



Participatory Educational Research (PER)  
Vol. 6(1), pp. 27-35, June, 2019  
Available online at <http://www.perjournal.com>  
ISSN: 2148-6123  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17275/per.19.3.6.1>

## Place of Some Cultural Objects in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Sciences Textbooks

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### Article history

**Received:**  
08.01.2019

**Received in revised form:**  
10.03.2019

**Accepted:**  
11.03.2019

### Key words:

Culture; social sciences;  
textbooks; cultural objects

Nations that have strong connections with their past can reach their objectives more reliable and secure. This can be achieved through culture. Culture is transmitted to new generations mostly by education. Educational institutions undertake the role of transmitting culture to new generations, developing and changing the culture of that society. Schools are the most important educational institutions of one's life. Schools use different kinds of materials while carrying on this goal. Textbooks are the most important element of these materials. Aim of this study was to examine Social Sciences' textbooks which are being used in 7th grade classes in public schools; recommended by National Education authorities, in terms of selected cultural values which are determined as: family life, lifestyle, traditions, ceremonies, and holidays. This study was implemented by document analysis which is one of the qualitative studies. This study was based on a descriptive analysis and descriptive study model which investigates cultural objects within specified textbooks in regard to visual and textual respects. After the inspection of 7th grade social sciences textbooks of Ministry of National Education, it can be concluded that some cultural objects were mentioned but these are not enough. Especially for social science course culture should be more emphasized. Social sciences course is not only a history course but also a course that should include culture as well.

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### Introduction

Culture is one of the most important elements of societies which creates their core, helps them to live in the world and provides the continuation of new generations (Güfta & Kan, 2011). Culture is essential for the nations' and societies' existence and continuity of societies. Even if culture is a commonly used concept it has an unclear and slippery meaning.

There are many definitions of culture. "Culture means the whole complex of traditional behavior which has been developed by the human race and is successively learned by each generation" (Mead, 1947). According to Macit (2010, p. 9) "Culture is whole material and moral factors shared by a society's members, is transmitted to new generations and one another, and is created and valued by the society". Culture was also defined by Linton (1961) as "a learned behavior patterns appurtenant to a specific society" (p.29). According to the definitions, culture is a total of learned behaviors and these behaviors transmitted from one generation to another for the continuity of that society. Culture also guides members of the society and leads relations among people. Culture emerges from shared common products. Society occurred by people who share common culture and interact with each other. Without

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a culture we cannot mention about a society and the continuity of that society.

Cultural values have divided into two as material and moral values (Güfta & Kan, 2011). Material values are buildings, all equipment, clothing, schools, books, architectural works and etc. Moral cultural values are beliefs, customs, norms, way of thinking, religion, language, education, political life, moral, laws and etc. Of course, these cultural values differ from society to society. Every society has different beliefs, norms, traditions, lifestyles and etc. according to their past, location and experiences.

Since culture is a total of learned behaviors, new generations learn the specific values of the culture they lived in. Culture is transmitted to new generations mostly by education. Educational institutions undertake the role of transmitting culture to new generations, developing and changing the culture of that society. According to Gellner (2006) “If two people share the same culture, then it can be said that these two are from same nation” (p. 78). Thus, to be able to be a society or nation culture is a must. As Durkheim stated that for going through of a society, there should be homogeneity among members at a specific level and this can be possible due to an educational system that trains children to be alike. One of the most important aims of education is raising a child at will of society (Ergün, 2009). Some values should be earned to each individual who are in educational system to be able to harmonize within the society and to direct the society toward the same goals by gathering in same aims. So, it will provide protection of society’s own values and culture by handing down from generation to generation (Tezcan, 1991).

Nations that have strong connections with their past can reach their objectives more reliable and secure. Thus, duty of transmitting cultural heritage to new generations was given to schools. Schools provide cultural background by starting, developing innovations within the society and raising innovator and creator individuals. School is an institution that transfers culture, transmits culture to new generations and in this regard maintains continuity of culture. According to Dođan (2001), “Education is a process that elders prepare new generations to social life. New generations learn their own history and culture through education” (p.74). In respect to this, education is responsible for transmitting social, vital and national moral values to new generations.

Schools are the most important educational institutions of one’s life. One of the most important aims of the school is to transfer cultural values to new generations. And schools use different kinds of materials while carrying on this goal. Textbooks are the most important element of these materials (Altundal, 2015). Education’s culture bearer role should be reflected with textbooks. To be able to make the individual as a member of the society, this is a must. According to Çapar (2004) “While education is socializing the individual; on the other hand, it contributes individual’s gaining a culture toward government’s wish and expectation by gaining “persistent and permanent behavior” (p.1).

Taught disciplines in schools as an educational institution, put in practice by textbooks in general. Textbooks being primary course material show the importance of them. According to Meraç (2006) “Textbooks are core materials for education programs. This necessitates textbooks’ relation between cultural values and content. Textbooks act as a bridge between programs and student” (p.1). Thus, textbooks and their contents such as, pictures, texts and subjects are very important for transmitting culture to the new generations accurately. Some lessons have more responsibility than others such as social sciences course.

Social sciences course aims to gain some specific values for continuing and providing society’s existence, unity and process to students (MEB, 2005, p. 87). These values are caring

unity of family, being fair, freedom, peace, and independence, being scientific, sedulity, solidarity, sensitivity, honesty, esthetics, and tolerance, hospitability, caring to be healthy, respect, love, responsibility, cleanliness, patriotism and helpfulness (MEB, 2005, p. 89). These are values determined by the Ministry of National Education. However, only values don't represent culture. Thus, in this study some of other cultural objects will be taken into consideration. As stated above, culture is all the things that a society created, and it is divided into two sub dimensions as moral and material ones. In this study, family life, lifestyle, traditions, ceremonies, and holidays will be taken into consideration as cultural objects in social sciences' textbooks.

### ***Previous Studies***

There are many studies done on examination of textbooks. However, there are few studies done on social sciences textbooks. Most of the previous studies done on textbook examination were on Turkish and English textbooks. For example, Kan (2010) did a study on examination of 7<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish textbooks in regard of cultural elements. He tried to find out to what extent these cultural elements were used in the textbook and how these elements transferred. Another study on Turkish textbooks was done by Atalay (2011). In that study, he examined values in texts partaking in Turkish Literature and Language and Expression books. From a different point of view, Altundal (2015) had a study on examination of 4<sup>th</sup> grade English textbook on regard of cultural values.

While there are very few studies done on cultural objects; there are many studies done on examination of books regarding to values determined by the Ministry of National Education. Also, there are studies done on content analysis of textbooks regarding some values determined by the researcher. For example, Ertürk (2006)'s study was on content analysis of social sciences textbook on regard to society, citizenship, patriotism and economy.

### ***Aim of the Study***

According to Altundal (2015) people who are raised to be a member of a specific culture via schools should be educated according to moral and material values of that culture. So, social sciences' textbooks should include moral and material elements of Turkish culture and should have specific characteristics to carry on cultural elements to new generations. Aim of this study is to examine Social Sciences' textbooks which are being used in 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes in public schools; recommended by National Education authorities, in terms of selected cultural values which are determined as: family life, lifestyle, traditions, ceremonies, and holidays.

## **Method**

### ***Research Method***

This study, which is intended for determining the situation of giving place to cultural objects within 7<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks, was implemented by document analysis which is one of the qualitative studies. This study was based on a descriptive analysis and descriptive study model which investigates cultural objects within specified textbooks in regard to visual and textual respects. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013, p. 256) "According to this approach, obtained data was summarized and interpreted as far as themes determined before. Firstly, data was represented and then interpreted". In this study, cultural objects such as family life, lifestyle, traditions, ceremonies and holidays were analyzed descriptively depending on content within specified textbooks. Visual and determined textual contents in textbooks were described without changing.

## Sample

In this study, latest edition of 7th grade Social Sciences textbooks were reviewed. Textbooks were books of The Ministry of National Education Publishing House.

## Data Collection and Analysis Process

This study's data were collected through document analysis method which is one of the qualitative research methods. Document analysis consists of written materials', which includes information about research's targeted phenomenon or facts, analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). Inductive analysis was used to determine describing gathered data concepts and relations among them. Within the concept of inductive analysis, there are some steps that researchers should follow (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). These steps were followed as;

- (1) Constituting a form to examine cultural objects in 7th grade social sciences textbook. In this form, 5 (five) cultural objects' category, which were determined by the researcher, were determined.
- (2) All texts were read, and pictures were analyzed by two different field experts. One of these experts was expert on document analysis and the other one was expert on cultural studies. Two field experts and the researcher analyzed the pictures and texts and placed the related ones below appropriate category determined by the researcher.
- (3) Later, three different analyses were compared to check the harmony within the analysis. Similar analyses were reread, and the last form of the categories and their examples were made.
- (4) Inconsonant examples were removed within the related category by getting the experts' opinions.
- (5) Findings were presented according to these five objects determined at the beginning.

## Findings

In this section, findings obtained from the inspection of 7th grade social sciences textbook of Ministry of national Education were presented. Numeric distribution according to the texts and pictures of cultural objects such as family life, lifestyle, traditions, ceremonies and holidays are as follows:

**Table 1:** Distribution of Cultural Objects According to the texts and visuals

Cultural Objects	Text	Visual	Total
Family life	2	2	4
Lifestyle	2	1	3
Traditions	5	1	6
Holidays	0	0	0
Ceremonies	1	0	1
<b>Others</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

Some examples about cultural objects within the inspected textbooks were represented below:

### Family Life

In the textbook, family life was mentioned only twice in texts and twice in visuals. In page 85, it says "Family is the basis of society in Turkish culture. As a result of value of family within Ottoman society, women have a very prestige place". Also, in page 165, it says "previously extended family structure was common; but nowadays, nuclear family structure is



common”. In addition to the texts, there are two places that family life was presented in textbooks. In picture 1, nuclear family is watching TV in living room (page 25), and in picture 2, a nuclear family is having their breakfast (page 30).



**Picture 1:** Nuclear family is watching TV in living room



**Picture 2:** A nuclear family is having their breakfast

### ***Lifestyle***

Lifestyle as one of the cultural objects was mentioned 5 times within the texts and once within the visuals. In page 88, it mentions about how coffee has been a Turkish coffee. It says “Coffee had been come from Yemen 450 years ago to Ottoman Palace. Coffee had been called as “Turkish coffee” as a new method of cooking coffee in coffee pot. Turkish coffee has a very special place not only with its delight and cooking but also its presentation and drinking”. In page 46, it mentions about peace and brotherhood in Ottoman society. It says “if there are offended within two individuals, neighborhood residents come together and try to reconcile those two individuals within three days. Also, holidays are seen as an occasion of peace and brotherhood”. According to the visuals, in page 88, Turkish coffee and its presentation was shown (Picture 3).

### ***Traditions***

There are different traditions within a culture. In inspected textbook, some different traditions were given in both texts and visuals. Some traditions are as follows; wish merry holidays, having breakfast together, helping each other, notification, protecting animals, and endowments. For example, in page 28 it says “previously while visiting elders on holidays nowadays we only send text messages from cell phones”. At page 86, it mentions about helping other people and preventing animals. It says “at roadsides of villages and suburbs, rich people-built caravansary and roads for other people. Also, they built water fountains and toilets”. For cats and birds, they built bird and cat houses and water fountains to big buildings’ roofs and walls and to sepulchral monuments”.

On page 88, cooperation tradition was mentioned. It says “in Ramadan, rich people go to different neighborhoods and visit shopkeepers such as greengrocer and grocery store to pay debts of poor people. They pay debts of people that they don’t know”. Another example for cooperation is public fountains. It says “in front of some shops, you see water fountains for people while water is sold nearby”. On page 170, 172 and 173, it talks about charitable institutions in old times and nowadays. Some of these charitable institutions are Yeşilay, Kızılay, TEMA, LÖSEV and etc. Lastly, on page 24, it talks about notification of community about important news. It says “previously important news were given by brokers’ shouting out with drums. Also, announcements were made from mosques for street and village folks”. For holiday visits, on page 28, there is a visual about holiday visit of grandchildren’s visit to grandparents (picture 4).



**Picture 3:** Turkish Coffee



**Picture 4:** Holiday visit

### ***Holidays***

There isn't any text or visual about Turkish holidays.

### ***Ceremonies***

There is only one example for ceremonies of Turkish culture. That is Şed ceremony. On page 175 it mentions about what Şed ceremony is. Şed ceremony is about vocational education. In the past, to be able to open a shop, one should get vocational education first. After having vocational education, a person passes from assistantship to apprenticeship. Şed ceremony is made for this transfer. Child's father, master and a component of artisans attended to this ceremony.

### ***Others***

Along with selected cultural objects, there are some others mentioned in textbook. These are language, architecture, art and history. Language as a cultural object was mentioned in different pages. For example, on page 17 some of Turkish proverbs were given and asked for their meanings. Additionally, on page 22, it mentions about Turkish lacework as silent communication of Anatolian people. Meanings of laceworks were given. For example, a woman who is angry at her husband wears a scarf with red pepper lace. Anatolian women try to express their feelings with point laces. In addition to laceworks, carpets and rugs also show person's feelings and cultural livings who crafts it. It was also supported by visuals Picture 5.

On Culture and Heritage content, Ottoman architecture and historical events were given. Mostly birth of Ottoman Empire was told. Architecture of Ottoman Empire was also shown in most pages such as page 40, 56, 84 and 85 (Picture 6).



**Picture 5:** Carpet sample



**Picture 6:** Architecture of Ottoman Empire

Art as another cultural object was also given. Tile art, marbling art, and calligraphy were mentioned in textbook. On page 88, tile (picture 7) and marbling (picture 8) arts were described and visuals of these arts were given. On page 89, calligraphy art was described and visual of that art was given (picture 9). Other art kinds of Ottoman were also given on page 92 (picture 10).



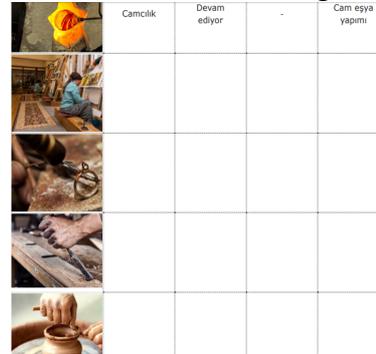
Picture 7: Tile



Picture 8: Marbling



Picture 9: Calligraphy art



Picture 10: Other art kinds of Ottoman

Some concepts of culture were also mentioned within the textbook. These are cultural degeneration and multiculturalism. On page 27, it says “due to borrowed words Turkish culture is degenerated”. On page 62, it mentions that in Ottoman Empire by respecting other religions and sectarians, there was multiculturalism. Thus, Ottoman Empire was a multicultural society.

## Conclusion and Discussion

At the end of the analysis of this study, it has been founded out that there are some texts and visuals mentioning about cultural objects within the 7th grade social sciences textbooks. These mentions can be summarized as family life (two texts and two visuals), lifestyle (two texts and 1 visual), traditions (5 texts and 1 visual), holidays (no text and no visual), ceremonies (1 text and no visual) and other cultural objects (2 texts and 1 visual for language, 4 visuals for architecture, 4 visuals for arts).

Results of the study showed that mostly traditions were mentioned as one of the cultural objects. However, these traditions are mostly old traditions. Instead of or beside these traditions, present Turkish culture traditions should be given. After traditions, family life 4th times and lifestyle 3rd times were mentioned. Family life was also taken as a cultural value in previous studies such as Altundal (2015). However, lifestyle of Turkish culture was not shown accurate. For example, on page 30 visual shows that nuclear family is having breakfast and they are having cereal, but in common Turkish culture people mostly don't have cereal and orange juice. Turkish people have tea, egg, cheese and olives at breakfast. Thus, this visual doesn't show the true culture. This result was similar with previous ones. In his study Altundal (2015) stated that “family life was not demonstrated as specific to Turkish culture

but it was dealt universally. Visuals were qualified as universal and can be faced with in every culture and unique to Turkish culture” (p. 99). There are no text or visual about holidays of Turkish culture and only one text about ceremonies which is not enough. Holidays and ceremonies are the important cultural objects of a culture. Thus, holidays and ceremonies should be had place more than this. Other cultural objects such as art, architecture and language were mentioned. Art and architecture were mentioned more than language. Language was mentioned only at two places which are not also enough. Language is as important as art for a culture. Thus, language should be mentioned more than twice.

After the inspection of 7th grade social sciences textbooks of Ministry of National Education, it can be concluded that some cultural objects were mentioned but these are not enough. Yaman, Toflan and Çolak (2009)’s study supports the result of this study by mentioning that text transmitting cultural values in Turkish textbooks were on a limited scale. Especially for social science course culture should be more emphasized. Social sciences course is not only a history course but also a course that should include culture as well. Holidays and ceremonies are important objects for a culture but those objects weren’t mentioned. There is no mention about holidays which is a big gap. Holidays and ceremonies should be continued for the continuation of a culture. Another point that should be taken care of is giving the truth for culture. As stated above, breakfast habit of Turkish culture was given wrong. It should be corrected. As a conclusion, there are some mentions about cultural objects in 7th grade social sciences textbook but these are not enough at all. Culture is the basis of a society; thus it should be given more than this.

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