





RESEARCH ARTICLE

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 8TH GRADE HISTORY TEXTBOOKS USED
IN THE TURKIC REPUBLICS: A QUALITATIVE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of 8th-grade history textbooks used in the Turkic Republics, including Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Utilizing a qualitative research design, the study employed document analysis to examine the distribution of content, language and presentation characteristics, visual design elements, and assessment-evaluation practices within the textbooks. A total of twelve textbooks officially approved by the respective ministries of education were analyzed through a criterion-based evaluation rubric developed in line with expert opinions. The findings reveal significant differences among the textbooks regarding their historical scope and pedagogical orientations. Textbooks in Türkiye and TRNC focus exclusively on national history, whereas those in Azerbaijan demonstrate a more balanced structure, integrating national, Turkic, and world history content. Visual and text design features indicate that student-centered approaches are more prominent in Azerbaijan and TRNC textbooks, while textbooks from some countries, such as Uzbekistan, predominantly present dense block texts that may hinder student engagement. Additionally, substantial disparities were found in assessment practices, with Türkiye offering a wider variety of question types targeting higher-order thinking skills. Overall, the study concludes that although the Turkic Republics share a common historical legacy, their history education practices diverge considerably due to varying national policies and pedagogical priorities. It is recommended that history textbooks be improved in terms of content balance, visual design, and assessment strategies to better support the development of historical thinking skills and a comprehensive historical perspective among students.

Keywords: History education, Turkic Republics, history textbooks, document analysis.

Received: 11.12.2025

Accepted: 21.12.2025

Sorumlu Yazar: Barış ÇİFTÇİ

Cited: Aliç, İ., Çiftçi, B., & Dönmez, A. (2025). Comparative analysis of 8th grade History Textbooks used in the Turkic Republics: A qualitative document analysis. *Eğitimde Kuram ve Uygulama*, 21(2), 230–247. doi.org/10.17244/eku.1840545

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

TÜRK CUMHURİYETLERİNDE OKUTULAN ORTAOKUL 8. SINIF TARİH DERS KİTAPLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANALİZİ: NİTEL DOKÜMAN İNCELEMESİ

Öz

Bu çalışmada Türk cumhuriyetlerinden Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Türkmenistan ve Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nde ortaokul sekizinci sınıf düzeyinde okutulan tarih ders kitaplarının karşılaştırmalı analizinin yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda doküman analizi yönteminin uygulandığı çalışmada Azerbaycan'dan 3, Kazakistan'dan 2, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nden, Türkmenistan'dan ve Türkiye'den 1'er, Kırgızistan'dan 2, Özbekistan'dan 2 olmak üzere toplam 12 adet 8. sınıf tarih ders kitapları incelemeye alınmıştır. Doküman analizi kapsamında çalışmada program dağılımı, metin ve görsellerin kullanımı ile ölçme yöntemleri incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre; ders kitaplarının içerikleri incelendiğinde kitaplarda genel olarak akıcı ve sınıf düzeylerine uygun bir dilin kullanıldığı; önemli noktaların kitapların çoğunluğunda koyu renklerle vurgulandığı ve sıkıcılıktan uzaklaşılması adına da metin kutularına yer verildiği belirlenmiştir. Görsel değerlendirme sonucunda ise özellikle Kazakistan ve Özbekistan'daki ders kitapları daha sade bulunmuş, görsel açıdan en zengin ders kitabının da Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'ndeki ders kitabı olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ölçme ve değerlendirme bakımından ise neredeyse tüm kitaplar içerik bakımından yeterli ve zengindir. Bu konuda en kapsamlı kitap Türkiye'deki ders kitabıdır. Öğrencilerin tarihi konulara dikkatlerinin çekilmesi, motivasyonlarının artırılması bakımından ders kitaplarının görsel, anlatım ve ölçme-değerlendirme açısından çağın gerekliliklerine uygun hale getirilmesi ayrıca ülkelerde belirli kriterlere uyum sağlanarak geliştirilmesi tarih konularının öğretimi açısından önemli görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tarih eğitimi, Türk Cumhuriyetleri, Tarih ders kitapları, doküman analizi.

Geliş : 11.12.2025

Kabul: 21.12.2025

Sorumlu Yazar: Barış ÇİFTÇİ

Kaynak Gösterimi: Aliç, İ., Çiftçi, B., & Dönmez, A. (2025). Comparative analysis of 8th grade History Textbooks used in the Turkic Republics: A qualitative document analysis. *Eğitimde Kuram ve Uygulama*, 21(2), 230-247. doi.org/10.17244/eku.1840545

Geniş Özet

Bu çalışma, ortak bir tarihsel mirasa sahip olan Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde okutulan 8. sınıf tarih ders kitaplarını içerik, metin sunumu, görsel kullanım özellikleri ve ölçme-değerlendirme yaklaşımları bakımından karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Türk Cumhuriyetleri; Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Türkmenistan ve Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nden oluşmakta olup, bu ülkelerdeki tarih öğretimi uygulamaları hem ortak kültürel bağların hem de ulusal politikaların etkisiyle farklılaşmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel motivasyonu, tarih öğretiminin yalnızca bilgi aktarımı değil, aynı zamanda kimlik inşası, ulusal bilinç oluşturma ve tarihsel düşünme becerilerini geliştirme açısından belirleyici bir alan olmasıdır. Bu nedenle ders kitaplarının yapısal ve pedagojik açıdan karşılaştırılması, ülkeler arası benzerlikleri ve ayrışmaları ortaya koymak açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemine dayalı olup doküman analizi deseniyle yürütülmüştür. Bu doğrultuda her ülkeden güncel müfredat kapsamında okutulan 12 adet 8. sınıf tarih ders kitabı amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla seçilmiş ve inceleme birimi olarak kullanılmıştır. Veri analizinde betimsel analiz yaklaşımı benimsenmiş; program içeriği, metin dil ve sunum özellikleri, görsel tasarım unsurları ve ölçme-değerlendirme yapıları olmak üzere dört ana tema oluşturulmuştur. Kodlamaların güvenilirliğini artırmak için iki uzman görüşüne başvurulmuş ve Miles & Huberman formülü ile hesaplanan kodlayıcılar arası uyum oranı %89 olarak bulunmuştur.

Çalışmanın bulguları, Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde tarih ders kitaplarının içerik ve sunum bakımından kayda değer farklılıklar barındırdığını göstermektedir. Program içeriği bakımından Türkiye ve KKTC ders kitaplarının yalnızca millî tarihe odaklandığı görülmüştür. Bu durum, tarih dersinin ulusal kimlik, yurttaşlık bilinci ve toplumsal hafıza inşası için araçsallaştırıldığını göstermektedir. Azerbaycan ise millî tarih, Türk tarihi ve dünya tarihini bir arada sunarak daha geniş kapsamlı ve dengeli bir yaklaşım sergilemektedir. Kazakistan, Özbekistan, Türkmenistan ve Kırgızistan'da ise dünya tarihi ile millî tarihin farklı oranlarda harmanlandığı bir yapı vardır. Bu çeşitlilik, ülkelerin tarih politikalarını ve tarihsel önceliklerini doğrudan yansıtmaktadır.

Metin sunumu açısından ülkeler arasında belirgin pedagojik farklılıklar ortaya çıkmıştır. Azerbaycan ve KKTC ders kitaplarında öğrenci merkezli etkinlikler, metin kutuları, sade ve anlaşılır dil kullanımı, Levstik ve Barton'un önerdiği yapılandırmacı tarih eğitimi anlayışına uygun bir görünüm sergilemektedir. Türkiye ders kitabında ön hazırlık soruları, kalın vurgular ve URL yönlendirmeleri öğrenciyi derse aktif olarak dâhil etmektedir. Buna karşılık Özbekistan ve kısmen Kazakistan'da metinlerin ağırlıklı olarak blok hâlinde sunulduğu, bu durumun öğrencinin anlamlandırma sürecini zorlaştırdığı belirlenmiştir. Bu bulgu, Bloom'un bilişsel alan basamaklarına göre, üst düzey düşünme becerilerine geçişi sınırlayan bir unsur olarak yorumlanmıştır.

Görsel materyal kullanımında da ülkeler arasında niteliksel farklar görülmüştür. KKTC ve Türkmenistan ders kitapları, Mayer'in çoklu ortam öğrenme kuramına uygun biçimde metin-görsel entegrasyonunu güçlü bir şekilde sunmaktadır. Renk, boyut, konumlandırma ve tarihsel bağlam açısından bu ülkeler olumlu örnek oluşturmaktadır. Azerbaycan'ın Ümumi Tarix kitabında ilgi çekici portreler ve renkli grafikler öğrencinin dikkatini artırmaktadır. Buna karşın Kazakistan ve Özbekistan'da düşük çözünürlüklü, küçük boyutlu ve pedagojik değeri sınırlı görsellerin kullanıldığı belirlenmiştir. Tüm ülkelerde ortak eksiklik, metin içinde görsellere açık yönlendirme yapılmamasıdır. Bu durum görsellerin öğrenme sürecindeki işlevselliğini azaltmakta ve çoğu zaman dekoratif bir unsur hâline getirmektedir.

Ölçme-değerlendirme açısından en kapsamlı uygulama Türkiye'de görülmüştür. Açık uçlu sorular, çoktan seçmeli maddeler ve proje görevleri birlikte kullanılarak öğrencinin farklı bilişsel alanlarda değerlendirilmesi sağlanmıştır. Azerbaycan ders kitaplarında cevap anahtarının bulunması dikkat çekici olup değerlendirme sürecine şeffaflık kazandırmaktadır. Buna karşın Özbekistan'ın bir kitabında yalnızca hatırlama düzeyinde sorulara yer verilmiş, bazı Kırgızistan kitaplarında ise öğrenciler çalışma kitaplarına yönlendirilmiş ve ders kitabı içinde ölçme-değerlendirme sınırlı tutulmuştur. Bu durum, üst düzey bilişsel becerilerin geliştirilmesi açısından ülkeler arasında anlamlı farklar olduğunu göstermektedir.

Tartışma bölümünde elde edilen bulgular, Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde tarih eğitiminin hem ortak hem de farklı yönlerini ortaya koymaktadır. Ortak tarihsel miras ve kültürel bağlara rağmen tarih öğretiminin ulusal kimlik politikalarıyla güçlü biçimde şekillendiği anlaşılmaktadır. Bazı ülkelerde öğrenci merkezli yaklaşımlar güçlenirken, diğerlerinde metin ağırlıklı ve geleneksel yapıların hâkim olduğu görülmektedir. Görsel tasarım ve ölçme-değerlendirme konularında ülkeler arasında pedagojik kalite farklılıkları

bulunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak tarih eğitiminin niteliği, hem içerik hem yöntem hem de değerlendirme boyutunda ülkelerin eğitim sistemleriyle yakından ilişkilidir.

Araştırmanın sonuçları doğrultusunda bazı öneriler geliştirilmiştir. Program içeriklerinde millî tarih, Türk tarihi ve dünya tarihi arasında denge sağlanmalı, ortak müfredat çalışmaları için Türk Cumhuriyetleri arasında iş birliği yapılmalıdır. Metin dilinde yalınlık, erişilebilirlik ve öğrenci etkileşimini artıran tasarımlar standart hâle getirilmelidir. Görsel materyaller yüksek çözünürlük, doğru konumlandırma ve pedagojik amaç ilkelerine göre hazırlanmalıdır. Ölçme-değerlendirmede üst düzey bilişsel becerileri ölçen etkinliklere ağırlık verilmeli, açık uçlu ve çeşitli soru tipleri kullanılmalı ve cevap anahtarları şeffaf şekilde sunulmalıdır. Ayrıca tarih ders kitabı geliştirme alanında ülkeler arası bir konsorsiyumun kurulması, öğretmen ve öğrenci geri bildirimlerinin düzenli olarak değerlendirme süreçlerine dâhil edilmesi önerilmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde tarih ders kitaplarının benzerlik ve farklılıklarını kapsamlı biçimde ortaya koyarak tarih eğitiminin gelişimine katkı sağlayacak önemli bulgular sunmaktadır. Ders kitaplarının içerik, yöntem ve değerlendirme açısından güçlendirilmesi, hem pedagojik niteliğin yükselmesini hem de öğrencilerin 21. yüzyılın gerektirdiği tarihsel düşünme becerilerini kazanmasını sağlayacaktır.

INTRODUCTION

History education plays a fundamental role in enabling nations to make sense of their past, construct their identities, and shape a collective consciousness for the future. The teaching of history is not merely the transmission of a sequence of events and facts; it is also a pedagogical process that contributes to the development of social memory, national values, and political identity in students. In this regard, history textbooks serve both as the primary instructional materials through which curriculum goals are implemented and as essential sources that support the development of students' historical thinking skills (Wineburg, 2010; Seixas & Morton, 2012).

In the Turkic Republics, historical narratives occupy a significant position due to shared cultural heritage and deep-rooted historical ties. However, the language used in presenting historical events and figures, the selection of visuals, the scope of content, and assessment practices may vary from one country to another. Such variation can influence the nature of historical consciousness as well as students' ability to approach events from multiple perspectives (Levstik & Barton, 2011). Therefore, systematically comparing textbooks in terms of their content and presentation is crucial for understanding the relationship between educational systems and policy, cultural orientations, and pedagogical differences.

Contemporary approaches to history education emphasize not only the transmission of knowledge but also the cultivation of critical thinking, historical empathy, causal reasoning, and the ability to make evaluations from multiple viewpoints (Bloom, 2010; Mayer, 2014). From this perspective, the pedagogical coherence between textual and visual design in history textbooks is a determining factor for supporting students' learning motivation and higher-order cognitive processes. Furthermore, assessment activities should move beyond mere recall and instead focus on analysis, application, evaluation, and creative thinking (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

The 8th-grade level in the Turkic Republics represents a critical stage in which students are transitioning toward abstract thinking; therefore, the foundations of historical understanding are shaped at this level. Accordingly, examining the curriculum scope, textual and visual quality, and assessment structure of textbooks provides insights into both the quality of history education and the development of learning outcomes.

The purpose of this study is to comparatively analyze the 8th-grade history textbooks used in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in terms of curriculum coverage, textual and visual structure, and assessment characteristics. In addition, the study aims to reveal what these differences imply for historical identity formation, learning outcomes, and pedagogical design.

In this context, the study seeks to identify whether there are similarities and differences in history teaching among these countries despite their shared historical roots. A comparative examination of the current situation is expected to contribute to future textbook revisions and standardization efforts.

The main research problem of the study is defined as follows:

"What are the similarities and differences among the 8th-grade history textbooks used in the Turkic Republics?"

Based on this purpose, the study seeks answers to the following sub-problems:

- 1. How is the curriculum content distributed in the 8th-grade history textbooks used in the Turkic Republics?*
- 2. What are the characteristics of the structure and language of the texts used in these history textbooks?*
- 3. To what extent are visual materials used in the textbooks?*

4. How are assessment and evaluation practices structured in the textbooks?

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design in which 8th-grade history textbooks used in the Turkic Republics are examined comparatively in terms of content, visual design, and assessment characteristics. The document analysis method was used. Document analysis is a systematic process of reviewing written materials to make inferences related to the research problem (Büyükoztürk et al., 2018). Accordingly, the textbooks used in the research constitute the central data source for the study.

Documents of the Study

The documents of the research consist of 12 history textbooks determined through purposive sampling and officially approved for use by the Ministries of National Education in the relevant countries. In selecting the textbooks, criteria such as alignment with current curricula, grade level appropriateness, and official adoption were taken into consideration. The distribution by country is as follows: Azerbaijan (3), Kazakhstan (2), Kyrgyzstan (2), Uzbekistan (2), Turkey (1), Turkmenistan (1), and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (1).

Data Collection and Analysis Process

A descriptive analysis approach was employed in analyzing the textbooks. The review process was carried out by following the steps below:

1. Obtaining the textbooks to be examined
2. Developing the thematic and criteria framework based on the research questions:
 - Curriculum content
 - Textual and linguistic features
 - Use of visual materials
 - Assessment and evaluation practices
3. Systematic coding of textbook content
4. Classifying codes according to the themes
5. Presenting findings through tables and descriptive explanations

The evaluation criteria used in this study were developed based on literature on history education and textbook analysis, and their validity was strengthened through expert review.

Researcher Role and Ethics

The researchers adhered to the principle of objectivity throughout the data analysis process, and the data were reported as they were, without external intervention. The documents were examined in their existing form, and interpretive content was not used directly as data.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure internal validity, the opinions of two experts were consulted before and after the analysis process. One expert specializes in history education, while the other is a social studies teacher. Their evaluations focused on the appropriateness of the criteria set and the coding scheme. In addition, the coding process was carried out collaboratively with a second researcher, and inter-coder reliability was calculated using the formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). As a result of the analysis, the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.89, indicating a high level of reliability for the study ($\geq .70$ is considered acceptable).

Role of the Researcher

Documents are considered rich data sources for researchers because they offer diverse information and often include details that are difficult to access by other means. Researchers are expected to reorganize information when necessary and maintain an objective stance during document analysis. In this study, an analysis of the content of 8th-grade history textbooks was

conducted. The researchers first performed preliminary readings and then examined the textbooks based on predetermined categories such as curriculum structure, textual and visual elements, and assessment methods.

FINDINGS

The findings obtained in line with the research questions are presented under four main themes.

Findings Regarding the Distribution of Curriculum Content

The subject scopes of the 8th-grade history textbooks taught in the Turkic Republics were examined and classified according to the themes of Turkish history, world history, and national history (Table 1).

Table 1. Curriculum Content Distribution of History Textbooks

Country - Textbook	Curriculum Content		
	Turkish History	World History	National History
Turkey			
<i>Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Republic of Turkey History of Revolutions and Kemalism Grade 8 Textbook</i>	-	-	+
Azerbaijan			
<i>Ortaq Türk Tarixi 8 Textbook</i>	+	-	-
<i>Azərbaycan Tarixi, Grade 8 Textbook</i>	-	-	+
<i>Ümumi Tarix, Grade 8 Textbook</i>	+	+	-
Kazakhstan			
<i>Дүниежүзі Тарихы 8</i>	-	+	-
<i>Қазақстан Тарихы 8</i>	-	-	+
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus			
<i>Grade 8 Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot History Textbook</i>	-	-	+
Kyrgyzstan			
<i>История Кыргызстана ХIХ</i>	-	-	+
<i>Жаны Тарых-8</i>	-	+	-
Uzbekistan			
<i>Jahon Tarixi, (XVI-XIX. Asrning 60-yillari)</i>	-	+	-
<i>O'zbekiston Tarixi</i>	-	-	+
Turkmenistan			
<i>Dünyä Taryhy (XVI—XIX asyryň 60-njy yllary)</i>	-	+	-

When the findings in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that the subject scopes of the history textbooks taught in the Turkic Republics differ significantly depending on the historical policies of the countries.

- Only national history is emphasized in the textbooks of Turkey and the TRNC.
- Azerbaijan presents all three areas of history in a balanced manner and demonstrates the widest content structure.
- The Turkmenistan textbook focuses solely on world history.
- In other countries, national and world history are addressed together.

This distribution shows that the textbooks highlight national priorities in historical narratives and that the political-cultural orientations of the countries are directly reflected in content selection. When the curriculum distributions of the textbooks are examined, the textbook taught in Turkey is within the scope of national history only; the textbooks used in Azerbaijan are within the scope of Turkish history, national history, and world history; the textbooks used in Kazakhstan are within the scope of world history and national history; the textbook taught in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is entirely within the scope of national history; the textbooks taught in

Kyrgyzstan are within the scope of national history and world history; the textbooks taught in Uzbekistan are within the scope of world history and national history; and finally, the textbook taught in Turkmenistan is only within the scope of world history topics. This distribution shows that the countries predominantly highlight their national histories in history teaching within the textbooks, while Turkish history and world history appear at different rates depending on the country.

When the textbooks are evaluated in terms of content, it is seen that each country highlights various aspects of its own history. As the first examined country, in Türkiye the textbook "*Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Republic of Turkey History of Revolutions and Kemalism Grade 8 Textbook*" uses a text language appropriate for 8th-grade students. The fact that the terms considered important are indicated in bold allows students to pay attention to these expressions. The preparation questions directed to the students before the subject explanation enable brainstorming during the course. It is also considered that the font size used in the texts of the textbook is relatively small. At the end of the book, reference guidance and a glossary are included. The URL guidance in particular provides content appropriate to the requirements of the era.

When the texts of the Azerbaijani textbook "*Ortaq Türk Tarixi 8 Dərs Vəsaiti*" are examined, it is seen that the text is prepared at a level the students can understand and that it is not written in an overly simple language. The style is serious and appropriate for history education. In addition, a glossary is provided at the end of the book, allowing students to look up unfamiliar words. In the textbook "*Azərbaycan Tarixi, Dərslik 8,*" a more fluent and formal language is used compared to the previous book. A language that students can understand more easily is dominant. However, this book does not include a glossary. The book, which is richly supported with visuals, can attract students' attention. The textbook "*Ümumi Tarix, 8 Dərslik*" includes speeches of state leaders and informal information, and is designed to attract the student's attention. In addition, the fact that the texts are presented in text boxes rather than in blocks moves the textbook away from monotony. For Azerbaijan, this textbook has been identified as the most suitable and successful content for the 8th-grade level.

When the textbooks taught in Kazakhstan are examined, in the textbook "*Дүниежүзі Тарихы 8*" it is observed that a quite formal language is used and the information is presented with clear expressions. In addition, side notes indicating what the subject will cover, important terms, and key points are presented to the student in a separate text box. A chronological list of important events and a glossary are included at the end of the book. The textbook is quite successful in terms of subject presentation. In the textbook "*Қазақстан Тарихы 8,*" similarly, important points are given in separate text boxes, and the language of the book is again serious but appropriate for the 8th-grade level. A bibliography, glossary, and chronology of important dates are also included at the end of the book. The list of important dates at the end of the book provides practical support for students.

In the TRNC, the textbook "*Grade 8 Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot History Textbook*" uses a language quite suitable for 8th-grade students; it includes activities before the subject explanation and allows discussions. In the work, the texts are placed within text boxes in a way that is not boring, and related and important points are emphasized. In terms of explanation, it is one of the most successful textbook examples.

In the Kyrgyzstan textbook "*История Кыргызстана XIX,*" while the language is suitable for student level, the content frequently includes social information and speeches of rulers. In this way, the texts are made less monotonous and more story-like. However, the fact that the texts are not divided and are spread across the entire page in large blocks is distracting for students. At the end of the textbook, important dates are given in chronological order, providing a practical list for students. In the textbook "*Жаны Тарых-8,*" a formal and serious language is again used, and the

explanation is appropriate for the 8th-grade level. A list of visuals, important events, and a glossary are provided at the end of the book.

In the Uzbek textbook “Jahon Tarixi (XVI–XIX. Asrning 60-yillari),” a formal, serious but fluent language appropriate for the student level is used. Evaluation questions are included between the texts, and symbols are used to draw attention to important events and terms. The texts are presented in blocks, and important dates and terms are emphasized with bold letters. In the textbook “O‘zbekiston Tarixi,” it is determined that a fluent and student-appropriate language is used, but there is very heavy use of text. This seriously affects student attention and motivation and creates a monotonous structure. Important points are emphasized in bold, and terms are described with additional explanations.

In Turkmenistan, in the textbook “Dünyä Taryhy (XVI—XIX asyryň 60-njy yllary),” a language appropriate for student level is used and important terms and events are highlighted in bold. However, no glossary or chronological information is included at the end of the book. The contents are presented to the student in block texts and are not supported with visual cards.

Findings Related to the Presentation of Texts, Narrative Features, and the Use of Visual Materials

Table 2. Evaluation of History Textbooks in Terms of Visual Content

	Use of Visual Elements Supporting the Text	Consistency Between Visuals and Text Content	Effective Use of Color in Visuals	Effective Use of Visual Size	Placement of Visuals Near the Text	Reference to Visuals Within the Text	Placement of Visuals without Splitting Across Pages
Turkey							
<i>Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Republic of Turkey History of Revolutions and Kemalism Grade 8 Textbook</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Azerbaijan							
<i>Ortaq Türk Tarixi 8 Textbook</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
<i>Azərbaycan Tarixi, Grade 8 Textbook</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
<i>Ümumi Tarix, Grade 8 Textbook</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Kazakhstan							
<i>Дүниежүзі Тарихы 8</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Қазақстан Тарихы 8</i>	+	+	-	+	-	-	+
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus							
<i>Grade 8 Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot History Textbook</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Kyrgyzstan							
<i>История Кыргызстана XIX</i>	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
<i>Жаны Тарых-8</i>	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Uzbekistan							
<i>Jahon Tarixi, (XVI-XIX. Asrning 60-yillari)</i>	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
<i>O‘zbekiston Tarixi</i>	+	+	-	-	+	-	+

Turkmenistan							
Dünyä Taryhy (XVI—XIX asyryň 60-njy yllary)	+	+	+	+	+	-	+

When the findings in Table 2 are examined, it is notable that references to visuals within the text are not made in the textbooks. The language used in the textbooks and the design of the text are fundamental areas of difference that affect students' attention and meaning-making processes.

- In Turkey, preparation questions, bold highlights, and URL references are included.
- In Azerbaijan, the use of text boxes, glossaries, and fluent language is notable.
- Kazakhstan's textbooks are strong in terms of clear information transfer.
- The TRNC textbook has a structure enriched with activities.
- In Uzbekistan's textbooks, the density of block text may challenge students' attention.

In terms of educational text characteristics, the most prominent examples of student-centered design were found in the textbooks of Azerbaijan and the TRNC. Contents dominated by block texts, on the other hand, may create reading difficulty.

In Türkiye, the textbook "Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Republic of Turkey History of Revolutions and Kemalism Grade 8 Textbook" enriches its visual content by including geographical maps and portraits of national struggle commanders at the end of the book.

Among the Azerbaijani history textbooks, the textbook found to be the most successful was "Ümumi Tarix, 8 Dərslik." In the book, color palettes that attract students' interest and portraits of rulers particularly help evoke curiosity.

In Kazakhstan, the textbook "Дүниежүзі Тарихы 8" was observed to have weak visual use. It was determined that the visuals used in the book were insufficient, not of appropriate size, and low in pixel quality, thus failing to attract students' attention. In the textbook "Қазақстан Тарихы 8," visuals are more numerous compared to the previous book, and color and size use is more positive. However, the use of low-quality visuals is still considered inadequate compared to textbooks used in other countries during the same period.

Textbooks were evaluated in terms of visual variety, placement, quality, and alignment with the text. Although the use of visuals is common in the textbooks, the pedagogical functionality of visuals shows significant differences among countries.

- The TRNC textbook is the richest in terms of visual content.
- In the textbooks of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, small-sized and low-resolution visuals are notable.
- The Turkmenistan textbook is among the strong examples in terms of text-visual coherence.
- It was determined that references to visuals within the text are generally not made (a common deficiency across all countries).

These results show that textbooks that ensure quality and coherence in visual use support students' meaning-making and the development of historical imagination. Otherwise, visuals remain limited to a decorative function.

In the TRNC, the textbook "Grade 8 Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot History Textbook" is the textbook in which visuals are used the most compared to the other textbooks. Visuals have been used in attention-grabbing colors and sizes to prevent students from getting bored.

In Kyrgyzstan, the textbook “История Кыргызстана XIX” uses visuals effectively, in good quality, and with appropriate colors. However, when compared to other textbooks, the visual sizes were found insufficient. In the textbook “Жаны Тарых-8,” the use of visuals is more intense and in more appropriate colors compared to the first book. Nevertheless, it still has shortcomings when compared to textbooks used in other countries. The main issue in the textbooks used in Kyrgyzstan is the small size of the visuals and the low quality of the images.

In Uzbekistan, in the textbook “Jahon Tarixi (XVI–XIX. Asrning 60-yillari),” visuals of appropriate quality and color were used, but it was determined that their quality was still low and that they were not in sufficient size. In the textbook “O‘zbekiston Tarixi,” the use of visuals was found to be highly insufficient. The book contains dense text, and the visuals included are small in size and not designed in attention-grabbing colors. The use of black-and-white visuals is also quite frequent. In Turkmenistan, in the textbook “Dünyä Taryhy (XVI—XIX asyryň 60-njy yllary),” it was determined that visuals were used appropriately and sufficiently. Visual quality is high, and the connection with the text is strong. In this sense, the textbook is adequate in terms of visual content.

Findings Related to Assessment and Evaluation Practices

Table 3. Evaluation of History Textbooks in Terms of Assessment and Evaluation Content

	Presence of a measurement-evaluation section		Presence of an answer key	Cognitive content of the questions		
	Open-ended questions	Multiple-choice and other question types		Recall	Understanding	Evaluation
Turkey						
<i>Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Republic of Turkey History of Revolutions and Kemalism Grade 8 Textbook</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
Azerbaijan						
<i>Ortaq Türk Tarixi 8 Textbook</i>	+	-	-	+	-	+
<i>Azərbaycan Tarixi, Grade 8 Textbook</i>	+	-	+	+	+	+
<i>Ümumi Tarix, Grade 8 Textbook</i>	+	-	-	+	+	+
Kazakhstan						
<i>Дүниежүзі Тарихы 8</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Қазақстан Тарихы 8</i>	+	-	-	+	+	+
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus						
<i>Grade 8 Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot History Textbook</i>	+	-	-	+	+	+
Kyrgyzstan						
<i>История Кыргызстана XIX</i>	+	-	-	+	+	+
<i>Жаны Тарых-8</i>	+	-	-	+	-	-
Uzbekistan						
<i>Jahon Tarixi, (XVI-XIX. Asrning 60-yillari)</i>	+	-	-	+	-	-
<i>O‘zbekiston Tarixi</i>	+	-	-	+	+	+
Turkmenistan						
<i>Dünyä Taryhy (XVI—XIX asyryň 60-njy yllary)</i>	+	-	-	+	+	+

According to the findings presented in Table 3, the types of questions, cognitive levels, and answer keys in the textbooks were examined. There are significant inequalities in assessment and evaluation practices among countries, and this affects the extent to which students are guided toward higher-order cognitive processes.

- The Turkish textbook is the most developed in terms of question variety, project assignments, and overall scope.
- The Azerbaijani textbook stands out for including an answer key.
- One of the Uzbekistan textbooks includes only recall-level questions.
- The second Kyrgyzstan textbook directs students to a workbook.
- In the Turkmenistan textbook, the variety of activities is limited.

These results show that variety in question types and increases in cognitive level are decisive for the development of historical thinking skills, and that there are meaningful developmental differences among countries in this regard.

In Türkiye, in the textbook “Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Republic of Turkey History of Revolutions and Kemalism Grade 8 Textbook” a sufficient number of open-ended questions are directed to students at the beginning of chapters, in the middle of topics, and at the end of chapters. Thus, it has been made easier to draw students’ attention to the lesson. Again, multiple-choice assessment questions are included at the end of the chapters, encouraging students to think at all stages of the unit. In addition, project tasks are included at the end of the book, allowing students to carry out learning activities. The textbook was found to be quite successful in terms of assessment and evaluation.

In the Azerbaijani history textbooks, the textbook found to be the most successful in terms of assessment and evaluation was “Azərbaycan Tarixi, Dərslik 8.” Unlike the others, answers are also included in the book. In addition, it was observed that the question contents addressed all cognitive domains: recall, understanding, and evaluation.

In Kazakhstan, in the textbook “Дүниежүзі Тарихы 8,” both open-ended and multiple-choice questions are included, presenting a rich assessment and evaluation profile. In the textbook “Қазақстан Тарихы 8,” however, the assessment content is less than in the previous book and includes only open-ended questions. Nevertheless, the questions used in this book also address all cognitive domains—recall, understanding, and evaluation.

In the TRNC, in the textbook “Grade 8 Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot History Textbook” an activity is included at the beginning of each chapter, and at the end of each chapter a rich assessment section is presented with open-ended, fill-in-the-blanks, and matching questions, ensuring that all cognitive domains of the students are engaged.

In Kyrgyzstan, in the textbook “История Кыргызстана XIX,” open-ended questions are directed to students between and at the end of chapters, allowing students to think, recall, and evaluate. The absence of activities in the work constitutes a shortcoming. In the textbook “Жаны Тарых-8,” only open-ended questions are included, and it was determined that these open-ended questions address only the recall domain. In this sense, the book has deficiencies; however, it is understood that workbook directions are given in the texts, indicating that an additional book is used for assessment and evaluation.

In Uzbekistan, when the textbook “Jahon Tarixi (XVI–XIX asrning 60-yillari)” is examined, it is observed that only open-ended questions are included and that these questions address only the

recall cognitive domain. In this context, the book was found to be deficient in terms of assessment and evaluation. In the textbook “O‘zbekiston Tarixi,” open-ended questions are used at chapter ends and between topics. It was determined that the content of the questions addresses all three cognitive domains. The number of questions is sufficient in terms of textbook content.

In Turkmenistan, in the textbook “Dünýä Taryhy (XVI—XIX asyryň 60-njy yllary),” when the assessment and evaluation contents are examined, it was determined that open-ended questions are included, that these questions are spread throughout the text, and that they address all three cognitive domains. However, it was also determined that no activities or other question forms are used in the book. In this sense, the textbook needs development in terms of assessment and evaluation.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

In this study, the curriculum contents, text presentation, visual usage features, and assessment–evaluation structures of 8th-grade history textbooks taught in the Turkic Republics were examined. The findings reveal that although a common historical past is shared, each country diverges in history teaching in line with its educational policies and ideological orientations.

The fact that the curriculum content in Turkey and the TRNC focuses solely on national history shows that the history course is instrumentalized in constructing identity and fostering citizenship awareness. Indeed, the literature emphasizes that history textbooks are among the fundamental materials of nation-building (Wineburg, 2010; Seixas & Morton, 2012). In examples such as Azerbaijan, where national history, Turkish history, and world history are addressed together, this constitutes a positive model in terms of offering students a broader historical perspective.

In terms of text presentation, the enrichment of Azerbaijani and TRNC textbooks with activities, text boxes, and a clear narrative that encourages active learning aligns with Levstik and Barton’s (2011) emphasis on student-centered design in history teaching. In contrast, the dominance of block text in countries such as Uzbekistan is seen as a factor that makes it difficult for students to make meaning from the text. This situation limits the transition to higher-order thinking skills in line with Bloom’s cognitive domain classification (Bloom, 2010).

Significant quality differences were identified in the use of visual materials. The TRNC and Turkmenistan textbooks offer content that supports text–visual integration in accordance with Mayer’s (2014) multimedia learning theory. In contrast, the low resolution, small visuals, and lack of in-text referencing in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan limit the pedagogical contribution of visuals. It is known that visuals should serve as tools for developing historical imagination rather than mere decoration (Paivio, 1991).

In terms of assessment–evaluation, the Turkish textbook has the highest diversity with open-ended questions, multiple-choice items, and project tasks. This finding aligns with Black and Wiliam’s (1998) learning-based assessment approach. However, the presence of only recall-level questions in some countries limits the development of higher-order cognitive processes (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Overall, the research shows that history courses in the Turkic Republics differ in terms of national priorities, educational philosophy, and pedagogical capacity, and that there are significant opportunities for development.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on how the understanding of history education is structured in the Turkic Republics, which share a common historical heritage. The textbooks examined reveal differentiated educational approaches shaped by each country's historical realities, national identity policies, and pedagogical priorities. History textbooks are not merely instructional resources that transmit knowledge; they are also powerful socio-cultural tools through which states shape social memory, construct historical consciousness, and develop future-oriented citizenship competencies. Accordingly, the findings of this study indicate that history teaching in the Turkic Republics develops within a dual structure that reflects both shared bonds and national specificities.

As a result of this study:

- History textbooks used in the Turkic Republics carry significant differences in terms of content and presentation.
- In Turkey and the TRNC, history teaching is structured around national identity, national unity, and patriotism.
- In Azerbaijan and some other countries, more balanced and comprehensive topic distributions are observed.
- Student-centered and visually supported content increases learning motivation; in this regard, Azerbaijan and the TRNC stand out.
- Quality differences in visual usage are pronounced; in some countries, visuals drift away from being instructional.
- There are cognitive-level differences in assessment–evaluation practices across countries.

These results show that:

- History education is not only the transmission of knowledge but also a decisive tool in shaping ideological orientations, historical consciousness, and cultural identity.
- Despite a shared cultural past, history pedagogy differs and important areas for improvement exist in some countries.

In conclusion, the most effective textbooks among those examined are the ones that balance question types and cognitive levels, encourage students to think deeply, and provide opportunities for them to evaluate their own learning processes. On the other hand, textbooks limited to recall-level questions and offering little variety contribute minimally to the development of higher-order skills expected in modern history education. Therefore, it is important to enhance the quality of history education in the Turkic Republics and align it with the historical thinking skills required in the 21st century.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations have been developed to improve the quality of 8th-grade History textbooks in the Turkic republics and to align them with modern educational approaches:

Curriculum Content / Historical Scope

The research results show that some countries adopt an approach focused solely on national history or solely on world history. This limits students' ability to develop a historical perspective. Therefore:

- A balance should be established among national history, Turkish history, and world history.
- Cooperation-based curriculum standards focusing on shared historical ties may be developed.

Text Language and Presentation Structure

- Texts that are fluent, interactive, and appropriate for student level should be increased.
- Glossaries, concept boxes, and pre-preparation activities should be standardized.

Visual Design and Instructional Function

Taking the successful practices in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Azerbaijan as reference:

- Visuals should be used in accordance with high resolution, proper placement, and historical context principles.
- The text-visual connection should be strengthened through direct referencing.

Assessment and Evaluation

By disseminating the successful practices observed in Turkey and Azerbaijan:

- Activities measuring higher-order cognitive skills that go beyond recall should be expanded.
- Answer keys and evaluation criteria should be presented transparently.

Policy and Collaborative Development

- A consortium for developing history textbooks may be established among the Turkic Republics.
- Teacher and student feedback should be used within a continuous improvement cycle.

The implementation of these recommendations may enhance the quality of history education in the Turkic republics and contribute to students' acquisition of 21st-century skills. Furthermore, it may create a stronger foundation for cooperation in the field of education among these countries that share a common historical heritage.

Researcher Contribution Rate

All authors contributed to the manuscript equally.

Ethics Information

Research and publication ethics were followed. The researchers adhered to the principle of objectivity throughout the data analysis process, and the data were reported as they were, without external intervention. The documents were examined in their existing form, and interpretive content was not used directly as data.

Support and Acknowledgements

The authors declared that this research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

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

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