

## Evaluation of religious literacy skill levels in terms of various variables in religious education<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The main goal of this research is to determine the effect of Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge classes on religious literacy skills. Considering the type of people that religions aim to raise, religious literacy includes skills such as knowing the concepts, worship, belief principles, and historical realities that a religion expects its believers to have. The quantitative research method was used. In this context, achievement test was applied to primary school students. While the general population of our research consists of primary school students, the study population consists of 105 students studying in the fourth grade of a primary school in a metropolitan city in the 2021-2022 academic year. The demographic characteristics of the students who participated in the research were examined in terms of gender and age. In addition, to determine the socio-economic status of students and their families; questions about the education level of the parents were asked. In the study, it was concluded that the literacy levels of female students were higher, the level of religious literacy increased as the age of the students increased, and the education level of the parents was determinant when it comes to religious literacy. In addition, it was concluded that social media and the internet have rather more effect on religious literacy.

**Keywords:** religious education, religious literacy, primary school students, achievement test, religious concepts

### Din eğitiminde dini okuryazarlık beceri düzeylerinin çeşitli değişkenler açısından değerlendirilmesi

### Özet

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersinin din okuryazarlık becerisine etkisini tespit etmektir. Dinlerin yetiştirmeyi amaçladığı insan tipi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, din okuryazarlığı bir dinin inananlarından sahip olmasını beklediği o dine ait kavramları, ibadetleri, inanç esasları ve tarihi gerçeklikleri bilmek gibi becerileri kapsar. Çalışmada nicel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu kapsamda ilkökul öğrencilerine başarı testi uygulanmıştır. Araştırmamızın genel evrenini ilkökul öğrencileri oluştururken, çalışma evrenini 2021-2022 eğitim öğretim yılında büyükşehirde bulunan ilkökul dördüncü sınıflarında eğitim gören 105 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin demografik özellikleri, cinsiyet ve yaş yönünden incelenmiştir. Buna ek olarak öğrencilerin ve ailelerinin sosyo-ekonomik durumlarını tespit etmek amacıyla; anne babanın eğitim durumu ile ilgili soruları yöneltilmiştir. Araştırmada, kız öğrencilerin okuryazarlık düzeyinin daha yüksek olduğu, öğrencilerin yaşı arttıkça dini okuryazarlık düzeylerinin de arttığı, anne babanın eğitim düzeyinin belirleyici olduğu, sosyal medya ve internetin din okuryazarlığı konusunda öne çıktığı sonuçlarına ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** din eğitimi, dini okuryazarlık, ilkökul öğrencileri, başarı testi, dine ait kavramlar

### Introduction

#### **Literacy**

While the concept of literacy was used in the sense of having literacy skills before the 1960s, it started to be used in the sense of acquiring knowledge and skills on a certain subject by expanding its meaning as a result of academic discussions on it. By examining literacy, which means having different, complex, special skills and high level knowledge belonging to a special field, with in the frame work of the sespecial fields, science and technology literacy such as computer literacy, science and technology literacy, media literacy, environmental literacy, critical literacy, visual literacy, mathematical literacy It is known that they emerged in the fields of social sciences and as an independent research topic (Kurudayioğlu & Tüzel,

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2010). One of these types of literacy is the concept of religious literacy, which emerged in the literature in the early 2000s.

### ***The Concept and Development of Religious Literacy***

Religious literacy is a concept that has taken its place in the scientific literature after the 2000s. Along with the rapid change in societies (secularization, globalization, increase in technological opportunities, etc.), religion is seen as an alternative to these systems and the effect of religion on social life has decreased and the results of these have caused religious literacy to take place among the types of literacy.

In the approach where religious literacy is seen as a part of religious education, the assumption is that religious literacy helps children and adolescents to stay away from religious fanaticism. The individual who has knowledge about the religions knows what the belief and their practices mean. This approach envisages religious literacy education for a peaceful and tolerant society, in addition to Bible teaching, in order to develop a common religious language in multi cultural societies where sects and sectarian differences are evident (Wilkins, 1992). By providing religious literacy education within the scope of religious education in schools and society;

- Individuals will have acquired the democratic skills to provide the basis for national and world wide public discourse. – Students will develop their critical thinking skills.
- Individuals who have received religious literacy education will gain an understanding of respect for diversity.
- Students will greatly improve their ability to make sense of history, literature, science, morality and culture.
- He will understand the evolution-religion conflict arising from religious ignorance in the words of both sides.
- He will learn about various religious traditions through religions' own scriptures, regardless of any denomination.
- It will be ensured that the prejudices and bigotry that individuals have about religions will be destroyed.
- The experience of multi culturalism and pluralism will be gained through religious literacy education given in schools (Moore, 2007).

Religious literacy can also be divided into groups according to its functions. Prothero (2008) classified religious literacy according to its function as follows:

- Worship literacy; knowing how to pray. E.g; Knowing how to make wudu or pray.
- belief literacy; is to know the basic belief principles of religions. E.g; To know the conditions of belief and how to believe in God.
- Sectarian literacy; Knowing the differences between religions. E.g; To know the differences between Catholic and Protestantism, Reformist and Conservative Judaism.
- parable literacy; is to know the stories of religions peculiar to them. E.g; Knowing the expulsion of Adam and Eve from heaven or how Buddha chose the wandering and ascetic life.
- Interreligious literacy; is to know the different and similar aspects of religions. E.g; Like the monotheistic belief in Judaism and Islam (Prothero, 2008).

Considering the religion of Islam, the Religious Culture and Ethics course program and the cultural structure of our country, Prothero (2008)'s classification and approach is considered to be more suitable for these structures, and this approach is taken as the basis in this study.

In the literature, it is emphasized that religious literacy can contribute to the resolution of disagreements and conflicts between individuals and societies arising from religious ignorance. Some developments in the world have led to the formation of this thought. Intense migration, especially from Asia to America, has increased cultural and religious diversity. Accordingly, knowing the worship, practices and concepts of religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Taoism gains importance in the establishment of respect, tolerance, unity and solidarity in the society. In multicultural, multi-religious societies such as England and America, religious literacy has been the subject of research and education in order to provide individuals with general information about other religions so that religious differences do not turn into conflicts. The subject maintains its importance in non-religious societies as well (Prothero, 2008).

One of the elements that makes the issue of religious literacy important in Turkey is religious ignorance. A belief that stems from religious ignorance, based on false information and built on superstitions, leads people to religious bigotry with many mistakes. Bigotry and bigotry result in the spread of false religious beliefs and damage to the core of religion. An individual trained in religious literacy in terms of belief, worship, parable, sect, inter-religious and moral literacy may not incline to superstitions because he will know the basic beliefs and rules of his religion. In addition, it is thought that the sectarian literacy skills that should be possessed within the framework of religious literacy can reduce the divisions arising from sectarian differences in our country. Individuals; To be able to comprehend social and political events and the religious realities behind them, to facilitate dialogue with individuals belonging to different religions and cultures, to clarify the separation of religion and politics, which has not been fully established in the minds of people since the Republic, In order to improve life, it is necessary to raise awareness about religious literacy. Although religious literacy does not take place conceptually, in the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge curriculum, which is guaranteed by the 24th article of the constitution and stated to be compulsory in our country, gains aimed at improving religious literacy have been found. Individuals who graduate by taking this education at the basic and secondary education levels are expected to have a level in religious literacy. The main problem of the research is the level of religious literacy of a university student who has been educated by taking these courses, and whether the curriculum programs are sufficient in raising religiously literate individuals.

In multicultural societies, tolerance, respect, etc., which are necessary for the establishment of an atmosphere of democracy and social peace and harmony. There is a need for a cognitive basis in the establishment of values. When the religious preferences and actions of individuals are understood correctly, it will be easier to ensure peace in the society. In general, religious terms, worship, history and social background of religion, principles of belief, etc. With religious literacy, which means knowing It may be possible for individuals to develop their religious literacy skills. According to the results obtained from the research carried out based on this need, the factors that are effective in the acquisition of religious literacy knowledge and skills within the framework of the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course programs were determined and the causes and consequences were discussed. The main purpose of this research is to determine the effect of Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course on religious literacy skills.

The main problem of the research; "What is the contribution of the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course to gaining religious literacy?"

1. Does religious literacy differ according to the gender variable?

2. Does religious literacy differ according to the age variable?
3. Does religious literacy differ according to the parent education variable?
4. Does religious literacy differ. According to the source variable in acquiring religious information?

## **Method**

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

In research, the model is the process that covers the activities from determining the subject of the research to presenting the results. This study is a descriptive (descriptive/situational) research. This type of research, as in our study, aims to determine the current state of the object or phenomenon in the focus of the research. Before collecting data, a proper definition of the phenomenon about which data has been collected should be made, and then the obtained data should be evaluated with in-depth analyzes and syntheses should be reached based on the data. With the descriptive method, the existence, absence, and significance of the relationship between the variables can be compared with logical inferences (Altunışık, 2010). The relevant documents were reached by scanning the literature on the subject of our research and which will form the basis of our research. Quantitative research method was used in the study. In this context, an achievement test was applied to primary school students.

### ***Sample***

In order for research to yield healthy results, it must be done in the right society, on the right units. The whole of the elements that carry the variables examined in the research and includes all the units assumed to be able to carry it is called the universe (Özdamar, 2003). The sample is; is to take a section of the research universe as a study area and generalize the results to the universe (Aziz, 2014). According to these definitions; While the general population of our research consists of primary school students, the study population consists of 105 students studying in the fourth grade of a primary school in a metropolitan city in the 2021-2022 academic year.

### ***Preparation of Data Collection Tool***

The tests used to measure the success of individuals in any training or practice are called achievement tests (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The achievement test technique, which has a very wide usage area, was used in this study to measure the level of religious literacy based on the achievements in the basic education Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge curriculum.

The increase in the level of religious literacy of the students participating in our research is also proportional to their ability to have skills in these cognitive steps. While using the achievement test, questions that require knowledge and skills from the lowest level to the highest level of these steps were included. The achievement test developed by Birecik (2015) was used in our research. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of this achievement test was found to be 0.88. Accordingly, it can be said that the religious literacy achievement test is highly reliable.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

After the religious literacy achievement test, whose validity and reliability was tested, was prepared, the application was made by us to the students selected as the sample group. The data in the evaluated forms were analyzed with the SPSS 26 package program. First of all, frequency analyzes were made for the variables and interpreted. In order for the analyzes and statistical processes to be healthy, reliable and useful, it is necessary to choose the appropriate analysis technique. There are certain criteria for parametric and nonparametric tests used to evaluate the relationships between variables. E.g; According to the center-limit theorem, the minimum sample size should be 30 in order to use parametric tests. When the sample size exceeds 30, it is assumed that the sample population approaches the normal distribution. Another criterion is the use of the random sampling method. If the random sampling method is not used, doubts may arise about the validity and reliability of the analysis results of parametric tests (Altunışık, 2010). Since the structure of our research is suitable for parametric tests according to the above criteria, t-test and ANOVA were used in the study, as the sample population showed a normal distribution. The significance level was taken as 0.05 in testing the hypotheses.

### **Results**

#### **Characteristics of the Students Participating in the Sampling**

The demographic characteristics of the students participating in the research were examined in terms of gender and age. In addition, in order to determine the socio-economic status of students and their families; Questions about the education level of the parents were asked. All of our students are fourth-year students, as there is a Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course only in the fourth grade in primary school. Frequency analyzes and interpretations of these variables are as follows.

**Table 1.** Gender Distribution of Participants

Gender	N	%
Girl	54	51,4
Male	51	48,6
Total	105	100

Of the 105 students participating in our study, 54 (51.4%) were female and 51 (48.6%) were male.

**Table 2.** Age Distribution of Participants

Age	N	%
9 yearsold	28	26,7
10 yearsold	29	27,6
11 yearsold	48	45,7
Total	105	100

There are 28 students (26.7%) at the age of 9, 29 students (27.6%) at the age of 10, and 48 students (45.7%) at the age of 11 out of 105 students who participated in our study.

The education level and monthly income of the parents of the students participating in our study are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Parent Education Level Distribution of Participants

Level of education	Mother		Father	
	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	12	11,4	2	1,9
Primaryschool	52	49,5	63	60,0
Secondaryschool	21	20,0	14	13,3
Highschool	19	18,1	21	20,0
University	1	1	4	3,8
Graduate	0	0	1	1,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 3, when the educational status of the parents of the students participating in our study is examined, the majority of the mothers and fathers are primary school graduates (49.5% and 60%), while the number of illiterate mothers is 12 (11.4%), and the number of fathers is 2 (1%). While the number of mothers graduated from secondary school is 21 (20%), the number of fathers is 14 (13.3%). While there are 19 mothers (18.1%) who are high school graduates, the number of fathers is 21 (20%). While there is a university graduate mother (1%), there are 4 fathers (3.8%). While there is 1 father (1%) of graduate students, there is no mother with a graduate degree.

The students participating in the research were asked a question about the source of information, which is the first in acquiring religious information outside of school lessons, in the section of personal information. Table 4 shows the distribution of information sources, which are in the first place in acquiring religious knowledge.

**Table 4.** The Source of Obtaining Religious Knowledge of the Participants

Religious Information Source	N	%
Quran course	31	29,5
Family	34	32,4
Internet or social media	17	16,2
Mosque	23	21,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 4 is examined, the majority of the students (32.4%) stated that they learned their religious knowledge from the family. There are 31 students (29.5%) who say Quran course, 23 students (21.9%) who say mosque, and 17 students (16.2%) who say Internet or social media, respectively.

### ***Findings Regarding the Achievement Levels of the Students in Religious Literacy and Its Sub-Dimensions***

The religious literacy achievement test applied in our research consists of a total of twenty questions. The total scores of the students in the religious literacy achievement test and frequency analyzes of the sub-dimensions were examined in connection with the questions created based on the curriculum of the Basic Education Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course and related learning areas.

### ***Findings Related to Success in the Belief Literacy Sub-Dimension***

While most of the achievements regarding the belief literacy sub-dimension are included in the units in the field of belief learning in the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge curriculum, other learning fields and units that can be included in the belief literacy were also included in the religious literacy achievement test by scanning them. There were seven questions about belief literacy in the achievement test. Statistics related to these questions are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Statistics on Belief Literacy Sub-Dimension

N	Mean	Std. Def.	Minimum	Maximum
105	25,374	1,423	17	35

When Table 5 is examined, the average of seven questions related to belief literacy in the achievement test is 25,374.

### ***Findings Related to Success in Worship Literacy Sub-Dimension***

The achievements regarding the worship literacy sub-dimension are based on the worship learning area included in the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge programs. Apart from the unit in the learning area, the achievements that can be included in the scope of worship literacy were determined, and it was ensured that the achievement test covers all subjects related to worship literacy. In this literacy type, there were seven questions in the achievement test. The mean (mean), median (median) values of the answers given to these questions, the peak value (mode), the minimum and maximum scores obtained from the test and the range of these scores are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Statistics on Worship Literacy Sub-Dimension

N	Mean	Std. Def.	Minimum	Maximum
105	28,023	1,012	21	35

When Table 6 is examined, the average of the seven questions related to belief literacy in the achievement test is 28,023.

### ***Findings Related to Success in Moral Literacy Sub-Dimension***

Moral literacy has been discussed with in the scope of religious literacy in our research. In the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge curriculum, six questions were prepared based on the field of moral learning and the subjects that can be evaluated with in the scope of this sub-dimension. Analysis of these questions is as follows.

**Table 7.** Statistics on Moral Literacy Sub-Dimension

N	Mean	Std. Def.	Minimum	Maximum
105	4,84	0,96	18	30

When Table 7 is examined, the average of seven questions related to belief literacy in the achievement test is 4.84, and the reareal sostudents who got eighteen points from this section and answered all questions correctly and got 30 points.

**Examination of Religious Literacy Levels According to Some Independent Variables**

The scores obtained from the religious literacy achievement test, which was prepared based on the basic education curriculum according to the 5 independent variables (gender, age, class attended, parents' educational status, source of religious knowledge other than school lessons) determined under this title, were analyzed by statistical analysis of the data obtained, hypotheses were tested. The number of students participating in the sample (N), the percentage (%), the mean scores in the groups, standard deviation and standard error values, and the level of significance (Sig.) are shown in the tables. The findings were evaluated and interpreted within the theoretical framework and related literature.

**Findings Related to the Differences in Religious Literacy Levels of Students by Gender**

The mean and standard deviation values of the scores obtained from the religious literacy achievement test according to the gender variable of the participants and the statistical values of whether there is a significant difference between this variable and the scores obtained from the religious literacy achievement test are as follows.

**Table 8.** Average and Standard Deviation of Students' Religious Literacy Achievement Test Scores by Gender Variable

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Def.
Girl	54	75,3	7,85
Male	51	70,1	7,63

According to Table 8, the average of 54 female students was 75.3 out of 100 points, and 70.1 for male students. Although the religious literacy levels of both gender groups are close to each other, it is seen that female students perform higher than males. There is a difference between the averages of the scores obtained. T test was performed to determine whether this difference was statistically significant. The results of the relevant test are as follows.

**Table 9.** The Relationship Between the Gender of the Students and the Scores They Got in the Religious Literacy Achievement Test

	F	t	df	p
Equality of variances		3,210	103	0,000
	41,276			
The variances are not equal		2,518	255,120	0,000

According to the T-test results, the relationship between gender and religious literacy achievement test averages is  $p=0.00$ , and there is a significant difference between gender and religious literacy achievement test scores. Looking at the average scores, it can be said that the difference arises from the fact that the religious literacy level of girls is higher than that of boys.

**Findings Regarding the Differences in the Religious Literacy Levels of the Students by Age**

All of the students in the sample group are primary school students. Therefore, the smallest value in the age range is 9 and the largest value is 11. The mean and standard deviation values of the total scores obtained by the students according to the age variable are as in Table 10. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to see the relationship between the age variable and the total score obtained from the religious literacy achievement test.



**Table 10.** Average and Standard Deviation of Students' Religious Literacy Achievement Test Scores by Age Variable

Age	N	Mean	Std. Def.
9 yearsold	28	68,2	7,232
10 yearsold	29	73,6	7,301
11 yearsold	48	75,7	7,698

According to Table 10, the group with the highest average over 20 points is 11-year-old students. The average of the students in the 10-year-old group was 73.6 and the average of the students in the 9-year-old group was 68.2. ANOVA test was applied to determine whether the difference between these averages, which vary according to age groups, is statistically significant.

**Table 11.** The Relationship Between Age and Religious Literacy Achievement Test Scores

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of squares	F	p
Between groups	2365,42	2	254,231	1,254	0,013
In-group	62541,39	103	130,245		
Total	64906,81	105			

According to the ANOVA test, in which we investigated the relationship between age and the total scores obtained from the religious literacy achievement test, it is seen that there is a significant difference between these two variables ( $p=0.012$ ).

*Findings Concerning the Differences in Religious Literacy Levels of Students According to Their Parents' Educational Status*

Educational status of students' parents is one of the factors that will help to measure the effect of socio-cultural level on religious literacy. Educational status of the mother and father was examined separately for both parents. Below are the results of the one-way analysis of variance regarding whether there is a significant difference between the educational status of the mothers of the students and the mean and standard deviations of the total scores of the students in the religious literacy achievement test, and between the educational status of the mother and the scores of the students in the religious literacy achievement test.

**Table 12.** Religious Literacy Achievement Test Mean and Standard Deviations According to the Variable of Educational Status of the Mothers of the Students

	N	Mean	Std. Def.
illiterate	12	72.7	14.21
Primaryschool	52	69.1	13.13
Secondaryschool	21	70.3	15.32
Highschool	19	72.9	14.05
University	1	77.1	16.11
Graduate	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>72.42</b>	<b>14.55</b>

According to the educational status variable of the mothers of the students participating in the research, the highest average is the average score of a student whose mother is a

university graduate, according to the total score averages obtained from the religious literacy achievement test. It can be said that the religious literacy level of this group, whose average is 77.1, is at a high level. However, the fact that there is only one student in this group weakens the power of representation in the sample. After this group, the second group of students whose religious literacy level is high are those whose mothers are primary school graduates. However, the scores of the students who stated that their mothers were secondary school graduates are the same with this group, except for fractions. These are followed by students who state that their mothers are high school graduates, followed by students who choose to be illiterate. The mean scores of the students differ according to the educational status of their mothers. However, one-way analysis of variance was performed to determine whether this difference was statistically significant.

**Table 13.** The Relationship Between the Educational Status of the Mothers of the Students and the Religious Literacy Achievement Test Scores

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	mean of squares	F	p
Between groups	4112,12	2	312,211	1,254	0,013
In-group	42501,19	103	130,245		
Total	64906,81	105			

According to the ANOVA test, in which we investigated the relationship between the education level of student mothers and the total scores obtained from the religious literacy achievement test, it is seen that there is a significant difference between these two variables. ( $p=0.013$ ).

Below are the results of the one-way analysis of variance regarding whether there is a significant difference between the educational status of the fathers of the students and the mean and standard deviations of the total scores of the students in the religious literacy achievement test, and the difference between the educational status of the fathers and the students' scores in the religious literacy achievement test.

**Table 14.** Religious Literacy Achievement Test Mean and Standard Deviations According to the Variable of Educational Status of the Fathers of the Students

	N	Mean	Std. Def.
illiterate	2	68,3	15,02
Primaryschool	63	71,4	13,29
Secondaryschool	14	70,6	11,32
Highschool	21	72,3	13,54
University	4	78,5	15,50
Graduate	1	75,8	14,23
Total	105	69,30	13,21

According to the educational status variable of the fathers of the students participating in the research, the highest average is the average score of four students whose fathers are university graduates, according to the total score averages obtained from the religious literacy achievement test. It can be said that the religious literacy level of this group, whose average is 78.5, is at a high level. After this group, the second group of students with a high

level of religious literacy is those whose fathers are graduate students. The scores of the students who stated that their fathers graduated from primary, secondary and high school are close to each other. The lowest average belongs to two people whose fathers are illiterate. According to the educational status variable of the fathers of the students, their total score averages differ. However, one-way analysis of variance was performed to determine whether this difference was statistically significant.

**Table 15.** The Relationship Between the Educational Status of the Fathers of the Students and the Religious Literacy Achievement Test Scores

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	mean of squares	F	p
Between groups	3252,12	2	398,204	2,254	0,006
In-group	542501,19	103	113,521		
Total	545753,31	105			

According to the ANOVA test, in which we investigated the relationship between the father's education level and the total scores obtained from the religious literacy achievement test, it is seen that there is a significant difference between these two variables ( $p=0.006$ ).

*Findings Related to the Differences in the Religious Literacy Levels of the Students with the Primary Source of Religious Knowledge*

Apart from the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge classes at school, the students were asked to choose the element that was in the first place in obtaining religious knowledge. The relationship between the sources from which students obtained religious knowledge outside of school and their religious literacy levels was determined by one-way analysis of variance. The distribution of the scores they got from the religious literacy achievement test, according to the sources they obtained religious knowledge, is shown in Table 16.

**Table 16.** The Average and Standard Deviations of the Religious Literacy Achievement Test Scores According to the Source Variable from which Students Have Primarily Acquired Their Religious Knowledge

Religious Information Source	N	%
Qurancourse	31	29,5
Family	34	32,4
Internet orsocialmedia	17	16,2
Mosque	23	21,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 16, 34 students (32.4%) who stated that they learned in the family and 31 students (29.5%) who stated that they learned in the Quran course were in the first and second places in the analysis conducted to determine where the students participating in our study learned their religious knowledge from. There are 23 students (21.9%) who stated that they learned from the mosque and 17 students (16.2%) who stated that they learned from the internet or social media.

Whether the difference between the mean scores was statistically significant was determined by the ANOVA test.

**Table 17.** The Relationship between the Primary Sources of Religious Knowledge and the Scores They Get from the Religious Literacy Achievement Test

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	mean of squares	F	p
Between groups	7853,05	2	1067,112	6,254	0,000
In-group	89760,30	103	168,344		
Total	97613,35	105			

According to Table 17, there is a significant difference between the sources from which students obtain religious knowledge and the scores they get from the religious literacy achievement test, since  $p=0.00$ .

## Discussion and Comment

### ***Discussion and Comment on the Differences in Religious Literacy Levels of Students by Gender***

It is seen that the students participating in the research have higher averages than female students in religious literacy classes, as in the total score. Looking at the average scores, it can be said that the difference arises from the fact that the religious literacy level of girls is higher than that of boys. Although being religiously literate does not have to result in being religious, the issue that religiosity will evolve into conscious religiosity on the basis of religious knowledge has been mentioned in the theoretical framework of our study. According to the results compiled by Cirhinlioğlu and Ok (2011) from the religiosity-gender research in Turkey, women are more religious than men. At the same time, women experience more religious stress than men and tend to have more religious openness/flexible beliefs. Since the religious literacy achievement test, which was prepared based on the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge curriculum and applied within the scope of our research, helps to predict the success of the students in the religion course, this result in our study can also be compared with the studies revealing the relationship between gender and academic achievement. In studies conducted at various education levels and in various learning areas, it has been observed that the academic success of female students is higher than that of male students (Demirtaş & Özer, 2007; Özkal & Çetingöz, 2006; Yücel & Koç, 2011). In this case, it can be said that the level of religious literacy is also related to academic success.

### ***Discussion and Comment on the Differences in Religious Literacy Levels of Students by Age***

It is not possible to directly explain the relationship between age and religious literacy, such as the higher the age, the higher the level of religious literacy. Because, like the other dimensions of the individual's development, religious development has certain stages, and therefore, the individual's interest, attitude, and desire to acquire and use religious knowledge may vary according to the characteristics of this stage.

### ***Discussion and Comment on the Differences in the Religious Literacy Levels of the Students according to the Educational Status of their Parents***

It is seen that there is a significant difference between the educational status of the mothers of the students and the scores they get from the religious literacy achievement test.

( $p=0.00<0.05$ ). It is seen that the differentiation is between the students whose mothers are university graduates and the children of primary school graduate mothers. It is seen that the children of mothers with a higher education level show lower success in the religious literacy achievement test. There could be many reasons behind this. It may be due to the religious structure of the family, as well as social factors such as the mother's employment status, may also be effective on this situation. On the one hand, there are opinions that the inability of the mother, who is tired and nervous from work, to spare enough time for her child has negative effects on the child, on the other hand, it is claimed that the children of working mothers are more self-confident. (Aktaş, 1994). However, in line with our research, since we do not have the data to comment that university graduate mothers work in a job and primary school graduates do not, it cannot be inferred that university graduate mothers are not sufficiently interested in their children's education and the result indicates this. Therefore, in order to reach a healthier result, the effect of the socio-cultural status of the family on the success of the students' religious literacy can be interpreted by considering the educational status of the fathers of the students.

Since  $p=0.006$ , there is a significant difference between the educational level of the fathers of the students and the scores they got from the religious literacy achievement test. According to the Post Hoc test, this difference is between students whose fathers are primary school graduates and those whose fathers are high school graduates. This situation has a complex structure depending on many factors such as the father's level of religiosity, his interest and attitude towards religion, and even whether the child is interested in religious education. Therefore, it is difficult to give a specific reason for this issue. However, it is certain that individuals' religious attitudes, perspectives on religion, and levels of religiosity are affected by family communication, parental attitudes, and the level of religiosity in the family (Apaydın, 2001). In our study, it was seen that the educational status of the parents also had an effect on the religious literacy of individuals.

The family effect on individuals' perception of religion is shaped by taking a model from an early age and preparing a positive emotional environment for the family. In addition, it is said that individuals who grow up in families that perceive religiosity as a form of religiosity and do not internalize the wisdom and knowledge behind religious behavior will be insufficient in terms of religious knowledge and behavior (Sağlam, 2006). According to Atalay's (2006) study on primary and high school students to measure the dimensions of religion's belief, knowledge, emotion and worship and total religiosity in terms of the level of religiosity of the family, there was no significant difference between the averages of the knowledge dimension according to the level of religiosity of the family. However, it was determined that as the level of religiosity of the families increased, the mean knowledge dimension also increased. According to Atalay, the main factor behind the ineffectiveness of family religiosity in the knowledge dimension compared to other dimensions is the determinant of religion lessons at school. When the result obtained regarding the increase in the knowledge dimension average with the level of religiosity is compared with the result in our research, it can be said that it has parallel meanings. The basis of conscious religiosity should be religious knowledge. Although this religious knowledge does not always result in religiosity, it can be said that children will also be affected by the religious knowledge of the family when it is considered in terms of the effect of the religiosity of the family on the level of religiosity of the individual.

***Discussion and Interpretation on the Difference of Religious Literacy Levels of Students with the Primary Source of Religious Knowledge***

It is usual for people who do not have enough information about religion and its basic sources to prefer the internet in order to facilitate access to information. However, while making use of the internet source in obtaining religious information, it should be investigated which basic sources will be the basis for the information in question. In addition, attention should be paid to whether people sharing information on websites are experts on the subject, and even if the website is reliable on these issues, it should not be perceived as a source of information. Otherwise, negative results may arise with misinformation. The fact that the group with the lowest level of religious literacy according to the source of information is among those who choose this option indicates that these issues are not taken into account. On the other hand, it is seen that the religious literacy level of the students who stated that they obtained their religious knowledge from the Qur'an course is in the second place among the mentioned groups. Qur'an courses are one of the important institutions that have been serving since 1925 as one of the active areas of non-formal religious education. Teaching how to read the Qur'an duly from the face, teaching the meanings of the suras and prayers necessary for worship by memorizing them, ensuring that the message of the Qur'an is understood, and the principles of belief, worship and morality of the religion of Islam and the Prophet. Being a reading program, training programs to educate hafiz (who knows Qur'an by heart) and summer courses in the Qur'an courses operating for purposes such as giving information about the life and morals of the Prophet, organizing social and cultural events with religious content, and making people realize the values of the Islamic religion and that it is one of the elements that give meaning to human life (Koç, 2014).

It is seen that there is a significant difference between the scores of the students who stated that they acquired their religious knowledge outside of school lessons from their families and those who said they obtained it from the internet. According to the total scores, it can be said that the religious literacy levels of these students are high. Since the awakening and development of religious belief starts as early as 3-5 years of age, the family, which is the first education home, is very important in the religious perception and attitude of the individual. Among the external factors that are effective in the development of an individual's religious ability and ability, the family takes the first place. In this context, with the right religious education given in the family, it can be ensured that the child grows up as an individual who is conscious or believes in religion (Ay, 2007). The high level of religious literacy of the students participating in our study who acquired their religious knowledge outside of school lessons from their families indicates that the parents of the students in question are conscious about this issue.

The fact that the phenomenon of religion is experienced in all areas of life makes religious education more open to the impact of non-formal education and informal learning. One of these learning areas, apart from mosques and other institutionalized non-formal education institutions, is the preaching and guidance programs that various religious groups hold at homes or in various meeting places. Religious groups and communities, like other groups, are structures whose members have a sense of belonging. Belonging means member to an ever-expanding circle, starting from the religious authority in the center. While the source of religious knowledge is authority, it's the the founders and leaders of the group who produce the knowledge. Group members accept this information as the most accurate without

objection. In this respect, most of the groups are closed to the outside and slowly changing (Bilgin, 2003).

### **Results**

1. The main purpose of this research is to determine the effect of Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course on religious literacy skills. Each question of the achievement test applied within the scope of our research is five points, and the average of the students is 71%. In this case, it was concluded that the students were not sufficiently religiously literate.
2. It has been concluded that female students are at a higher level than male students in terms of the gender of the students.
3. It has been concluded that as the ages of the students increase, their religious literacy levels also increase.
4. It was concluded that as the education level of the parents of the students increased, their religious literacy levels also increased.

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All of the authors have contributed equally to this article.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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