beleive that it had a positive impact."

### **The Ideas Of The Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Course Teachers About The Difficulties Faced In The Process Of Achieving The Objectives Of Religious Culture And Ethics Course**

The ideas of the secondary education religious culture and ethics course teachers about the difficulties faced in the process of achieving the objectives of Religious Culture and Ethics course are expressed in Table 5.

**Table 5. The distribution of the ideas about the difficulties faced**

Theme(Categories)	Codes	n	%	
<b>Difficulties faced in achieving the objectives of the course</b>	Inefficiency of the subjects in the curriculum	(T1,T2,T3,T4)	4	36
	Repetition of the subjects	(T1,T4)	2	18
	Readiness level	(T5,T9)	2	18
	Prejudice against the course	(T5, T8)	2	18
	Unwillingness of the student	(T6)	1	9

According to Table 5, when we examine the participants' views about the difficulties faced in achieving the objectives of the religious culture and ethics curriculum, it is seen that 'inefficiency of the subjects in the curriculum' takes the first place at the rate of 36 %. Then 'repetition of the subjects', 'readiness level' and 'prejudice against the course' views take the second place at the rate of 18 %. Finally, 'the unwillingness of the student' view comes at the rate of 9 %. One-to-one quotes from participants' opinions are given below:

(T1): *"The religious culture and ethics course has its own difficulty inside. As this is a verbal course and the same subjects are repeated continuously, it becomes very difficult for the teacher to attract the students' attention the course. The value of the course was raised from 1 to 2. However there has been no change in the content, in the subjects. The number of the subjects should be increased and new subjects that appeals to adolescents should be added to the curriculum."*

(T3): *"The course books and the curriculum are below the students' level. They should be revised to be more useful for the new generation. As the subjects studied before were removed from the curriculum, we are having difficulties in conveying the objectives of the course."*

(T8): *"The biggest difficulty for us is the prejudice. Students are prejudiced against some subjects or they are misinformed. So we must give them true information in the most effective and appealing way."*

## RESULT, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the research about the difficulties faced in achieving the objectives of the secondary education religious culture and ethics course can be summarized as the following. When we consider the effects of the family learnings, the idea that family background is important has the biggest share according to the research. Secondly, negative family attitude towards the religious culture and ethics course is seen as another factor. When the impact of the social surrounding on learning is evaluated, it is seen that religion perception of the social surrounding is the most effective factor. False learnings in social media and adolescence period friendship circles are of secondary importance. When it comes to the analysis of the ideas related to the method that would be used against different denomination and belief groups among the students, it is obvious that differences should be expressed as wealth to the students. Secondly, giving chance for the expression of thought and freedom is stated. Finally it is pointed that it is necessary to meet in common values.

For the views on personal or professional trainings received and their impacts, It is seen that the most important thing is to narrate the lecture in an impressive way. After that importance of psychology trainings is stated. Finally it is pointed that transfer of experience has positive effects on teachers' attitudes in class. When the views about achieving the objectives of the secondary education religious culture and ethics course are evaluated, the fact that the subjects are inefficient and should be increased is number one. Repetition of the subjects, readiness level and prejudices against the course are of secondary importance. The reluctance of student view is the last and the least significant view.

In general, education consists of the activities for raising the individuals according to the set targets. These activities ensure the formation of personality of the individuals of the society. The education process

of the individuals starts in the family firstly and continues whole lifetime in social circles and in professional life. (Çakmak, 2013) In this study, it is seen that family attitude and social surroundings are the most important factors in religious education. In his study (1992), Okçay states that mostly families fulfill the task of religious socialization at home in the country whereas families leave this task given to schools in the cities. Religion is a way of living and a feature people learn at the process of socialization from the people around. People's perception of religion are formed according to the time and society they are in depending on the development in the physical and mental world (Çapçioğlu, 2009). These sayings of Çapçioğlu support our research's finding on the importance of social surrounding in religion perception. Adolescence is the period in which psychological changes are most intense in terms of emotional and cognitive aspects besides physical developments. In this sense, people's psychological structures forming an integrity, and the changes adolescents experience affect their religious emotions, attitudes and behaviours (Koç,2005). These psychological changes experienced at adolescence cause an increase in the importance of friendships in their social surroundings. As it is stated in the Constitution, " Religious education should be objective, pluralist, scientific and free from superstitions. People should not be exposed to religious discrimination and the State should be objective to all religions in teaching religion" (Yıldız, 2009). Based on these points, it is important that the students should meet in common values, creation a free classroom atmosphere where they can express themselves freely, and application of an education model with above-denomination in a real sense by the teachers. One of the most important results seen at the process of achieving the course objectives is the inefficiency of the curriculum and the repetition of the subjects. Such a situation will reduce interest of the student in the lesson and will cause the student move away from the course (Dirimeşe, 2005)

### Suggestions

After examining the results obtained in this study on the difficulties faced by the teachers at secondary education in achieving the objectives of religious culture and ethics course, the following suggestions are reached:

- When the families have no information about the objectives or the subjects of the course, they generally have a negative attitude towards Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Course. Because of this reason teachers should organize meetings with parents and inform them about the course. The teachers should contact the parents in a positive way and remove their prejudices.
- Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics teacher should have information about religious social media pages and continuously examine these pages and follow actual religious discussions actively.
- Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics Course Curriculum should be renewed, subjects should be increased, level of the subjects should be organized according to level of secondary education students.
- Secondary Education Religious Culture and Ethics teacher should be given professional trainings about adolescence period features and actual religious topics.
- Religious Culture and Ethics teacher should get information about different belief groups and denominations from their original resources.

### REFERENCES

- Çakmak, A., Ay, M.F. (2016). Ortaöğretim din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi dersi genel amaçlarına erişim düzey ölçüğü: Geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışması. *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 14(31), 43-66.
- Çakmak, F. (2013). Din eğitiminde program geliştirme ve aile faktörü. *Iğdır İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1, 81-104.
- Çapçioğlu, İ. (2008). İlahiyat fakültesi öğrencilerinin yakın sosyal çevre ile ilişkilerinde etkili bir faktör olarak dindarlık. *Ankara İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 14(1), 143-180.
- Dirimeşe, E. (2005). *Lisede din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi dersi müfredatının program geliştirme süreçleri bakımından incelenmesi* ( Yüksek lisans tezi, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, İzmir).

- Günaydın, M. (2009). Din kültürü ve ahlâk öğretiminin ilköğretim ve liselerde zorunlu ders olmasına Prof.Dr. Hüseyin Atay'ın katkıları. *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 9(1), 287-304.
- Karaağaç, Z. (2013). *1980 Sonrası Türkiye'de din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi dersi programlarındaki değişimler* (Yüksek lisans tezi , Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul). Erişim adresi: katalog.marmara.edu.tr
- Koç, M. (2005). Din psikolojisi açısından ergenlik döneminde dua ve ibadet psikolojisinin gelişimi. *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, 9(25), 75-88.
- MEB. [Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı]. (2018). *Ortaöğretim din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi öğretim programı*. Ankara: MEB Yayınları.
- Okçay, H. (1992). Çocuğun dinsel sosyalizasyonunda ailenin işlevi. *Sosyoloji Dergisi*, 3, 131-145.
- Özdemir, M. (2010). Nitel veri analizi: Sosyal bilimlerde yöntembilim sorunsali üzerine bir çalışma. *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 11(1), 323-343.
- Türnüklü, A. (2000). Eğitim bilimleri araştırmalarında etkin olarak kullanılabilir nitel bir araştırma tekniği: Görüşme. *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi Dergisi*, 24, 543-559.
- Yıldız, İ. (2009). Din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi dersi: zorunlu mu kalmalı, yoksa seçmeli mi olmalı. *TUBAV Bilim Dergisi*, 2(2), 243-256.
- Yüksel, S. (2002). Örtük program the hidden curriculum. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Eğitim ve Bilim Dergisi*, 27(126), 31-37.
- Zengin, M. (2010). *Yapılandırmacılık ve din eğitimi ilköğretim DKAB öğretim programlarının değerlendirilmesi ve öğretmen görüşleri açısından etkililiği* (Doktora tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul). Erişim adresi: katalog.marmara.edu.tr

EK

### Değerli Meslektaşım;

Bu çalışma Sakarya Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Eğitim Programları ve Öğretimi Bölümü Master çalışması olarak "**ortaöğretim din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi dersi amaçlarını kazandırma sürecinde öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları zorluklar**" başlıklı araştırma için hazırlanmıştır. Çalışmada elde edilecek bilgiler sadece bilimsel amaçlar için kullanılacak ve üçüncü kişiler ile paylaşılmayacaktır.

### GÖRÜŞME SORULARI

- 1) Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi Amaçlarını kazandırmada, aile tarafından gerçekleştirilen öğrenmelerin etkisi olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
- 2) Öğrencilerin sosyal çevresinin Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi Amaçlarını kazandırma sürecinde etkisi hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?
- 3) Öğrenciler arasındaki farklı mezhep ve inanç gruplarına karşı nasıl bir eğitim metodu kullanılması gerekmektedir, neler düşünüyorsunuz?
- 4) Bireysel ve mesleki gelişiminiz için aldığınız eğitimlerin ders amaçlarını kazandırmada nasıl bir etkisi olmaktadır.
- 5) Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi Amaçlarını kazandırma sürecinde karşılaştığınız zorluklar nelerdir ve bu zorlukların ortadan kaldırılması için sizce neler yapılabilir.