

A Comparative Analysis of the Social Studies Curricula of Türkiye and Singapore

Türkiye ve Singapur Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretim Programlarının Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

Büşra Elçiçeği¹

Keywords	Abstract
Türkiye	The purpose of Social Studies curricula is to develop effective and responsible citizens. The program's initial implementation in the United States was driven by the objective of fostering a shared purpose among individuals from diverse religious affiliations, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and socio-cultural histories, thereby facilitating harmonious coexistence. While this educational program is taught as a distinct discipline in countries like the USA, Türkiye and Singapore, it is incorporated within history, geography, or citizenship education in countries such as France, Germany, and the UK. This study provides a comparative analysis of the Social Studies programs in Türkiye and Singapore, focusing on the 2023 program in Türkiye and the 2020 program in Singapore. This research was conducted using qualitative methodology. The data was collected through a meticulous analysis of pertinent documents, and the findings were subsequently analyzed using descriptive analysis. The findings suggest that the educational program of Singapore encompasses a philosophy of education, complemented by seven skills and values that are integral to the curriculum. In contrast, the Turkish social studies curriculum lacks a clearly defined educational philosophy and instead provides general statements that outline the curriculum's perspective. The objectives of the Singaporean program are categorized under three main headings with 13 goals, whereas Türkiye's program has 18 objectives. The Singaporean program delineates the philosophy of the course, its objectives, the recommended pedagogy, and assessment mechanisms. In contrast, the Turkish Social Studies program encompasses competencies, general values and skills, descriptions, and details such as general program objectives and perspectives. The Social Studies curricula of Singapore and Türkiye reflect their national priorities and cultural contexts. Türkiye focuses on national identity and historical awareness, while Singapore emphasizes multiculturalism and global citizenship. Both aim to foster critical thinking, problem-solving and responsibility, but their values and focus areas vary.
Singapore	
Social studies	
Curricula	
Comparative education	
Anahtar Sözcükler	Öz
Türkiye	Sosyal Bilgiler öğretim programlarının amacı, etkili ve sorumlu vatandaşlar yetiştirmektir. Programın Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki ilk uygulaması, farklı dini inançlara, ırksal ve etnik kökenlere ve sosyo-kültürel geçmişlere sahip bireyler arasında ortak bir amaç geliştirme ve böylece uyumlu bir arada yaşamı kolaylaştırma hedefiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu eğitim programı ABD, Türkiye ve Singapur gibi ülkelerde ayrı bir disiplin olarak öğretilirken, Fransa, Almanya ve İngiltere gibi ülkelerde tarih, coğrafya veya vatandaşlık gibi derslerin öğretim programları içerisinde yer almaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki 2023 Sosyal Bilgiler Dersi Öğretim Programı ile Singapur'daki 2020 Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretim Programının karşılaştırmalı analizini sunmaktadır. Araştırma nitel yöntem kullanılarak yürütülmüş, veriler ilgili belgelerin ayrıntılı biçimde incelenmesiyle toplanmış ve elde edilen bulgular betimsel analiz yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular, Singapur eğitim programının, öğretim programının ayrılmaz bir parçasını oluşturan yedi beceri ve değerlerle desteklenen bir eğitim felsefesine sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna karşılık, Türk sosyal bilgiler müfredatında açıkça tanımlanmış bir eğitim felsefesi yer almamakta, bunun yerine müfredatın bakış açısını özetleyen genel ifadeler sunmaktadır. Singapur programı; eğitim felsefesi, amaçları (13 hedef), önerilen öğretim yaklaşımı ve ölçme-değerlendirme mekanizmaları olmak üzere üç ana başlık altında yapılandırılmıştır. Ayrıca program 27 beceri ve 18 değeri içermektedir. Buna karşılık, Türkiye Sosyal Bilgiler programı; yeterlikler, genel amaçlar, değerler ve beceriler, açıklamalar ile genel program amaçları ve bakış açıları gibi ayrıntıları içermektedir. Singapur ve Türkiye Sosyal Bilgiler öğretim programları, kendi ulusal önceliklerini ve kültürel bağlamlarını yansıtmaktadır. Her iki program da eleştirel düşünme, problem çözme ve sorumluluk geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır; ancak benimsedikleri değerler ve odaklandıkları alanlar farklılık göstermektedir.
Singapur	
Sosyal bilgiler	
Öğretim programı	
Karşılaştırmalı eğitim	

¹ **Corresponding Author**, Van Yuzuncu Yıl University, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Studies Education, Van, Türkiye. busraelcicegi@yyu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1346-8185>

Citation/Atıf: Elçiçeği, B. (2026). A comparative analysis of the social studies curricula of Türkiye and Singapore. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 34(3), 549-568. <https://doi.org/10.24106/kefdergi.2004077>

Received / Başvuru: 13.09.2024
Accepted / Kabul: 30.05.2026

Introduction

In ancient times, subjects taught in schools such as history (China, Israel, Rome), geography (Rome), law (Rome), and citizenship (Israel) are related to the disciplines included in the social studies curriculum (Sönmez, 2005). During the Middle Ages, courses related to social sciences acquired religious content due to the influence of religion (Moffatt, 1957; Sönmez, 2005). The French thinker Condorcet was the first to advocate for the inclusion of a course under the name “social studies” at the primary and secondary education levels (Sönmez, 2005; Sözer, 2008; Turan & Ulusoy, 2010). Social studies, as a subject, was first incorporated into school programs in the United States in 1916 under the influence of the progressive movement, with the aim of “educating citizens for a democratic society” (Moffatt, 1957; Sönmez, 2005).

In 1916, the National Education Association (NEA) Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education published a report to define the scope of social studies programs in secondary education. This report recommended the integration of individual disciplines such as history, geography, citizenship, and economics under the concept of “Social Studies” in the curriculum (Schug & Beery, 1987). Subsequently, in 1921, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) was officially established and standardized the concept of social studies within the American education system (Naylor & Diem, 1987). According to the NCSS definition (1990), social studies is an interdisciplinary field that draws upon disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, while also integrating relevant knowledge from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences to promote civic competence (Evans & Brueckner, 1990).

Social studies is a multidisciplinary field that integrates concepts from social and human sciences to develop citizenship skills in key social areas (Barth, 1991). It is considered the most comprehensive subject among all school courses (Ross et al, 2013). It has been defined as the study of all human endeavors across time and space (Stanley & Nelson, 1986). The multidisciplinary nature of social studies provides a theoretical framework that enables students not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to connect social phenomena (Barth, 1991; Stanley & Nelson, 1986).

Looking at the development of social studies in the United States, history initially dominated the program content (Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). In parallel with societal developments, the content of social studies diversified. In the first report published by the NEA in 1916, social studies focused on “institutions, human societal development, and the individual as a member of social groups,” aiming to educate “good citizens” (Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). Since its inception in the United States, the primary objective of social studies has been to cultivate responsible citizens (Altay, 2021; Barth, 1991; Evans & Brueckner, 1990; Doolittle & Hicks, 2003; Kan, 2010; Sağdıç, 2019; Öngören, 2022).

In Türkiye, the historical roots of social studies education date back to the late Ottoman period, although the course was not yet formally identified under the name “social studies” (Öztürk, 2009). During the final years of the Ottoman Empire, courses related to history, geography, citizenship, and morality were taught in primary schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education, reflecting the early foundations of social studies education (Akdağ & Kaymakçı, 2011). Following the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, the first national curriculum implemented in 1924 included courses such as History, Geography, Musahabat-ı Ahlakiye, and Malumat-ı Vataniye. Through these subjects, which incorporated the disciplinary foundations of social studies, the curriculum aimed to strengthen national consciousness, citizenship awareness, and patriotic values among students (Akpınar & Kaymakçı, 2012). Social studies was later formally introduced into the Turkish curriculum in 1968 as an interdisciplinary course under the name “Social Studies” (Sönmez, 2005; Öztürk, 2009).

The historical development of social studies and its citizenship-oriented objective necessitate the examination of educational programs across various countries and a comparative evaluation of these programs. Comparative education is a field that studies education systems across societies, countries, regions, and historical periods, identifying similarities and differences either holistically or in specific aspects, to inform educational theory and practice, policy, planning, reforms, international relations, and the promotion of peace (Ergün, 1985). Comparative education intersects social sciences, education, and international studies and is regarded as an interdisciplinary field (Noah & Eckstein, 1969; Trethewey, 1976).

The process of globalization has added a new dimension to comparative education, influencing its development (Marginson & Mollis, 1999). Scientific, cultural, and political reasons have further increased its importance. Organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank have contributed to establishing international educational networks. Countries around the world are ranked and classified based on common evaluation criteria, aiming to provide solutions to shared educational challenges or produce alternatives. These include financial issues, selection and placement procedures, centralization versus localization, public versus private education, and quality improvement. Furthermore, in the context of globalization, educational policies in national curricula have increasingly adopted innovative approaches based on quality, equity, and social participation, meaning that examining the curricula of leading countries provides essential guidance for other nations (Shalimov, 1997).

Program evaluations are conducted to identify areas where the existing program is insufficient or ineffective and to propose necessary improvements. Furthermore, comparing a program with those of other countries is essential to reveal its strengths and weaknesses; therefore, analyzing and comparing the social studies curricula of other countries with that of Türkiye is crucial for enhancing the quality of national curricula (Altay, 2021).

In the literature, Öztürk & Öztürk (2013) compared the social studies curricula of Canada and Türkiye in terms of grade levels, learning areas, distribution of learning areas across grades, program objectives, and the number of learning outcomes, revealing differences. For example, the Turkish curriculum emphasizes national and historical consciousness, while the Canadian curriculum prioritizes developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Similarly, the distribution of learning outcomes and content intensity varies by grade level. Osmanoğlu (2014) examined Ottoman representations in 6th and 7th-grade textbooks in Egypt and Türkiye and found that Turkish textbooks were more neutral. Metin, Uygun & Oran (2017) compared the curricula of social studies and the Turkish Revolution History and Atatürk's Principles course in Türkiye with equivalent courses in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, analyzing objectives, content, teaching-learning processes, and assessment methods, highlighting similarities and differences. Turkish educational programs emphasize national consciousness and Atatürk's principles, while Azerbaijani and Turkmen programs prioritize history and cultural heritage differently. Differences in content coverage, teaching methods, and assessment tools were also observed. Karauğuz & Özkara (2018) compared social studies curricula of Türkiye, the Czech Republic, England, Ireland, Singapore, and the USA concerning ancient history elements, finding that Türkiye, the Czech Republic, and England focus on local perspectives, while Ireland, Singapore, and the USA adopt a more universal approach. Ilgaz & Çaykesen (2019) compared geography topics in Turkish and Azerbaijani 7th-grade social studies textbooks, noting that geography topics are more comprehensively addressed in Türkiye, which facilitates understanding.

In the contemporary social studies education paradigm, there is an emphasis on cultivating competencies deemed essential for success in the 21st century, such as critical thinking, digital literacy, media literacy, and global citizenship (Ross et al., 2013). The latest updates to the Turkish social studies curriculum aim to foster gender equality, cultural diversity, and democratic awareness, although some learning outcomes are not yet fully implemented in practice (Tokmak et al., 2023). Internationally, social studies curricula in Singapore and the USA aim to develop students' problem-solving and reflective thinking skills through project-based learning, discussions, and inquiry-based pedagogies (Nanthawong, 2024; Rapoport, 2021). Singapore's educational success has drawn attention in the international literature to the structure of its social studies curriculum; furthermore, OECD reports emphasize that curricula in different countries should be designed to foster sensitivity to global issues (OECD, 2021).

Assessment tools such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) measure student achievement. According to the 2018 PISA report, the top-performing countries in reading and mathematics were China, Singapore, Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), and Estonia. Based on PISA 2012 and 2018 data, Singapore ranks among the world's highest-performing education systems (OECD, 2014; 2019).

Although previous studies have examined social studies curricula in different countries in terms of various dimensions such as content, objectives, values, and learning outcomes (Öztürk & Öztürk, 2013; Osmanoğlu, 2014; Metin et al., 2017; Karauğuz & Özkara, 2018; Ilgaz & Çaykesen, 2019), these studies have

generally focused on limited aspects or specific country comparisons. In particular, there is a lack of comprehensive and up-to-date comparative research that simultaneously evaluates the 2023 Turkish Social Studies Curriculum and the 2020 Singapore Social Studies Curriculum in terms of educational philosophy, pedagogical structure, and holistic curriculum components. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing a systematic and multidimensional comparison of these two curricula. In this respect, the present study contributes to the existing literature by offering a comprehensive framework that integrates content, skills, values, assessment approaches, and pedagogical orientations while also providing insights for curriculum development and comparative education research.

The increasing number of comparative education studies is important for providing sustainable solutions to common educational challenges worldwide. Insights from different countries' approaches can guide other nation-states. Comparative education studies do not necessarily require a problem; sometimes, examining curricula, education systems, and textbooks in different countries is crucial for improving and enriching local education systems. Consequently, the present study conducts a comparative analysis of the social studies curricula in Singapore and Türkiye due to Singapore's educational success. The main research problem is formulated as follows: "What are the similarities and differences between the social studies curricula of Singapore and Türkiye?"

Based on the main research problem, the following sub-problems are addressed:

1. What are the similarities and differences between the content knowledge of Singaporean and Turkish social studies curricula?
2. What are the underlying educational philosophies of the Singaporean and Turkish social studies curricula?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the objectives of the Singaporean and Turkish social studies curricula?
4. What are the similarities and differences in the skills emphasized in the Singaporean and Turkish social studies curricula?
5. What are the similarities and differences in the values addressed in the Singaporean and Turkish social studies curricula?
6. What are the similarities and differences in the learning domains included in the Singaporean and Turkish social studies curricula?
7. What are the similarities and differences in the assessment and evaluation approaches of the Singaporean and Turkish social studies curricula?
8. What are the detailed curriculum contents and recommended pedagogical approaches in the Singaporean social studies curriculum?
9. What are the key considerations in implementing the Turkish social studies curriculum in practice?

Method

This study was conducted using a descriptive research design, one of the qualitative research methods. Descriptive research involves analyzing data based on pre-determined themes. The purpose of this analysis is to organize and interpret the findings. This study followed a process that included establishing a thematic framework, processing data according to this framework, identifying findings, and interpreting them (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The study comparatively examined the social studies curricula of Türkiye and Singapore. The study aimed to compare the social studies curriculum implemented in Singapore since 2020 with the Turkish social studies curriculum implemented from 2023 in terms of content knowledge, educational philosophy, objectives, skills, values, learning domains, assessment and evaluation approaches, curriculum usage, recommended pedagogy, and practical considerations.

Data Collection

In accordance with the research design, document analysis was used to collect the data. Document analysis is a qualitative research technique that seeks answers to research questions through systematic examination and interpretation of written materials (Bowen, 2009). The technique was preferred because it allows systematic collection, review, and evaluation of official and private records (Ekiz, 2003). Following the document analysis, a comparative education approach was applied to compare the findings from both countries. The comparison process employed a horizontal approach, where the educational dimensions of each country under investigation were examined side by side for the same time periods to identify similarities and differences (Ültanır, 2000).

Purposeful sampling was used to conduct an in-depth investigation from a holistic perspective. The 2020 Singaporean and 2023 Turkish social studies curricula were selected as data sources due to their recency and official status. The curricula examined were updated in 2020 for Singapore and 2023 for Türkiye. Specifically, the Turkish social studies curriculum for the second stage of primary education (grades 4, 5, 6, 7) and the Singaporean social studies curriculum for the first and second stages of primary education (grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) were included. In the first phase, the relevant documents were accessed through the official ministry websites of both countries. For Türkiye, the data were retrieved from www.meb.gov.tr using the keywords "Social studies curriculum 2023." For Singapore, the data were obtained from www.moe.gov.sg using the keywords "Social studies curriculum 2020." In the second phase, the authenticity of the data was verified. Official codes, emblems, and ministry approvals were examined to ensure the legitimacy of the documents. Both countries' curricula were published on official ministry websites, and the presence of emblems and official codes confirmed their authenticity.

In the third phase, the English documents were translated into Turkish. In the fourth phase, the documents were subjected to a descriptive analysis, in which they were digitized and subsequently analyzed. Finally, findings, conclusions, and recommendations were written based on the information derived from the data. In the sixth phase, the content, objectives, pedagogical recommendations, and assessment dimensions of the Turkish and Singaporean curricula were compared, and similarities and differences were determined (Ültanır, 2000).

Since this study was conducted solely through document analysis and did not involve human participants, animals, experiments, surveys, or interviews, ethics committee approval was not required.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis (Patton, 2002). In this technique, the findings are systematically described, summarized, and interpreted. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to present the data in an organized and meaningful way. The analysis followed the stages of descriptive analysis, including establishing a framework, processing the data, identifying the findings, and interpreting the findings (Sözbilir, 2009; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In this study, the analysis was conducted according to the research questions, and the curricula of Singapore and Türkiye were compared in terms of content knowledge, educational philosophy, objectives, skills, values, learning domains, assessment and evaluation, curriculum design, recommended pedagogy, and implementation principles.

In qualitative research, validity and reliability are associated with the accuracy of the data and the consistency of interpretations. In this study, validity was ensured by using official curriculum documents published by the Ministries of Education of Türkiye and Singapore. Reliability was supported through the systematic examination and comparison of both curricula according to the research questions and the dimensions examined in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings

This section presents a comparison of the social studies curricula of Türkiye and Singapore. Social studies education is provided in grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 in Türkiye, and in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 in Singapore. In Türkiye, grade 8 includes a history course titled "History of the Principles and Reforms of Atatürk." The

Singaporean social studies curriculum was updated in 2020, while the Turkish social studies curriculum was updated in 2023.

Content Knowledge in the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

The Singaporean social studies curriculum consists of four sections: Introduction, Content, Recommended Pedagogy, and Assessment. In the Introduction section, the philosophy of social studies and the objectives of the curriculum are presented. In the Content section, content design, detailed content usage, and detailed curriculum content are included. In the Recommended Pedagogy section, research- and inquiry-based learning approaches and the transformation of research approaches from the humanities into the social studies classroom are addressed. In the Assessment section, the assessment objectives, modes, and framework are presented (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2020).

In Türkiye, the social studies curriculum includes the following components: The Ministry of National Education curricula, objectives of the curricula, the perspective of the curricula, values, competencies, assessment and evaluation approaches in the curricula, individual development and curricula, conclusions, specific objectives of the social studies course curriculum, core skills in the social studies curriculum, values education in the social studies curriculum, considerations in the implementation of the social studies curriculum, the structure of the social studies curriculum, the number of pages and dimensions of the social studies textbooks for grades 4, 5, 6, and 7, and the learning outcomes and explanations for grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2023).

Educational Philosophies Underlying the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

In terms of educational philosophy, the Singaporean social studies curriculum emphasizes helping students better understand the interconnectedness of Singapore and the world they live in. It prepares students to become the citizens of tomorrow and enables them to make sense of human complexity. The curriculum encourages students to explore real-world issues relevant to their lives and to engage in inquiry-based learning. It supports the acquisition of knowledge and understanding through authentic learning experiences, while fostering critical and reflective thinking and promoting multiple perspectives. In addition, it nurtures tendencies that inspire students to take an interest in society and the world, encourages a deeper understanding of values that define Singaporean society, and cultivates empathy in their interactions with others. In this way, the curriculum aims to develop students into engaged and collaborative citizens who are responsible to their communities and the wider world.

In contrast, the Turkish social studies curriculum does not explicitly provide a clearly defined educational philosophy. Instead, it presents general statements as the perspective of the curriculum. While values, competencies, and objectives are included, these are not structured within a clearly articulated philosophical framework.

Objectives of the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

Explanations regarding the objectives of the social studies curricula in Singapore and Türkiye are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Objectives of the Social Studies Curricula in Singapore and Türkiye

Singapore	Türkiye
1. <i>Students as Knowledgeable Citizens will be able to:</i> 1.1. View the world from a global perspective. 1.2. Understand different viewpoints. 1.3. Apply reflective thinking in making informed decisions. 1.4. Analyze and make sense of complex situations. 1.5. Evaluate information, consider multiple perspectives, and practice reasoning and responsible decision-making. 2. <i>Students as Engaged Citizens will be able to:</i>	<i>The students will be able to:</i> 1. Be raised as citizens of the Republic of Türkiye who love their country and nation, are aware of and exercise their rights, fulfill their responsibilities, and possess national consciousness. 2. Understand the place of Atatürk's principles and reforms in the social, cultural, and economic development of the Republic of Türkiye and to be willing to uphold democratic, secular, national, and contemporary values.

Singapore	Türkiye
2.1. Understand the sense of belonging to their community and nation. 2.2. Engage with issues concerning societal problems. 2.3. Build social cohesion by appreciating societal diversity. 2.4. Recognize the implications of ethical thinking and decision-making outcomes. 3. <i>Students as Participatory/Collaborative Citizens will be:</i> 3.1. Willing to describe related issues and take action. 3.2. Resilient in addressing societal concerns despite challenges faced. 3.3. Empowered to take personal and collective responsibility to effect meaningful change for the well-being of society. 3.4. Able to serve in order to make a positive difference in the lives of others.	3. Know, with justification, that legal rules are binding for everyone and that all individuals and organizations are equal before the law. 4. Comprehend the fundamental elements and processes that constitute Turkish culture and history, and to recognize the necessity of preserving and developing the cultural heritage that fosters national consciousness. 5. Become familiar with the geographical characteristics of their local environment and the world, explain the interactions between humans and the environment, and develop spatial awareness skills. 6. Recognize the limitations of the natural environment and resources, strive to protect natural resources with environmental awareness, and adopt a sustainable environmental perspective. 7. Possess critical thinking skills as individuals who know how to access accurate and reliable information. 8. Understand basic economic concepts and grasp the role of the national economy in development and international economic relations. 9. Believe in the importance of work in social life and acknowledge that every profession is necessary and respectable. 10. Analyze historical evidence from different times and places, identify similarities and differences among people, objects, events, and phenomena, and perceive change and continuity. 11. Understand the development of science and technology and their effects on social life, and to use information and communication technologies consciously. 12. Observe scientific ethics in accessing, using, and producing knowledge, based on scientific thinking. 13. Apply basic communication skills and the fundamental concepts and methods of social sciences to regulate social relations and solve encountered problems. 14. Believe in the importance of participation and express their opinions for the resolution of personal and societal issues. 15. Comprehend the historical processes and contemporary impacts of human rights, national sovereignty, democracy, secularism, and the concept of the republic, and to organize their lives according to democratic principles. 16. Adopt national, spiritual, and universal values and understand the significance and means of becoming a virtuous individual. 17. Demonstrate sensitivity to issues concerning their country and the world. 18. Become aware of their physical and emotional characteristics, interests, desires, and talents as free individuals.

Note. Adapted from MOE (2020) and MoNE (2023).

The Singaporean curriculum includes a total of 13 objectives, consisting of 3 main objectives with their sub-objectives, whereas the Turkish curriculum includes 18 objectives. In terms of objectives, the Turkish social studies curriculum is more detailed. Both countries' social studies curricula aim to develop citizenship and values education, as well as critical thinking skills. However, the Turkish curriculum places greater emphasis on local culture, history, and interdisciplinary academic knowledge, while the Singaporean curriculum prioritizes students' inquiry-based learning, skill development, and the acquisition of a global perspective. In Türkiye, teaching is more focused on knowledge transmission and cultural awareness, whereas in Singapore, the learning process is based on active student participation and real-world connections. These differences are directly related to the educational philosophy and societal priorities of each country.

Skills Emphasized in the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

Table 2 presents the skills included in the social studies curricula of Singapore and Türkiye.

Table 2

Skills Included in the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

Singapore	Türkiye
1. Critical thinking skills 2. Problem-solving skills 3. Decision-making skills 4. Communication skills 5. Creative thinking skills 6. Effective research skills 7. Media literacy skills	1. Research, 2. Environmental literacy, 3. Understanding change and continuity, 4. Digital literacy, 5. Critical thinking, 6. Empathy, 7. Financial literacy, 8. Entrepreneurship, 9. Observation, 10. Map literacy, 11. Legal literacy, 12. Communication, 13. Collaboration, 14. Recognizing stereotypes and biases, 15. Using evidence, 16. Decision-making, 17. Spatial analysis, 18. Media literacy, 19. Spatial awareness, 20. Self-regulation, 21. Political literacy, 22. Problem-solving, 23. Social participation, 24. Drawing and interpreting tables, charts, and diagrams, 25. Correct, eloquent, and effective use of Turkish language, 26. Innovative thinking, 27. Understanding time and chronology

Note. Adapted from MOE (2020) and MoNE (2023).

While the Singaporean social studies curriculum identifies 7 skills that students are expected to acquire, the Turkish curriculum lists 27 skills. It can be stated that the Turkish social studies curriculum is prepared in much greater detail, except for incorporating the educational philosophy. Although both countries' curricula aim to develop core skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, in Türkiye, the skill development process is more knowledge-focused, whereas in Singapore, skills are acquired in a process-oriented, inquiry- and experience-based manner. The 2020 Singaporean Social Studies Syllabus not only supports students in developing knowledge and understanding but also emphasizes acquiring various skills. These skills are designed to help students develop a critical and analytical perspective on social events and issues. Furthermore, the curriculum of Singapore focuses on fostering students' decision-making, ethical awareness, collaboration, and communication skills within an interdisciplinary and global context, whereas the Turkish curriculum supports the development of these skills in a more indirect manner. This difference can be interpreted as a direct reflection of the educational philosophy and instructional approach of the two countries.

Values Addressed in the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

The objective of the social studies curriculum is to cultivate students' competencies so that they become knowledgeable, engaged, and participatory citizens. These competencies encompass the body of knowledge, skills, and values expressed in social studies. Table 3 presents the values included in the social studies curricula of Singapore and Türkiye.

Table 3

Values Included in the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

Singapore	Türkiye
1. National identity and belonging 2. Responsibility and accountability 3. Social justice and equality 4. Inclusivity and respect for diversity 5. Solidarity and community awareness 6. Open-mindedness and tolerance 7. Environmental sustainability	1. Justice, 2. Importance of family unity, 3. Independence, 4. Peace, 5. Scientific approach / Rationality, 6. Diligence, 7. Solidarity, 8. Sensitivity / Awareness, 9. Honesty, 10. Aesthetics, 11. Equality, 12. Freedom, 13. Respect, 14. Love / Affection, 15. Responsibility, 16. Prudence / Conservation, 17. Patriotism, 18. Helpfulness / Benevolence

Note. Adapted from MOE (2020) and MoNE (2023).

While the Singaporean Social Studies curriculum identifies seven core values to be instilled in students, the Turkish Social Studies curriculum lists eighteen values. Although both programs aim to develop citizenship and social responsibility, in Türkiye, values are conveyed primarily through knowledge and cultural content, whereas in Singapore, values are fostered through students' engagement in inquiry, discussion, and

experiential learning processes. The Turkish curriculum emphasizes national identity and cultural awareness, while the Singaporean curriculum highlights not only national values but also global perspectives and ethical awareness. This difference reflects the respective educational philosophies and societal priorities of the two countries and is further reinforced by differences in teaching methodologies.

Learning Domains Included in the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

Table 4 presents the learning domains in the Singapore and Turkish Social Studies curricula.

Table 4

Learning Domains in Singapore and Turkish Social Studies Curricula

Singapore	Türkiye
1. Citizenship and Governance	Individual and Society
2. Global Economic Forces	Culture and Heritage
3. Environmental Awareness and Sustainability	People, Places, and Environments
4. Diversity and Social Cohesion	Science, Technology, and Society
5. National Identity	Production, Distribution, and Consumption
6. Global Connections	Active Citizenship

Note. Adapted from MOE (2020) and MoNE (2023).

Both countries' curricula include six learning domains. Commonalities among these domains include the individual, citizenship, and economics. The "Active Citizenship" learning domain in Türkiye was addressed within the scope of global connections in the 2005 curriculum. The Turkish curriculum primarily encompasses local and national knowledge transmission along with interdisciplinary learning areas. In contrast, the Singaporean curriculum offers student-centered, process-oriented, and globally focused learning domains. While history and geography knowledge are emphasized in Türkiye, Singapore prioritizes students' understanding of the interaction between their own society and the global community, along with developing skills integrated with values. This distinction directly reflects the educational philosophies, societal priorities, and teaching-learning approaches of the two countries.

Assessment and Evaluation Approaches in the Social Studies Curricula of Singapore and Türkiye

Explanations regarding the assessment process in the Singapore and Türkiye social studies curricula are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Assessment process in the social studies curricula in Singapore and Türkiye

No	Singapore	Explanation	Türkiye	Explanation
1	Formative Assessment	Classroom activities, group work, presentations, short quizzes, and written assignments. These methods allow for real-time evaluation of students' participation and learning processes. Creating concept maps, discussion groups, written or oral responses to questions, and problem-solving activities.	Formative Assessment	Short quizzes, in-class discussions, group work, short written responses, and poster activities. During this process, the teacher can identify students' deficiencies and provide support. Question-and-answer techniques and short written tests are frequently used.
2	Summative assessment	Written exams, multiple-choice tests, open-ended questions, and project or research assignments. These assessments are typically conducted at the end of the term and measure the student's overall achievement level. Students' research-based papers, exams, and comprehensive projects are included.	Summative assessment	Written exams, multiple-choice tests, project presentations, and comprehensive research assignments.

No	Singapore	Explanation	Türkiye	Explanation
3	Project-based assessment	Students prepare and present projects. Projects may involve developing solutions to global issues, designing social campaigns, or making recommendations related to Singapore's national policies.	Project- and performance-based assessment	Project work, drama activities, role-playing, and fieldwork. Historical Event Reenactment: Students dramatize a historical event and present the social and political conditions of that period to the class. Environmental Project: Students conduct research on local environmental issues and develop and present solutions to address them.
4	Performance-based assessment	Role-playing, simulations, interviews, and case studies. Students engage in solving social problems, demonstrating citizenship skills, participating in decision-making processes, taking part in community-based projects, proposing solutions to social events, or participating in decision-making simulations (aimed at applying what they have learned in real-life contexts).	Portfolio-based assessment	Students compile the work they have completed throughout the term into a portfolio, which is then used for evaluation. Learning Journal: Students record in writing what they have learned during the course, and this learning journal is assessed.
5	Reflective assessment	Reflective learning reports, identification of personal development goals, and feedback provided on progress toward these goals	Reflective assessment	Reflective reports, learning journals.
6	Self- and peer-assessment	Evaluating peers' contributions in group projects and reviewing one's own performance.	Self- and peer-assessment	Peer Assessment: In group work, students evaluate each other's contributions and provide positive and constructive feedback. Self-Assessment Forms: After completing their projects, students fill out forms that identify their own strengths and weaknesses.
7	Observation and Surveys	Observation forms, attitude surveys, and participation in social responsibility projects.	Assessment through Observation	The teacher observes students' contributions within the group, their level of participation in discussions, and their responsibilities. Observation In-Class Interaction: Teacher observes how students adopt democratic values (respect, collaboration, empathy) through their behavior in the classroom.
8	Digital Assessment Tools	Technology-supported assessment tools such as online exams, e-portfolios, and digital projects; creating e-portfolios, participating in online discussions, and delivering digital presentations.	Digital and Technology-Based Assessment	E-portfolios, digital presentations, online exams; students prepare a digital presentation related to social studies, present it in class, and are assessed.
9	Assessment		Using Rubrics	Students' projects, performances, or written assignments are evaluated based on pre-determined criteria. Rubric for the Project: When assessing a research project, the teacher scores the student using a rubric based on their ability to use resources, present, solve problems, and collaborate. Presentation Rubric: Students' classroom presentations are evaluated according to rubric categories such as content, language use, visual materials, and communication skills.

Note. Adapted from MOE (2020) and MoNE (2023).

Formative, summative, digital, reflective, observational, and peer assessments are present in both countries. In Singapore, performance-based and project-based assessments are presented separately, whereas in Türkiye, they are addressed under a single category. Unlike Singapore, Türkiye also employs portfolio and rubric-based assessment methods. In Türkiye, the assessment process is more knowledge-focused and outcome-oriented, whereas in Singapore, it is process-oriented and student-centered. The Turkish curriculum is strong in measuring students' academic knowledge acquisition but has a limited scope in assessing skill and value development. In contrast, the Singaporean curriculum aims to evaluate knowledge, skills, and values in an integrated manner and supports active student engagement in the learning process. These differences are directly related to each country's educational philosophy, instructional approaches, and societal priorities.

In Singapore, school-based assessment processes include exams, discussions, deliberative debates, and topic-based research. These processes engage students in curiosity, data collection, reasoning, and reflective thinking. Additionally, within the national assessment framework, learning evaluation and evidence of students' learning quality are obtained through both school-based and national assessment practices. National assessment is designed in alignment with school-based assessment and the social studies curriculum, aiming for students to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills. Students are expected to understand societal issues, develop critical and reflective thinking skills, and gain appreciation for multiple perspectives. Assessment objectives include: 1. Informed Understanding - demonstrating comprehension of social issues; 2. Interpretation and Evaluation of Sources/Information – understanding relevant information, drawing inferences from provided data, analyzing and evaluating evidence, comparing different perspectives, distinguishing between opinions and judgments, recognizing values and detecting biases, and deriving reasoned conclusions from evidence and arguments; 3. Construction of Explanations - analyzing social issues from multiple viewpoints, developing reasoned arguments, and making informed decisions; 4. Assessment Scheme - source-based case studies aimed at fostering critical, reflective, and perspective-taking students, structured question-and-answer processes.

Detailed Curriculum Content and Recommended Pedagogical Approaches in the Singapore Social Studies Curriculum

Table 6 presents explanations from Singapore regarding curriculum design, detailed curriculum content, and recommended pedagogy.

Table 6

Detailed curriculum content and recommended pedagogy in Singaporean Social Studies

Section	Explanation
Curriculum Design and Use of Detailed Curriculum Content	1. It specifies the intended learning outcomes designed to foster citizens who demonstrate loyalty to Singapore, engage actively in societal life, and possess the capacity to contribute to the nation's future development. 2. It organizes the outcomes and aims to develop 21st-century competencies as well as character and citizenship education. 3. It strengthens national education in order to foster youths' emotional connection to Singapore and support their internalization of social values that contribute to society, thereby ensuring that Social Studies extends beyond mere knowledge acquisition. 4. It keeps knowledge, skills, and values up to date. 5. It sequences the primary school social studies curriculum. 6. It arranges all subjects and levels in order to ensure coherence within the curriculum structure. 7. It supports students in applying the values and relevance of social studies in their daily lives. 8. It prevents content overload and ensures a proper balance between content and skills. 9. It provides opportunities for students to demonstrate commitment to and understanding of shared values through the use of alternative assessment tools. 10. It empowers individuals and enriches society.
Recommended Pedagogy	1. Inquiry- and research-based learning 2. Essential questions 3. What does being a citizen of the country mean to me?

Section	Explanation
	4. How do I make decisions for the benefit of society?
	5. How can I contribute to society's well-being?
	6. Approaches that shape citizenship
	7. Legal status
	8. Developing a sense of identity
	9. Participation in community relations
	10. Balancing competing interests and needs
	11. Holding governance functions
	12. Providing resources and services for the community
	13. Learning one's role in working for the benefit of society
	14. Making rules, enforcing rules, and governing

Note. Adapted from MOE (2020).

In the “Curriculum Design and Use of Detailed Curriculum Content” section, 10 explanations are provided, while the “Recommended Pedagogy” section includes 14 explanations. The Singaporean Social Studies curriculum presents a holistic framework aimed at empowering individuals and enriching society. This structure, which simultaneously develops students’ knowledge, skills, and values, seeks to prepare them as responsible and active citizens in both national and global contexts.

The pedagogical approach recommended for teachers in the Singaporean curriculum focuses on guiding students’ learning through inquiry- and research-based methods. The essential questions included in the program support students in developing progressive understanding and allow them to structure their individual thought processes. For example, questions such as “What does being a citizen of the country mean to me?” or “How do I make decisions for the benefit of society?” encourage students to analyze their own values, sense of identity, and social responsibilities.

These questions also guide teachers to ensure students’ active participation in learning processes and to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes. The presence of essential questions serves to enhance the success of knowledge outcomes and promotes the integrated development of students’ skills, values, and knowledge. In this respect, the Singaporean curriculum is structured to enable teachers to implement a student-centered, process-oriented, and inquiry-based pedagogy effectively in the classroom.

Key Considerations in Implementing the Turkish Social Studies Curriculum

Table 7 presents the principles to be observed in practice in the Turkish Social Studies curriculum.

Table 7

Principles to be Observed in Practice in the Turkish Social Studies Curriculum

Items	Explanation
1	In the Social Studies learning areas, subjects such as history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, political science, and law, as well as human rights, citizenship, and democracy, are addressed in an integrated manner. These topics should be taught not separately as history, geography, human rights, and citizenship, but through an interdisciplinary approach.
2	In achieving learning outcomes, the fundamental principles of Social Studies education-such as locality, relevance, interdisciplinarity, reflective inquiry, past-present-future connections, time-continuity-change, and flexibility-should be taken into account. Instructional durations may be adjusted, if necessary, in accordance with these emphasized principles.
3	Importance should be given to the understanding of “Social Studies as social sciences” and “Social Studies as reflective thinking.” Students should be guided to intuitively grasp the scientific methods employed by social scientists (e.g., geographers, historians). By utilizing events inside and outside the school, students should frequently compare real-life problems and contradictory situations and engage in reflective thinking on the social issues they encounter.
4	In the curriculum, values and skills are directly linked to learning outcomes. However, in order to teach values and skills within the framework of lifelong learning, these values or skills should also be associated with other relevant learning outcomes and learning areas when appropriate.

Items	Explanation
5	Concept instruction holds an important place in the curriculum. Therefore, classifications and different approaches to concept teaching should be considered. Efforts should be made to resolve conceptual confusion, conceptual ambiguity, and misconceptions.
6	National and religious holidays, local liberation and celebration days, significant events, and specific days or weeks should be used to develop students' historical sensitivity and national consciousness.
7	In Social Studies instruction, attention should also be paid to utilizing out-of-school environments. These activities can range from the immediate school surroundings (e.g., school garden) to marketplaces, government offices, factories, exhibitions, archaeological excavation sites, workshops, museums, and historical sites (historical buildings, monuments, museum cities, battlefields, virtual museum tours, etc.). Additionally, oral history and local history studies should be conducted where appropriate.
8	The Social Studies course should be supported with literary works such as legends, epics, folktales, proverbs, folk stories, folk songs, and poems. Students should be encouraged to read literary works that make the subjects appealing, such as novels, historical novels, short stories, memoirs, travel writing, and anecdotes. Moreover, selected learning outcomes can be supported through traditional or modern artistic products such as painting, music, miniature, engraving, calligraphy, sculpture, architecture, theatre, and cinema.
9	Current and controversial topics related to the learning outcomes can be introduced into the classroom using different discussion techniques and linked to problem-solving, critical thinking, evidence use, decision-making, and research skills.
10	In recent years, developments in digital technology have created new situations regarding citizenship rights and responsibilities (digital citizenship, e-Government, virtual commerce, social media, etc.) as well as certain issues (digital divide, identity theft, personal data privacy, cyber fraud, cyberbullying, etc.). In order to develop students' digital citizenship competencies, relevant in-class and extracurricular activities should be included.

In the Turkish Social Studies curriculum, ten fundamental principles to be observed in implementation have been specified. The Turkish Social Studies program aims to integrate learning areas through an interdisciplinary approach and to develop students' reflective thinking skills. The program addresses subjects such as history, geography, human rights, and citizenship not separately, but within an interwoven framework, emphasizing core principles such as flexibility, relevance, and locality in achieving learning outcomes. Students are encouraged to understand the methods used by social scientists and to engage in comparative thinking with real-life events both inside and outside the school. Values and skills are linked directly to learning outcomes, and concept instruction as well as the resolution of conceptual misconceptions occupy a significant place in the program. Moreover, through the use of out-of-school learning environments, literary and artistic works, current and controversial issues, and areas such as digital citizenship, the program aims to enable students to acquire knowledge, skills, and values in a holistic manner.

Discussion

In this study, the Social Studies curricula of Singapore (2020) and Türkiye (2023) were examined comparatively. The findings reveal both similarities and differences when compared to similar studies in the extant literature. The study identified similarities and differences in the goals, values, and skill development dimensions of both curricula. Our findings conclude that both curricula aim to develop fundamental skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and social responsibility awareness. However, while the Turkish curriculum emphasizes national identity, historical consciousness, and patriotism, the Singaporean curriculum focuses on modern themes such as multiculturalism, global citizenship, and environmental sustainability. These results are consistent with findings reported by Elçiçeği (2023), which indicate that themes of national identity and global citizenship are emphasized differently in the curricula of Social Studies. In this regard, the study contributes uniquely to the literature by being the first to comprehensively compare Türkiye's updated 2023 Social Studies curriculum with a high-performing education system such as Singapore's.

In the study, by Taşkın and Bozkurt (2024), which compared the Turkish and Singaporean curricula, it was stated that the Singaporean Social Studies curriculum had a philosophy aimed at helping students understand global issues, develop empathy, and strengthen social cohesion, whereas the Turkish curriculum targeted the development of national consciousness. It was also emphasized that the Singaporean curriculum

adopted a thematic approach, while the Turkish curriculum was structured according to an expanding environment and spiral program approach. The results obtained in the present study align with these conclusions. In Singapore, various performance tasks must be conducted at least once a year from grade 3 to grade 6 to assess and evaluate students' learning. While the current study focused on learning outcomes, the aforementioned study did not; instead, it examined learning areas, learning outcomes, and assessment processes in greater detail. The similarities and differences reported in that study are consistent with the present study. Our results reveal that, unlike Singapore, where seven skills and values are included, Turkish curriculum comprises 27 values and 18 skills. Singapore has 13 goals, whereas Türkiye has 18. The Singaporean curriculum aims to cultivate inquiry, problem-solving, and multiple perspectives among students, whereas the Turkish curriculum emphasizes citizenship awareness through detailed outcomes and values. The assessment process in Singapore and its stages are presented more transparently in the curriculum. One of the major differences between Türkiye and Singapore is that the Singaporean curriculum includes the educational philosophy of the course, whereas the Turkish curriculum does not. This difference is mainly due to the fact that Singapore has standardized the teaching process in line with centralized and performance-based educational policies, whereas Türkiye has adopted an outcomes-intensive structure that provides teachers with a wider scope for instructional practices. Overall, the Turkish Social Studies curriculum reveals a detailed and voluminous document.

In Altay's (2021) study comparing Turkish and Estonian Social Studies curricula, it was concluded that the curricula differed in terms of educational philosophy and structure. The curriculum of Estonia was designed to be student-centered and skill-based. Similarly, in the present study, the Singaporean curriculum has a clear educational philosophy aimed at developing students' inquiry skills. In the Turkish curriculum, philosophical foundations are included indirectly, which aligns with the structural differences noted by Altay (2021).

Elçiçeği (2023), in a comparative analysis of Turkish and Afghan Social Studies curricula and textbooks, reported that the Turkish curriculum emphasized sociology, philosophy, and interdisciplinary objectives, while the Afghan curriculum emphasized history and geography. The curricula of both countries made reference to their national leaders, and textbooks included the national anthem. It is a fact that the socio-political structure of Türkiye shapes citizenship education around national identity, whereas Singapore's multicultural society leads the curriculum to adopt a more inclusive approach, emphasizing universal values. Furthermore, the importance of interdisciplinary objectives in both the Singaporean and Turkish curricula is consistent with the findings of the present study.

In the study by Akhan and Çiçek (2019) examining Turkish and Russian students' perceptions of the "good citizen," it was found that Turkish students' citizenship understanding was framed more nationally, whereas Russian students emphasized universal citizenship. This finding aligns with the current study, which shows that Türkiye's Social Studies curriculum prioritizes national values and consciousness, whereas the Singaporean curriculum emphasizes universal citizenship and global awareness skills. This supports the conclusion of the study that Türkiye's approach to values education is more nationally oriented, while Singapore's is more universally oriented.

Akhan et al. (2019), in their study, titled "A Comparative Example of Social Studies Education: Türkiye and Russia Social Studies Curricula," concluded that both countries aimed to develop active citizens, but Russia's curriculum promoted a more universal concept of citizenship. The findings of this study are similar to the comparison between Singapore and Türkiye, showing that Singapore focuses on cultivating more universal citizens, while both countries emphasize instilling national values. Singapore's orientation is directly linked to educational policies aiming to enhance international competitiveness and strategies for integration into the global economy.

Kafadar et al. (2018), in their study, compared the Turkish, U.S., and French Social Studies curricula in terms of values education, finding that the countries based value transmission on their historical and cultural priorities. While that study focused only on values, the present study examined broader variables such as educational philosophy, unit structure, skills, and values. The findings are similar in nature: Singapore prioritizes universal values such as empathy, respect, social cohesion, and social responsibility, whereas the Turkish curriculum emphasizes national values such as justice, patriotism, cooperation, and thrift. Therefore,

in terms of values education, the two countries' curricula exhibit different orientations within the framework of the frequently highlighted "balance between national and universal values." This study fills a gap in the literature by examining these value differences not only at the level of values but also within the context of the entire curriculum.

Osmanoğlu and Yıldırım (2013), in their study, titled "A Comparison of 6th Grade Social Studies Curricula of Egypt and Türkiye," compared the 2007-2008 6th-grade Social Studies curricula in both countries. In contrast, the present study compared the elementary-level curricula implemented in Singapore (2020) and Türkiye (2023). It emphasizes that the curricula of both countries differ in content and goals and that the historical and social context of each country affects the structure of the curriculum. This result highlights the structural differences between the Singaporean and Turkish curricula. The Turkish curriculum is detailed, content-rich, and outcomes-based, whereas the Singaporean curriculum is more thematic, simplified, and structured to guide teachers during the instructional process. This reflects Türkiye's outcome-based approach, which increases content density during curriculum development; however, Singapore's design approach simplifies learning processes and guides teachers.

In conclusion, the findings of the current study largely support comparative Social Studies education studies in the literature. The Singaporean curriculum is more systematic pedagogically, emphasizing inquiry-based learning, performance tasks, and instructional guidance, whereas the Turkish curriculum is more detailed in terms of goals, values, and skills, but presents a more general framework in implementation and assessment. In this respect, the study contributes to both identifying the pedagogical aspects of Turkish Social Studies curriculum updated in 2023 and providing a comparative perspective with high-performing education systems such as Singapore. The findings obtained in this study, alongside comparisons with the literature, addressed the sub-questions of the study, and revealed the structural, pedagogical, and value-based aspects of the curricula. The present study was predicated exclusively on curriculum documents; consequently, its findings are not supported by empirical evidence from classroom implementations.

Recommendations:

Considering that the Türkiye Century Education Model (MoNE, 2024) has recently been implemented, some of the recommendations presented in this study may have already been addressed within the updated curriculum. Therefore, these suggestions should be interpreted as complementary contributions aimed at further improving and strengthening the current Social Studies curriculum in Türkiye.

1. The Turkish Social Studies curriculum could be further simplified, similar to the Singaporean example, to provide students with a clearer and more effective learning experience.
2. The educational philosophy of the Turkish curriculum should be explicitly stated, as in Singapore, to increase alignment between objectives and teaching processes and support teachers' interpretive capacity.
3. The Turkish curriculum should focus on providing information related solely to the course in terms of objectives, content, learning activities, and assessment, similar to the Singaporean.
4. Pedagogical approaches that develop students' inquiry, questioning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills should be prioritized, and teachers should be provided with sample activities, guidance materials, and professional development support.
5. Skills and values in the Turkish curriculum should be defined more selectively and meaningfully, with clear guidance on how they can be developed in the content.
6. While preserving national identity and cultural values, the Turkish curriculum should also strengthen global citizenship, environmental awareness, and sustainability themes. Balancing national and global values is essential for enabling students to understand their local identity while developing responsibility as global citizens.
7. The utilization of formative assessment tools, such as rubrics, self-assessments, and portfolios, should be systematized, and a balance should be maintained between process and summative assessment, as evidenced by the Singaporean educational model.

Conclusion

This study compared the Social Studies curricula of Singapore (2020) and Türkiye (2023). The present study addresses a significant lacuna in the extant literature on the subject by comprehensively examining the Social Studies curricula of both countries with respect to content knowledge, program structure, objectives, educational philosophy, learning areas, skills, values, assessment and evaluation, principles to consider in implementation, curriculum design, and recommended pedagogical approaches. While previous studies generally focused on a single country or were limited to certain dimensions, this study addresses both national and global perspectives in a holistic manner. Consequently, it offers a novel perspective on the manner in which national educational policies are influenced by historical, cultural, and social contexts. The Singaporean Social Studies curriculum demonstrates a simple, holistic structure grounded in philosophical foundations. It centers on an “inquiry- and research-based learning” approach and aims to develop students as critical, reflective, and participatory citizens. The program’s objectives ensure that students maintain their local identity while adopting a global perspective, and are guided toward values such as social justice, equality, tolerance, and sustainability. The instructional process is predicated on the principles of “question-based learning” and “problem-solving,” with learning and assessment processes meticulously designed to complement each other.

In comparison, the Turkish Social Studies curriculum is more comprehensive, detailed, and explanatory. Although the educational philosophy is not explicitly stated, the objectives, skills, and values are extensive. The Turkish curriculum emphasizes national values, such as citizenship awareness, national identity, and the preservation of historical and cultural heritage. Contemporary elements, including digital citizenship, interdisciplinary approaches, and out-of-school learning environments, are also incorporated.

The Singaporean curriculum (2020) aims to develop individuals with a global perspective. The city-state of Singapore, which shares its name with the country, is presented as a global city with international relations playing a central role. Students are taught to understand both their local identity and how to act as global citizens. Emphasis is placed on multiculturalism, tolerance, and acceptance of differences. Students learn the values that enable various ethnic and religious groups in Singapore to live harmoniously.

In contrast, the Turkish Social Studies curriculum (2023) focuses on national identity and patriotism, resulting in a more local and national perspective rather than a global one. While students are provided with information about Türkiye’s regional and global position, the main focus is on Turkish culture, history, and values. Topics such as respect for diversity and tolerance are included, but primarily in the context of understanding the cultural differences within Türkiye.

The Singaporean curriculum (2020) places significant emphasis on the nation’s history, particularly the colonial period, the independence process, and economic success stories. Geography is taught mainly in the context of Singapore’s environmental sustainability, global position, and regional relations. Modern topics such as global trade routes, resource management, and urban planning are also included. In the 2023 Turkish curriculum, history and geography lessons focus on Türkiye’s geographical position, historical events, and national heroes, with special emphasis on the Ottoman and Republican periods. Geography education is directed toward understanding Türkiye’s local and regional structure, natural resources, and strategic position.

The general objectives of the Singaporean curriculum (2020) focus on helping students understand their multicultural and multi-religious society, while also developing a global perspective and essential skills such as media literacy and environmental sustainability. In contrast, the Turkish curriculum (2023) primarily emphasizes foundational knowledge in core subjects like history, geography, economics, and citizenship.

Both curricula aim to foster national identity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and social responsibility. However, the Singaporean approach specifically highlights the importance of individual belonging in a global context, while the Turkish model places greater emphasis on historical awareness and patriotism.

In terms of fostering national identity, citizenship skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, and social and environmental responsibility, the Social Studies curricula of both countries show similarities.

The Singaporean curriculum (2020) emphasizes values such as national identity, responsibility, and inclusivity. Within Singapore's multicultural society, values supporting social justice, equality, acceptance of differences, solidarity, respect for diversity, and social cohesion are central. Modern values, including environmental sustainability, global citizenship, and awareness of global issues, are also emphasized. The curriculum highlights both individual responsibility and contribution to society.

In the Turkish curriculum (2023), national and spiritual values such as patriotism, love of the flag, and historical awareness are highlighted, while universal values like democracy, justice, freedom, equality, and human rights aim to promote local and national identity while introducing Türkiye's geographical, historical, and cultural richness. Individual responsibilities within family and society are emphasized. In essence, the Turkish program emphasizes family and individual responsibilities, whereas the Singaporean program emphasizes contribution to society.

In Singapore (2020), the curriculum aims to develop skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, media literacy, creative thinking, responding to social issues, critical thinking, empathy, and understanding multiple perspectives. In Türkiye (2023), emphasis is placed on critical and creative thinking, research, effective communication, analyzing social events, making inferences and problem-solving, and digital literacy. A salient difference is that Singapore places a pronounced emphasis on empathy and understanding diverse perspectives. The Turkish curriculum encompasses a wide range of skills and values, which may impede the implementation of in-depth strategies. In contrast, the simpler structure of the Singaporean curriculum provides teachers with pedagogical flexibility and allows more room for inquiry-based learning. Both countries' assessment approaches emphasize formative and summative assessment; however, Singapore has a nationally coordinated comprehensive system, while in Türkiye, tools such as portfolios and rubrics are primarily recommended at a suggestive level.

In Singapore (2020), citizenship education focuses on understanding the country's social structure and being a responsible member of society. Students learn how to develop citizenship awareness and contribute to society in Singapore's multicultural context. Both local and global citizenship are emphasized, alongside themes such as global awareness, environmental consciousness, and sustainability. In Türkiye (2023), citizenship education is closely linked to transmitting national and spiritual values. Students are expected to gain knowledge about democratic rights, citizenship duties, and social responsibilities, covering topics such as the Turkish Constitution, human rights, democratic society, and the justice system.

The Social Studies curricula of Singapore and Türkiye are shaped by each country's national priorities, historical context, and cultural dynamics. Türkiye emphasizes national identity, patriotism, and historical awareness, whereas Singapore emphasizes multiculturalism, global citizenship, and environmental sustainability. Both curricula aim to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and responsibility, but their focus areas and values differ.

This study makes a significant contribution to comparative education by demonstrating how Social Studies curricula are shaped by socio-cultural structures. Overall, the Singaporean curriculum is strong in depth and philosophical foundation, while the Turkish curriculum is strong in inclusivity and diversity. Both countries aim to cultivate critical and active citizens; however, Singapore directly links this aim to pedagogical practices, whereas Türkiye establishes this link more indirectly. The study seeks to provide a new perspective on citizenship education policies in Türkiye and highlight the importance of philosophical and pedagogical simplicity in curriculum development. The present study is constrained to an examination of curriculum documents. Subsequent research, incorporating the perspectives of teachers and students as well as classroom implementation, would facilitate a more comprehensive evaluation of these comparative analyses.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

There is no conflict of interest.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. No financial support was received by the researcher.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Since the research was carried out in line with the document review technique, it is in the category of studies that do not require an ethics committee report. In the study, no experiments, surveys or observations were conducted on humans, animals or any living creature. Existing documents were examined.

Declaration of AI Usage Statement

No artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript.

References

- Akdağ, H., & Kaymakçı, S. (2011). A chronological approach to development of social studies education in Turkey. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(15), 854-863, <https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR11.182>
- Akhan, N.E., & Çiçek, S. (2019). An example for comparative social studies teaching: The perceptions of Turkish and Russian secondary school students towards "good citizenship". *Bayburt Journal of Education Faculty*, 14 (27), 177-195. <https://doi.org/10.35675/befdergi.430390>
- Akpınar, M., & Kaymakçı, S. (2012). A comparative view to Turkish social studies education's general goals. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 20(2), 605-626.
- Altay, N. (2021). Estonya ile Türkiye sosyal bilgiler öğretim programlarının karşılaştırılması [Comparison of the Social Studies Curricula of Estonia and Türkiye]. *İnönü University Journal of the Faculty of Education*, 22(1), 262-289. <https://doi.org/10.17679/inuefd.591037>
- Barth, J. (1991). *Elementary and Junior high/middle school social studies curriculum*. University Press of America.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Doolittle, P. E., & Hicks, D. (2003). Constructivism as a theoretical foundation for the use of technology in social studies. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 31(1), 72-104.
- Ekiz, D. (2003). *Eğitimde araştırma yöntem ve metodlarına giriş*. [Introduction to research methods and methodologies in education]. Anı.
- Elçiçeği, B. (2023). A comparative analysis of Türkiye and Afghanistan social studies curricula and textbooks. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 9(3), 752-770.
- Ergün, M. (1985). *Karşılaştırmalı eğitim*. [Comparative education]. İnönü Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi.
- Evans, J. M. & Brueckner, M. M. (1990). *Elementary social studies, teaching for today and tomorrow*. Allyn and Bacon.
- İlgaz, S., & Çaykesen M. (2019). Comparison of geography topics at the 7th-grade level in secondary education in Türkiye and Azerbaijan. *International Journal of New Approaches in Social Studies*, 4(1), 17-44.
- Kafadar, T., Öztürk, C. & Katılmış, A. (2018). Comparison of social studies curricula of different countries in terms of values education. *Ahi Evran University Journal of Kırşehir Education Faculty*, 19(1), 154-174.
- Karauğuz, G., & Özkaral, T.C. (2018). Examination of the elements related to ancient history in social studies curriculum (case of Türkiye, the Czech Republic, England, Republic of Ireland, Singapore and the New Jersey, USA). *Abant İzzet Baysal University Journal of Faculty of Education*, 18(3), 1534-1553.
- Kan, Ç. (2010). The historical development of social studies in the USA and Turkey. *Gazi University Journal of Gazi Education Faculty*, 30(2), 663-672.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Marginson, S. & Mollis, M. (1999). Comparing national education systems in the global era. *Australian Universities' Review*, 42, 53-63. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ618281.pdf>
- Ministry of National Education (MoNE). (2023). Sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretim programı [Social studies curriculum]. Ankara.
- Ministry of National Education. (2024). *Social studies curriculum (Grades 4–7): The Century of Türkiye Education Model*. <https://tymm.meb.gov.tr/upload/program/2024programsos4567Onayli.pdf>

- Metin, B., Uygun, K., & Oran, M. (2017). A structural comparison of secondary school social studies and equivalent course curricula in Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan in terms of the structure of education programs. *Uşak University Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(4), 619-642.
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2020). *Social studies syllabus: Primary*. <https://www.moe.gov.sg/primary/curriculum/syllabus>
- Moffatt, M. P. (1957). *Social studies instruction* [Sosyal bilgiler öğretimi] (N. Oran, Trans.). Maarif Basımevi.
- Nanthawong, N. (2024). A comparative analysis of social studies curricula for enhancing global citizenship: A case study of New York State, the United States and Thailand. *Higher Education Studies*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v14n3p13>
- Noah, H.J., & Eckstein, M.A. (1969). *Toward a science of comparative education*. Macmillan.
- Naylor, D., & Diem, R. (1987). *Elementary and middle school social studies*. Random House.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Rapoport, A. (2021). Human rights and global citizenship in social studies standards in the United States. *Human Rights Education Review*, 4(1), 111-132. <https://doi.org/10.7577/hrer.3997>
- Ross, E. W., Mathison, S. & Vinson, D. K. (2013). Social studies education and standards-based education reform in north america: Curriculum standardization, high-stakes testing, and resistance. *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos*, 43(10), 19-48. <https://revistasojs.ucaldas.edu.co/index.php/latinoamericana/article/view/4953>
- Osmanoğlu, A. E. & Yıldırım, G. (2013). Comparison of 6th grade social studies curricula in Egypt and Turkey. *Turkish Studies*, 8(6), 511-535. <https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.4667>
- Osmanoğlu, A. E. (2014). *Ottoman perception in Turkey's and Egypt's social studies textbooks: A comparative analyze*. *Dicle University Ziya Gökalp Faculty of Education Journal*, 22, 94-107.
- OECD. (2014). PISA 2012 results: What students know and can do (Volume I, Revised edition, February 2014): Student performance in mathematics, reading and science. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264201118-en>
- OECD. (2019). *PISA 2018 results (Vol. I): What students know and can do*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/5f07c754-en>
- OECD. (2021). *Embedding values and attitudes in curriculum: Shaping a better future*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/aee2adcd-en>
- Öztürk, C. (2009). *Sosyal bilgiler: Toplumsal yaşama disiplinlerarası bir bakış* [Social studies: An interdisciplinary perspective on social life]. In C. Öztürk (Ed.), *Sosyal bilgiler öğretimi: Demokratik vatandaşlık eğitimi* [Social studies teaching: Democratic citizenship education] (pp. 1-31). Pegem Akademi.
- Öztürk, F. Z. & Öztürk, T. (2013). Canadian Ontario province social studies curriculum and its comparison with the Turkish social studies curriculum. *Adıyaman University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 6(14), 485-514. <https://doi.org/10.14520/adyusbd.599>
- Öngören, H. (2022). A review of reports evaluating U.S. citizenship education. *Journal of Academic Platform Education and Change*, 5(2), 231-250. <https://doi.org/10.55150/apjec.1056845>
- Sağdıç, M. (2019). Historical development of interdisciplinary teaching approaches in social studies education in Turkey. *Journal of History, Culture and Art Research*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v8i2.2121>
- Schug, M. C., & Beery, R. (1987). *Teaching social studies in the elementary school*. Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Shalimov, P. (1997). Comparative education and the world crisis in education. *The Annual Reports on Educational Science*, 74, 163-179. https://eprints.lib.hokudai.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2115/29547/1/74_P163-179.pdf
- Stanley, W. B., & Nelson, J. L. (1986). Social education for social transformation. *Social Education*, 50, 528-533. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ343082>.
- Sözbilir, M. (2009). *Nitel veri analizi*. <http://fenitay.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/1112-nitel-arac59ftc4b1rmada-verianalizi.pdf>

- Sözer, E. (2008). Definition, scope and place of social studies in the primary education curriculum. In S. Yaşar (Ed.), *Hayat bilgisi ve sosyal bilgiler öğretimi* [Life studies and social studies teaching] (pp. 1-20). Anadolu University Press.
- Sönmez, V. (2005). *Hayat ve sosyal bilgiler öğretimi öğretmen kılavuzu*. [Life studies and social studies teaching teacher guide]. Anı.
- Taşkın, A. M., & Bozkurt, F. (2024). Comparative analysis of Singapore and Turkey social studies curriculum. *Western Anatolia Journal of Educational Sciences* 15(1), 177-199. <https://doi.org/10.51460/baebd.1384153>
- Trethewey, A. R. (1976). *Introducing comparative education*. Pergamon Press.
- Tokmak, A., San, S., & Kara, İ. (2023). Investigation of the social studies curriculum of Türkiye and Italy in the context of citizenship education: A comparative study. *Journal of Human and Social Sciences (JOHASS)*, 6(Education Special Issue), 28-54.
- Turan, R. & Ulusoy, K. (2010). *Sosyal bilgilerin temelleri*. [Foundations of social studies]. Maya.
- Ültanır, G. (2000). *Karşılaştırmalı eğitim bilimi (kuram ve teknikler)* [Comparative education science (theory and techniques)]. Eylül.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2021). *Nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. [Qualitative research methods]. Seçkin.