

Chapter 14

Evaluation of Studies on Technology in Religious Education Published in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the studies conducted in Turkey on the use of technology in religious education. The Turkish National Academic Network and Information Center and the Journal of Theology Religious Foundation of Turkey's Islamic Research Center databases and the literature on religious education were screened (in February 2019) using the keywords "technology in religious education," "technology in formal religious education," "technology in non-formal religious education," and "technology in the religious culture and moral knowledge course." Relevant articles were first classified into two as "formal religious education" and "non-formal religious education." However, investigating the articles in both classes would be beyond the scope of one study; therefore, this study focused only on the 17 studies (published between 2000 and 2018) in the "formal religious education" class. The aim of this study was to determine the direction, trends, and problems of religious education studies in Turkey in terms of technology.

INTRODUCTION

In all areas of life, we are constantly confronted with new problems to which our current knowledge falls short of helping us find solutions. Social developments and needs and problems drive people to research and learn more. Not only do recent advances in science and technology focus on meeting people's needs and finding solutions to their problems but also transform the infrastructure of many areas. In other words, they, on the one hand, transform social life and mentality and, on the other hand, prompt us to re-question the philosophical, organizational and technical structure of education and to seek ways to restructure educational activities.

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Advances in science and technology have first transformed the means of obtaining information in education, which has introduced a different dimension to the production and sharing of information, access to and use of information. The rapid dissemination of information has, on the other hand, entailed the necessity of instructional technologies to monitor and control information processing and transformation. Advances in science and technology have also transformed the teaching methods and materials. Thus, new educational technologies are being developed, which improve the quality of schools, teachers and teaching environments, methods and materials.

Advances in science and technology have also led to the transformation of teaching models. For example, e-learning actively engages students in learning, enables them to develop new skills and contributes to learning by addressing multiple sensory organs. It has, therefore, become an indispensable part of education in recent years (Taşkıran, 2017: 284). Today, computers and computer-based technologies are extensively used to produce materials for effective teaching and learning. For example, e-contents are a kind of learning and teaching materials designed and developed as interactive animations, games, simulations etc. EBA (education information network) helps to realize learning goals by delivering audio, video, e-documents and social sharing to students over the Internet (Durnalı, Orakçı, & Aktan, 2019). The EBA facilitates learning in funny ways (Orakçı, Durnalı & Efe, 2018). A-okul provides a web-based learning environment for students of religious distance education (Durnalı, 2019).

Today, students are under the influence of visual technologies such as television, computers, mobile phones and the Internet, and therefore, they are sometimes uninterested in lessons based on classical methods, hence, the increase in technology-based or visual course materials and educational-teaching technologies. Research shows that the majority (80%) of young people spend at least one hour on social media a day (Yıldız & Demir 2016; Meydan et al., 2018). Students cannot stop using technology as it is in every corner of their lives, which inevitably makes it necessary to use technology in education.

The relationship between technology and education is the precursor of a relationship between technology and religious education because religious education is affected very much by advances in technology (Furat, 2015; p. 330). These advances in question make it necessary to integrate teaching skills, curricula, educational environments, educational methods and tools and materials with technology in religious education. The dimensions of this integration should be analyzed to achieve effective religious education. This is why we should approach religious education from new perspectives.

Studies on the use of technology in religious education generally focus on computer-assisted religious education (Asan, 2000), the use of computer-assisted technologies in visual classroom projects in the religious culture and moral knowledge course (RCMKC) (Taştekin, 2003), effect of technology-assisted courses of the RCMKC on student achievement and learning retention (Yorulmaz, 2005), use of visual media in the RCMKC (Furat, 2011), use of visual and audio materials in the RCMKC (Demirkan & Büyüksütçü, 2011), computer and internet use among RCMKC students (Keskin, 2011), RCMKC teachers' views of using computer technologies (Turan, 2012), use of technological materials in the RCMKC and RCMKC teachers' tendency to use them (Güneş, 2012), preservice RCMKC teachers' attitudes towards and self-confidence in technology use and material development (Çınar, 2014), use of digital games in religious education (Yorulmaz, 2015), effect of instructional technologies and material development course in pedagogical formation on theology faculty students' tendency to develop positive attitudes towards instructional technologies and materials (Yorulmaz, 2016b), preservice RCMKC teachers' perceived self-efficacy in the use of information and communication technologies (Özer, 2017), religious teaching materials (Güneş, 2017), teachers views of the curriculum of secondary school elective religious education courses (Sünter, 2017), developing religious education technologies and materials (Korkmaz,

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