



Examining the Cultural Elements in the 5th and 6th Grade Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Textbooks

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Abstract

Education is the most important element in transferring culture to children and young people and gaining cultural identity. For this reason, curricula and textbooks has gained importance. For accurate and powerful transfer of culture; it is possible with the curriculum that deals with cultural elements in the best way and with the textbooks prepared for this purpose. The Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course, which is obligatory in formal education institutions in Turkey as well, plays an important role in reach the next generation and adopting the culture to the next generation. In this study, it is aimed to determine the language, religion, tradition-custom and art culture elements in the 5th and 6th grade religious culture and moral knowledge textbooks. This descriptive research aims to evaluate the cultural elements in the primary education religious culture and moral knowledge textbooks (5th and 6th grade). Research data were collected through document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. As a result of the research, it is seen that while idioms are included in the religious culture and moral knowledge books, proverbs are not included enough, traditions and customs such as feasting, hospitality, birth, death, naming, and cultural elements related to architecture, music, literature and painting are also included.

Key words: culture, cultural elements, cultural transfer, religious culture, textbook.

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Introduction

Culture has taken on many different meanings in the historical process. As a matter of fact, one of the most important reasons why this concept cannot be defined clearly is the variety of meanings it covers in the historical process. Cemil Meriç defines culture as a “ Every activity that tells a hearing, thought and way of acting formed by people, which is learnt by majority of people “ and Nurettin Topçu, on the other hand, express culture as the learning of all kinds of activities that describe stereotypical perceptions, thinking and behavior styles by most people. While defining a nation's approach to events and situations as the values and judgments, it has created as a result of its historical accumulation, it expresses that culture is kept alive by science, philosophy, religion and art. (Uzunpolat & Şimşek, 2022)

Culture is the combination of feelings, thoughts, lifestyles and beliefs that a nation has formed for many years. Culture is a system of symbols and rituals that distinguishes humans from animals, are unique to humans, and are shared by humans and transferred to future generations (Arslanoğlu, 2013). A nation's culture lives in harmony with its material and spiritual elements (Ozankaya,1992). While a nation performs ceremonies for important periods of life such as birth, death, adolescence and marriage, it also performs rituals for some events in social life such as holidays, shopping and social relations. With all these ceremonies and rituals, our individual and social life gains a meaning. If nothing is done, they remain empty and meaningless. It can be achieved through culture to raise and develop language, music, architecture, mountain, stone, life, most importantly human, and to convey them to the most advanced, most beautiful and finest point they can reach (Arslanoğlu, 2013). National Culture includes all kinds of material and intellectual products such as language, thought, tradition, institutions, laws, tools, techniques, works of art, architecture and music in the social and social life of a nation.

“Although cultural elements are found in every culture, they also emerge in a unique way in every society with the influence of socio-cultural variables such as religion, language, art, history and tradition. Therefore, it is formed and determined in every culture in accordance with the structure of that culture. National cultural and elements include language, religion, tradition and tradition, art, worldview and history. Language comes first among the cultural elements. Because the emergence of other elements is possible with language. The vocal world of a nation is understood through its language. Language is a cultural treasure that incorporates all cultural values. Whatever language a nation uses, it reveals the mindset of the nation that uses it, how it thinks, how its mind works and the logic of that nation. Religion has a very important place among cultural elements. This cultural element has been at the forefront for a long time, and other cultural elements have remained in the shadow of religion. With the influence of

nationalism, the function of religion decreased when nations separated from empires. However, the effect of religion on the culture of a nation and its role in the formation and change of other elements of culture still continue. We still see this role clearly in our religious holidays and ceremonies.”(Göçer, 2012)

“Traditions are the unwritten or all unwritten laws of a nation. Many of the written laws are also regulated according to customs and traditions. It is not possible to regulate all the states and actions of people with written laws. Because laws usually determine rights and penalties. However, people have a social life and social relations in society: Customs and traditions, not laws, determine which method is required in social behaviors such as greeting, apologizing, showing respect, attending invitations, discussing, speaking and writing. The feelings and tastes, what distinguish a nation from other nations, unique to that nation, are embodied in art. Art is the way that nation seeks, reveals and finds beauty. Human beings want to linger, caress both their own soul and the souls of others, catch the beautiful and reveal new beauties. As a result of this effort, works of art emerge. The art of each nation has a different characteristic. Sound, word, place, color, taste and understanding are different. In this context, art is the expression of the common tastes of a nation. This common pleasure also emerges in the form of literature, painting, architecture, sculpture, etc. The philosophy of life of a nation, which is different from other nations, expresses its worldview. Due to the fact that the members of a nation have a common culture, they show different common characteristics in terms of mentality, attitude and behavior. These common attitudes and behaviors of the members of the society in the face of social and spiritual events and situations constitute the world view of that nation. For this reason, the values and value judgments of each nation are different. Heroism: Military service, love, morality, honor, death, fun, etc. Every nation exhibits different behaviors in the face of such concepts. The march and appearance of a nation through the ages constitute the history of that nation. History is the past, but this past connects the old and new members of that nation and carries them to the future. It ensures the unity of destiny among the members of the nation. People belonging to the same nation become aware of their kinship thanks to their history. History has a very important place in the life of that nation as it shows where a nation came from and where it is going.” (Url-1)

Since culture has a dimension that concerns both the social and the whole world, It is very important to include these two dimensions of culture in books and extracurricular activities (Bayraktar, 2015). Cultural transfer can be expressed as explaining and especially adopting the cultural elements of a nation to future generations. (Kapanadze, 2019). Education is the most important element in transferring culture to children and young people and gaining cultural identity. Although the cultural information that children and young people receive in their family and close environment constitutes a certain basis, the cultural information given in

schools is carried out consciously and systematically by teachers and administrators. This acculturation process has taken its place in today's modern society (Kula,2017).

While explaining the cultural transfer, it is necessary to mention about socialization and acculturation. Enculturation; It is the process of transferring a certain culture to the individuals who make up the nations, adopting it, reaching the ideal person desired by the society, ensuring cultural unity and solidarity by creating social awareness, and realizing social peace and tranquility in this way." It is the job of telling, teaching, showing and adopting the customs and traditions. (Kula, 2017). Educational activities play an important role in the acculturation and socialization process of children and young people.

Textbooks are written materials prepared in line with the objectives specified in the curriculum of the course so that students can learn the information on certain subjects in a certain order and in accordance with its purpose. At the same time, the textbook is not just for the student at school; It refers to an educational environment that needs to be structured properly and prepared in order to help students continue learning outside of school. The course book is prepared in accordance with the criteria determined by a course. Textbooks are course tools that are prepared in line with the curriculum for students at certain levels, used for learning purposes, facilitating learning, and offering systematic progress and development. (Kapanadze,2018)

With globalization, the responsibility to protect culture gains more importance than ever before. Education plays a very important role in transferring culture to future generations. Regardless of the aspect of culture, education has always been a bridge to culture. The main task of education and training in schools is to transfer and maintain the culture to future generations. Achieving this goal is facilitated by including the most vital, integrating, nurturing and supportive elements of culture in the lessons. For this reason, curricula and textbooks gain importance. Accurate and powerful transfer of culture; It is possible with curricula that best deal with cultural elements and textbooks prepared for this purpose. (Kolaç, 2017)

Textbooks are both an important supplementary material used in the process of carrying out educational activities and have an effective role in transferring the cultures of societies. At the same time, the inclusion of cultural texts and activities in textbooks is also important in terms of keeping the culture alive. An important aspect of education is the development of the individual with the skills and equipment to meet the cultural requirements of the society in which he lives. In providing this equipment, one of the most important tools of the teacher is the textbooks. Since the textbook accompanies the student not only at school but also outside of school, it needs to be structured and prepared correctly. (Kapanadze, 2018)

Since religion is one of the basic elements of culture, it is one of the most basic elements of many societies. Even if religion does not belong to only one nation, it has taken its place as one of the most important resources in the formation, development and transformation process of culture in every society. Because culture is fed by the beliefs of the people who make up that society and is shaped by being influenced by beliefs. This forming is shaped not only by the effect of religion on culture, but also by the effect of culture on religion. Morality is also among the cultural elements. It is seen that religion affects the determination of moral rules and sometimes even directly determines these rules. Your religion; the effect of culture on religion can also be discussed in many other ways, such as being perceived, taking the form of belief and understanding, interpretation, the way it is experienced, its appearance in behavior and its acceptance and becoming more widespread in social life (Uzunpolat & Şimşek 2022)

Ethics, law, politics, economics, etc., which are the elements of culture, religion is at the forefront of the factors that affect the thoughts and behaviors in the fields. Because religions not only gave information about the existence of Allah, but also gave information about the moral, legal and political rules that regulate social life. Therefore, religion is decisive in determining the basis of human-God, human-nature and human-human relations. Religious, political, moral, economic, philosophical and aesthetic values, which are the elements of social structure, show themselves in social life as a product of the activities of giving meaning to human life and arranging life. Again, the most important element that determines the formation of our value judgments and our attitude towards facts is religion. Religion enables the individuals forming the society to unite around common values by adopting the same ideas and behaviors. Social unity and solidarity are preserved in proportion to the strength of religious ties. Without the unity of belief, culturally, the efforts to bring people together are nothing more than a futile effort. For this reason, the harmony arising from the unity of belief is the basic bond that will hold the society together (Tanrıverdi, 2018).

It is expected from education that the generation raised in line with the expectations of the society and the aims of education is that the educated generation to internalize its own culture and contribute to the development of its own culture. In order for an individual to become a part of his own society, he must internalize the culture of the society. Here, the function of education to adapt the individual to his own society and to build the culture comes to the fore. The religious culture and moral knowledge course, which is compulsory in formal education institutions in Turkey as well, plays an important role in reaching and adopting the culture to the new generation (Uzunpolat & Şimşek, 2022).

While the purpose of the religious culture and moral knowledge course is based (social and cultural), it is seen that culture is included in the objectives and content of the course. In the renewed curriculum, it is stated that what is expected from the individual is to learn his culture and to contribute to his culture. It is stated in the program that values have a cultural dimension and that the future of society cannot be shaped without values. In the program, the link between tradition, value and culture is mentioned and it is stated that the future of society depends on them. The number of cultural units and achievements were determined as four units and eleven objectives in the fifth grade, and two units and three acquisitions in the sixth grade (Uzunpolat & Şimşek, 2022).

In this study, it has been aimed to determine the language, religion, tradition-custom and art culture elements in the 5th and 6th grade religious culture and moral knowledge textbooks.

Methods

Research data were collected through document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. In the research, the themes and categories were determined according to language, religion, tradition-tradition, art and worldview, which are the elements of culture.

Findings

Table 1 *Language theme for 5th graders*

Categories	N	%
Expression	28	87,50
Proverb	2	6,25
Poem	2	6,25

Table 2 *Language theme for 6th graders*

Categories	N	%
Expression	34	82,93
Proverb	7	17,07
Poem	0	0

When the codes in the language theme are examined, it is seen that the most common idioms are included in the religious culture and moral knowledge textbooks at both grade levels

(87.50% and 82.93%). Idioms are followed by proverbs (6.25% and 17.07) and poem (6.25%). However, it was observed that there was no poem at the 6th grade level. When these results are examined, it is seen that proverbs and poem are used less frequently at both grade levels. It has been seen that the idioms "to be an example" and "to take care" are the most used idioms. Idioms are used in the texts to explain the feelings and thoughts of our culture and to better explain the situations and events. Poems, on the other hand, appear as poems chanted by Ramadan drummers to wake people up for sahur. Looking at the grade levels, it was observed that the idioms were used more at the 5th grade level, and the proverbs were used more at the 6th grade level.

Table 3 Religion theme for 5th graders

Categories	N	%
Religious holidays	9	30
Religious rituals	17	56,67
Kandil	4	13,33

Table 4 Religion theme for 6th graders

Categories	N	%
Religious holidays	10	18,87
Religious rituals	8	15,09
Kandil	35	66,04

When the codes in the theme of religion are examined, it is seen that the religious rituals category (56.67%) is the most common at the 5th grade level in the Religious Culture and Ethics textbooks, followed by religious holidays (30%) and kandils (13.33%) the least. At the 6th grade level, kandils (66.04%) are followed by religious holidays (18.87%) and religious rituals (15.09%) the least. According to these results, it is seen that there are a lot of religious elements in our culture and they mostly appear in religious rituals and holidays during the worship. In the month of Ramadan, iftar invitations, mukabele, mawlid reading, and praying by visiting shrines in kandils can be given as examples of religious rituals. At the 6th grade level, it is seen that kandils are given more place.

Table 5 *Traditions theme for 5th graders*

Categories	N	%
Social relations	67	57,76
Customs	49	41,53

Table 6 *Traditions theme for 6th graders*

Categories	N	%
Social relations	11	68,75
Customs	5	31,25

When the theme of traditions and customs is examined, it is seen that social relations (57.76% and 68.75%) are the most common category in religious culture and moral knowledge textbooks at both grade levels. In this category, we can list cultural elements such as iftar tents set up in Ramadan, Ramadan parcels prepared to distribute to those in need, greetings, rules of courtesy, manners of speaking, and cooperation. During the holiday, customs, traditions and customs in social life such as holiday visits to elders, neighbors and relatives, birth, death, sending off soldiers, circumcision are less common (41.53% and 31.25%) compared to social relations.

Table 7 *Art theme for 5th graders*

Categories	N	%
Literature	8	8,51
Architectural	46	48,94
Lettering	1	1,06
Picture	13	13,83
Music	26	27,66

Table 8 Art theme for 6th graders

Categories	N	%
Literature	8	27,59
Architectural	4	13,79
Lettering	2	6,9
Picture	7	24,14
Music	8	27,59

When the theme of art is examined, it is seen that the most (48.94%) architectural (mosque, fountain, kulliye, cupola, hammam, pulpit, preaching lectern, etc.) cultural elements are included at the 5th grade level. Architecture is followed by music (27.66%), painting (13.83%), literature (Aşık Veysel, Karacaoğlan, Yunus Emre etc.) (8.51%) and calligraphy (1.06%). At the 6th grade level, literature and music are the highest with 27.59%, followed by painting (24.14%) and architecture (13.79%) and calligraphy last. In this theme, mosques and complexes within the architectural culture appear as both socialization areas and places of worship. Calligraphy is seen as an ornament in the mosque. Music, prayer, hymn, sufi music and composers took place as cultural elements.

Result and Discussions

When the Turkish cultural elements in the textbooks are examined, it is seen that there are mostly material culture elements. However, culture is a whole, both materially and spiritually. In this sense, moral cultural elements of Turks such as justice, tolerance, helpfulness, hospitality and independence were left incomplete in the program (Daşdemir & Tekin, 2018). It is seen that the spiritual culture elements (hospitality, benevolence) that are missing in the Social Studies textbook are included as a separate theme and achievement in the 5th and 6th grade religious culture and moral knowledge textbooks.

It has been determined that idioms and figurative expressions, which are cultural elements related to language, are in the foreground and there are few reflections and proverbs (Kan, 2010). As Kan stated, it has been observed that while idioms are included in the religious culture and moral knowledge books, as in the Turkish textbooks, proverbs are not included enough.

Greetings and farewells, hospitality, naming, weddings, which are cultural elements related to customs and traditions, are mentioned. Among these elements, greetings and farewells, neighborliness and hospitality are at the forefront, while respect for the state and state elders and women's rights are not given enough attention (Kan, 2010). In the religious culture and moral knowledge books, it is seen that the elements related to traditions and customs such as feasting, hospitality, birth, death, naming are included in the themes such as decency and courtesy in the 5th Grade book and Our Basic Values in the 6th Grade book.

Regarding art, elements related to music, painting, architecture, literature, photography, traditional Turkish theatrical plays, theatre, conservatory and opera are mentioned. While music, literature and theater were at the forefront, painting, conservatory and opera remained insufficient (Kan, 2010). It is seen that cultural elements related to architecture, music, literature and painting are included in the 5th grade religious culture and moral knowledge books. In addition to this, it has been determined that Islamic art of calligraphy is also included.

Recommendations

It is that proverbs are less common than idioms in the texts in the 5th and 6th grade religious culture and ethics textbooks, but proverbs should be given more place in order to better understand the subjects. was found to be less. Cultural elements related to traditions and customs should be associated with the religious element and should be included more in religious culture books. Considering the ages of students at this grade level, it is thought that adopting our culture at an early age will contribute more to the assimilation of our culture by children and young people. It has been seen that the cultural elements are included in the religious culture books from the 5th grade to the 6th grade. Considering the effect of religion on culture, it is thought that cultural elements should be included more in religious culture textbooks.

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