

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND RELIGION ORIENTED CHILD
REARING: A CASE OF QURAN COURSE OF PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS
AFFAIRS FOR 4-6 YEARS OLD

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REARING: A CASE OF QURAN COURSE OF PRESIDENCY OF
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS FOR 4-6 YEARS OLD**

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ABSTRACT

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND RELIGION ORIENTED CHILD REARING: A CASE QURAN COURSE OF PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS FOR 4-6 YEARS OLD

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This study aims to analyze the role of religion-centered child-rearing practices on the production and reproduction of conservatism. In this study conservatism is defined as protecting religious, moral, and traditional values. For this research Quran courses of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) for children aged 4-6 years old are analyzed to understand the religion-centered child-rearing process and the place of religion in children's lives. In a qualitative design, a single instrumental case study was conducted. Both families and the Quran courses are part of this process. Therefore, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six Quran course instructors from two Quran courses in Yenimahalle district in Ankara and 10 parents who send their children these courses. For interviews, two different sets of questions with similar context were used for instructors and parents. Data was analyzed by applying thematic analysis method. This analysis was done by the researcher manually with the help of an artificial intelligence tool, ChatGPT in the process of coding and constructing themes. Interviews revealed that religion is a significant part of participants' identities, and lifestyles. Thus, children are provided with conservative

and religion-oriented environments in houses and Quran courses. Participants emphasized transmitting religious and moral values to children, teaching them religious knowledge and practices. Participants aim to raise devout, nationalist, and moral individuals who are beneficial to society. Thus, it can be stated that religion-centered child-rearing practices might influence the production and reproduction of conservatism through providing religion-oriented environments and transferring religious and moral values.

Key words: Conservatism, Quran courses, Religious Education

ÖZ

ERKEN ÇOCUKLUK EĞİTİMİ VE DİN TEMELLİ ÇOCUK YETİŞTİRME: DİYANET İŞLERİ BAŞKANLIĞI 4-6 YAŞ KUR'AN KURSU ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı muhafazakârlığın üretimi ve yeniden üretiminde din temelli çocuk yetiştirme pratiklerinin incelenmesidir. Muhafazakârlık bu çalışmada dini, ahlaki ve geleneksel değerlerin korunması olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu araştırma için din temelli çocuk yetiştirme sürecini ve dinin çocukların hayatlarındaki yerini anlamak amacıyla Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'na (DİB) 4-6 yaş Kur'an kursları incelenmiştir. Nitel bir desen içinde tekli araçsal durum çalışması yapılmıştır. Hem aileler hem de Kur'an kursları bu sürecin bir parçasıdır. Bu sebeple veriler Ankara'nın Yenimahalle ilçesindeki iki Kur'an kursunda çalışan altı Kur'an kursu öğreticisi ve bu kurslara çocuklarını gönderen ebeveynlerle gerçekleştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Görüşmelerde öğretmenler ve ebeveynler için benzer içerikli iki farklı soru seti kullanılmıştır. Veriler tematik analiz yönteminin uygulanması ile analiz edilmiştir. Bu analiz araştırmacı tarafından bir yapı zekâ aracı olan ChatGPT'nin kodlama ve tema oluşturma sürecindeki sanal yardımlarıyla manuel olarak yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler dinin katılımcıların kimliklerinin ve hayat tarzlarının önemli bir parçası olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Dolayısıyla çocuklara hem evde hem de Kur'an kurslarında muhafazakâr ve din odaklı çevreler sunulmaktadır. Katılımcılar çocuklara dini ve ahlaki değerleri aktarmak, dini bilgi ve pratikleri öğretmek istedikleri vurgulamışlardır. Katılımcılar topluma faydalı olan dindar, milliyetçi ve ahlaki

bireyler yetiřtirmeyi amalamaktadırlar. Dolayısıyla, din temelli ocuk yetiřtirme srecinin din odaklı ortamların saėlanması, dini ve ahlaki deėerlerin aktarılması yoluyla muhafazakrlıėın retimi ve yeniden retiminde etkili olduėu sylenbilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Muhafazakrlık, Kur'an Kursları, Dini Eėitimi

‘No one had a common ballad, no one could sing alone.’

To people who search for a common discourse

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| DP | Democrat Party |
| JDP | Justice and Party |
| IHSs | Imam Hatip Schools |
| IHHSs | Imam Hatip High Schools |
| MoNE | Ministry of National Education |
| NSP | National Salvation Party |
| PRA | Presidency of Religious Affairs |
| RE | Religious Education |
| RPP | Republican People's Party |
| TPP | True Path Party |
| WP | Welfare Party |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to understand religion-centered child-rearing practices within Quran courses of the Presidency of Religious Affiliations (PRA) for children aged 4-6 years in terms of production and reproduction of conservatism through analyzing the perspective of instructors who work at these Quran courses and parents who send their children to these courses. This chapter will present background information on the relationship between education and society, religious education (RE) in Turkey, and conservatism. This chapter will also mention the statement of the problem, purpose, and significance of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

There is a strong connection between education and society, especially after the industrialization and establishment of mass education. With industrialization and the establishment of modern societies, mass education emerged. After this major change, the role of education in society in terms of transferring some values has been a matter of debate. It has also been discussed which norms and values should be transferred and continue to exist while others should be changed or disappear as a matter of social policy (Ergün, 1994). Debates on human societies' major features, whether their structure is based on the social order and harmony between groups or continuing conflict between groups with different interests affected the thoughts on education (Hurn, 2002). Scholars who supported the idea of social order and harmony developed the functionalist perspective while scholars who emphasized the ongoing struggle between society gathered around the conflict approach and reproduction theories.

Functionalist understanding of society is explained via the human body metaphor. Like parts of the human body with specific functions, parts of society called social

institutions work together to maintain social order (Sever, 2012). According to the functionalist perspective, education is one of the social institutions. The educational system functions to socialize children for the transmission of culture and select children with a meritocratic approach (Dinçer, 2003).

The most important figure of the functionalist perspective is Emile Durkheim. In his book, *Moral Education*, Durkheim (1925/1961), identifies the importance of moral education for raising children according to the expectations of society. In *Education and Society*, Durkheim briefly explains the nature of education and the relations between society and education. The other functionalism-oriented scholars Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, and Robert Dreeben also explain the functions of the educational system, knowledge transferred to schools by focusing on socialization, selection, and meritocracy. Unlike their perspectives, conflict theory indicates that the concept of meritocracy and selection myths for hiding unequal social order.

The conflict theory of education was derived from the ideas of Karl Max who focuses on economic relations within society and Max Weber who highlights cultural relations (Yıldırım Taştı, 2023). According to this approach, there is a conflict between classes that hold economic or cultural domination and others who want to have this dominance (Dinçer, 2023). From this perspective, reproduction theories are established. The economic reproductive theory of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis is explained in their book *Schooling in Capitalist America*. Bowles and Gintis (1976) indicate that the educational system corresponds to the economic system and the existing relations of production are reproduced. Louis Althusser introduces another perspective on the reproduction of interests of the dominant class in his book *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. Lastly, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron identify the role of the education system in the reproduction of the dominant culture in their books *Reproduction and Inheritors*. Although their discourse on education and society is different, both functionalist and conflict theories define the importance of education for social structures (Dinçer, 2023).

Since this study aims to understand the religion-centered child-rearing practices in terms of the reproduction of conservative culture, it is important to mention the

relationship between religion and parenting, RE in Turkiye and other countries, and conservatism. Religion may affect parenting approaches of people, inter family relations and identity construction process of children (Petro et al., 2017). Although it has different outcomes in adulthood, religiosity of parents influences parenting practices and childhood experiences (Godina, 2014). Religiosity of parents may also affect children's educational lives in terms of taking RE.

The goal of RE is to provide knowledge and experiences about religious rules and practices, maintain children's commitments, and develop religious thinking (Gottlieb, 2006) Like Turkiye, RE is an issue in different countries and different approaches toward RE are implemented. These types are denominational RE that focuses on a specific religious belief or non-denominational RE that focuses on different religions. RE can also change according to being compulsory or optional, provided by state, religious communities, or state authorities, or together. These can change according to the aim of the RE (Schreiner, 2013). Thus, RE is a controversial issue for countries including Turkiye. Throughout the history of the Turkish Republic, approaches to RE have differed according to the interest of the state. The place of religion, its weight, and aims have changed but religion has been an integral part of Turkish national education (Kaplan, 1999). The portion of religion within the Turkish education system has been growing with compulsory RE and an increased number of religious courses, Imam Hatip schools (IHSs) (Akyüz, 2021), and Quran courses (Öcal, 2017). There have been different studies about RE in Turkey, these studies are mainly focused on IHSs. The studies about Quran courses of the PRA for children aged 4-6 years are developed around the existing conditions in these courses, the quality of given education, and the values education. For example, the study of Dinçer (2019) focuses on the conditions and expectations by taking the opinions of instructors who work in these institutions. Another study on these courses is conducted by Acur (2019) with instructors to analyze the values of education. Genç (2019) also uses the opinions of instructors to examine the quality of education given in these courses.

The changing approaches to religion and national identity can be seen in the changes in forms of conservatism. In Turkiye, four forms of conservatism have emerged throughout the republic: Kemalist conservatism with an emphasis on nationalism and

Westernism and sometimes religion, nationalist conservatism with an emphasis on Turkish and sometimes a nationalist-religious approach, religious conservatism with an emphasis on Turkish-Sunni-Islamic faith, and nationalist-religious conservatism (Genç & Coşkun, 2015). It can be said that nationalism and lastly religion have always been part of conservative thought. The study demonstrate that the perception of conservatism is related to preserving family which is a traditional institution (Scruton, 1984), religion, and nationalism, (Türköz & Türköz, 2022).

Considering this theoretical background, this study aims to examine the role of religion-centered early childhood education provided by PRA in the construction and transfer of conservative thought.

1.2. Purpose of the study

This study strives to analyze religion-centered child-rearing through Quran courses of PRA for children aged 4-6 years. In this study, the effect of this religion-centered education on the production and reproduction of conservatism is investigated by taking religion, traditional institutions and values, and national values into consideration as components of conservative thoughts since Turkish conservatism emphasize importance of religion, nationalism, and morality (Köni & Torun, 2013). To make this analysis, the opinions of instructors who work in these courses and parents who send their children to these courses are sought. This study also reveals the role of family in this process and questions the complex relations between the family and religion-centered course. The research also demonstrates the religion-related experiences of individuals. This study is designed as a single instrumental case study. While conducting the research, the complex nature and history of RE in Türkiye and education as a social institution are also considered.

1.3. Research questions

1. How is conservatism produced or reproduced through religion-centered child-rearing practices and early childhood education?
 - 1a. What roles do Quran course instructors play in child rearing practices and early childhood education?

1b. What role does the family in child-rearing practices and early childhood education?

1.4. Significance of the study

On the one hand, education itself as an institution, the early childhood period, and the education given during this period is important in producing and reproducing some thoughts, knowledge, and meanings. On the other hand, the influence of religion in the construction of conservative thought cannot be abnegated. Quran courses for children aged 4-6 years, which combine these two powerful phenomena, education, and religion, are the most widespread institution after the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in the field of early childhood education. Thus, this study is an attempt to analyze their roles by using the case-study research method. Conducting this study contributes to the literature of educational administration and planning considering its diverse nature.

1.5. Definitions of terms

Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA): “*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*” a public cooperation which responsible for conducting a religion-related businesses, informing the public about religious issues and managing places of worship in Turkey since 1924 (Yücel, 1994).

Quran course: “*Kur’an Kursu*” an institution established to teach reading the Quran correctly and properly and memorizing part or all of the Quran (Çağrı,2002).

Quran courses for 4-6 years old group: institutions that give Quran education and values education alongside the preschool education for children aged 4-6 years old.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study aims to understand the role of the religion-centered child-rearing process in the production and reproduction of conservative culture, and in relation to this also the creation of conservative generations through early childhood education given by Quran courses. Thus, the literature focuses on the relationship between education and society, definitions of conservatism, and lastly RE by mentioning the Turkish context, implementations in different countries, and the relations between parenting and religion.

2.1. The Relationship Between Education and Society

There have been different theories regarding the relationship between education and society and individuals, or the role of education within a society. The three major approaches towards education are Durkheim and functionalism, the Marxist perspective and conflict theory, and the interpretive approach (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). This study mainly focuses on the production and reproduction of conservative culture, but two major theories of the sociology of education that approach education from the macro perspective, functionalist and conflict theories of education will be discussed alongside the reproduction theories since they contribute to the current literature in understanding the complex nature of the relationship between education as an institution and society.

2.1.1. Macro Perspectives Toward Education

Firstly, *functionalist theory* focuses on the role of education and schools in society's functioning. As one of the major theories with a macro perspective, functionalist theory attempts to explain and justify the role of education within society (Tan, 1990, p. 557). The functionalist perspective highlights the requirement for problem-solving

mechanisms called social institutions for each society to ensure the survival and development of society such as culture transformation, providing coherence among members, etc. (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). Education is one of the social institutions that needs to function together and separately to ensure stability within society. Education and other institutions; family, religion, economics, and politics should work harmoniously and contribute to the functioning of society (Ballantine et al., 2018). The main argument of the functionalist theory is explained through machine or living body metaphors. According to the this society is a kind of machine whose all parts work interconnectedly for the machine to operate (Sadovnik et al., 2018). Similarly, functionalist theory views society as a living organism with integrated works of different systems. For the survival of an organism, each system or organ must fulfill its functions such as respiratory, digestion, or circulation. (Feinberg & Soltis, 2019). Like the gears of a machine or a system of a living organism, each institution of society should fulfill its mission and work together. The emphasis on the social system of functioning interdependent institutions is related to the process of social order (Cookson, Jr. & Sadovnik, 2002). The functionalist perspective is also interested in the process of social order through consensus within society (Sadovnik et al., 2018).

This social order and consensus are the expected consequence of a functioning society with works of interdependent social institutions (Ballantine et al.,2017). A well-organized social structure requires a set of practices clearly defined and implemented in accordance with the objectives of the system (Merton, 1968). Each social structure with its unique features represents the interdependent relations between social institutions (Aslan, 2001). The relationship between society and education is important for both sides in terms of the maintenance of social order. In a school where children spend time with individuals within a small society after family, children not only gain skills and knowledge for economic life but also become citizens who meet the expectations of society. For functionalist perspective, the survival of society through functioning social institutions can be provided by the internalization of norms and values of society by its members. Socialized individuals who internalize these behave as expected and according to the defined roles provide the working of institutions properly. Thus, social order is maintained through socialization (Tan, 1990).Durkheim defines education as the influence of adult generations on individuals who have not

developed yet for social life. The purpose of education is to arouse and develop physical, intellectual, and moral conditions that are demanded by both political society as a whole and the special social environment in which a child is specifically destined from him/her in the child. Shortly, education is a “methodical socialization of the young generations” (Durkheim, 1922/2016, p. 54). Education is methodical socialization since there is a planned, programmed system with clear goals rather than indiscriminate learning within society which is called socialization without method (Ergün, 1994). Durkheim emphasized society as a determinant of education. He mentions two aspects of education which are being decided by a special social environment like class or locality and making individuals fit with the collective life (Barnes, 1977). Thus, through education, children are trained to be social individuals according to the requirements of society. According to Durkheim, education is a social fact that exists as external to individuals and has coercive power to impose itself on individuals. A person, willingly or under the pressure of society, public conscience, or punitive sanctions, conforms to the forms of behavior, feeling, and thinking that occur outside of herself /himself that are social facts (Durkheim,1894/ 2013). Similarly, Talcott Parsons attaches great importance to functions of education for maintenance, and improvement of modern societies which are different from previous societies (Cookson, Jr & Sadovnik, 2002). According to him, the maintenance and development of modern society can be provided with education because it has two vital functions: socialization and selection. In the process of socialization, the capacity of children to adapt to society increases by learning the norms and values of society and selection is about meritocracy. Children’s occupation and rewards are based on their efforts and merit (Yıldırım Taştı, 2023). Thus, development is provided by selection based on merit and maintenance is provided by adaptation to society.

The diversity of education within a society according to occupational specialization is a necessity for a modern, civilized nation, unlike inequality due to the ascribed earnings of pre-modern societies. The transition from the mechanic solidarity due to the similitude of consciousness in primitive societies to the organic solidarity of modern societies was provided with the division of labor which was based on the interdependence of functioning members of society (Merton,1934, p. 320). Thus, education should be differentiated according to the occupational specialty of an

individual and his/ her role in society (Barnes, 1977). People as individuals do not have a big impact on education, rather education that shapes individuals is shaped by society's greater effect, expectations, and necessities. Education, like other social institutions, is a social fact (Ottaway, 1968), so it has some power to exercise constraints on people. This pressure also restricts parents' choices regarding their children's education and upbringing, which differ from those determined by society and the social milieu (Ottaway, 1955). If children are raised without considering the norms and values of the society they live in, they cannot have the ability to live in harmony with society (Durkheim, 1922/2016). The emphasis on the effect of society can be seen in Durkheim's approach toward punishment and moral education. For him, morality is significant for maintaining social order, the function of schools is teaching and transferring moral values since the classroom is a small society. The main purpose of punishment is to make children feel guilty and disapproved. Children should learn that their immoral behaviors are reproached, and disapproved of by society (Durkheim, 1925/1961). Parsons also defines the classroom as a social system. Children internalize their responsibilities and develop commitments to their future adult roles and values and structure of society. Children are praised for being successful in their classes, for their skills, and for being well-behaved and responsible (Parsons, 2018). A formal education system that brings children under the control of adults legitimizes some behaviors and patterns accepted by society for children. Although there are different motivational sources, eventually children can accept schools' role expectations, adapt to universal achievement systems, and fulfill their roles (Parsons, 1951). Thus, schools function to improve the skills of pupils not only for occupational employment but also for participating in other social segments by contributing to psychological capacities through teaching norms of public life (Dreeben, 1968).

The emphasis on the effect of society shows that education changes from society to society. The functionalist perspective emphasizes the unique culture of each society, with norms and values that are rules, regulations, and desirable actions for a society. There should be a consensus among individuals to follow these norms and values for a functioning society (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). Education also differs from time to time in the history of a particular society. The education approaches varied according to the needs of time and society, so there is no definition of ideal education independent

from the requirements of time and society (Durkheim, 1922/2016). From a Durkheimian perspective, this change can be seen in Turkish education. National education ideology has changed depending on the conditions of the period from the establishment of the republic to the present day (Kaplan, 1999). Thus, changes in society and the world are also associated with educational approaches. The approach towards education is related to social change, education is both an important part and a mediator of this social change from a functionalist perspective. Education functions to create generations who have the power to provide social change and comply with innovations. Thus, the future of society can be guaranteed. Education has the power to support and control social change (Ergün, 1994). According to functionalism, social change is a slow process that does not disturb the functioning of the system, and society needs to keep up with new conditions of time (Ballantine et al., 2017). Parsons views social change as a change of functions for reaching new goals that appear with new situations. With the change in functions of institutions, the balance between old and new society will be provided (Ergün, 1994, p. 196). With new necessities of social system, change in education became unavoidable for their transition. Thus, educational change is both an indicator and a result of social change in society (Durkheim, 1977).

In summary, the functionalist perspective emphasizes the functions of schools for the maintenance and development of society by socializing and selecting individuals and contributing to the process of social change. This point of view is criticized by some scholars for overemphasis on social order and consensus and failing to recognize the diversity of interest groups, and conflict between different groups. Therefore, there are different approaches to the relationship between education and society.

Like functionalist theory, *conflict theory* also deals with the relationship between education and society, but it looks at this relationship from a different perspective. The conflict theory against the functionalist theory's emphasis on maintaining stability in society can be detrimental to some disadvantaged groups. This approach emphasizes the role of schools in unequal educational outcomes and social stratification like social classes (Ballantine et al., 2018). Thus, there is a conflict among different groups to have economic, political, cultural, and power for imposing their will on the entire society. Karl Marx and Max Weber's ideas laid the foundation for the conflict theory

from different perspectives (Karabel & Halsey, 1977). The Marxian approach deals with explaining conflict from more economic orientation and the consequences of capitalism. Although Weber agrees with Marx in terms of power relations and economic inequalities as sources of conflict, he believes that conflict exists within non-capitalist societies. Different groups struggle against each other to have more power, prestige, and status (Hurn, 2002). Marx emphasizes the continuing conflict between groups of society that compete, “the haves and have-nots” (p.33). The group who controls power, economy (wealth), and privileges is called the haves and others are the have-nots who strive to own larger wealth. The struggle between them defines the structures, aims, and functioning mechanisms of social institutions (Ballantine et al., 2017). On the other hand, for Weber class struggle is not enough to explain the complex system of hierarchies and what makes these hierarchies reasonable and inevitable. Thus, he analyzes status cultures and bureaucracy as a dominant authority in modern societies (Sadovnik et al., 2018). Weber indicates that people are part of status groups that share a common culture, manner, lifestyle, etc., and membership in these status groups defines the individual identity. Individuals fight as a group with each other to own scarce goods of society like wealth, power, or prestige. Thus, conflict in society mainly exists among society (Collins, 1971).

Conflict theories emphasize the role of education in the reproduction of the economic and political status quo by creating an illusion of objectivity, neutrality, and opportunity (p. 50). Schools function to reproduce belief systems and tendencies that are necessary for the continuity of privileges of dominant classes (Feinberg & Soltis, 2019). Marx believed in the false consciousness of individuals in terms of the belief of superiority of dominant classes prevents them from collectively revolting against the unequal structure of society (Hurn, 2002). The illusion of objectivity and neutrality of education for all provides conditions for the continuity of dominance of some groups. The conflict theory of education not only opposes the idea of equality in educational opportunity but also believes that this idea is used by dominant classes as a cover for privileges (Tan, 1990). According to the Marxist approach, dominant groups establish hegemony over others by ensuring acceptance of their perspective from subordinate groups (Feinberg & Soltis, 2019). Bates indicates that hegemony is about the consent of subordinate groups to the leadership of the dominant class and

the popularization of the worldview of the dominant class (p.352). According to Gramsci, the dominant class was not established by using force alone but also by ideas and consent (Bates, 1975). Hegemony is a notion that constitutes the consciousness of society rather than a mere opinion. It creates a sense of reality for people through a body of meanings, values, and practices that are experienced by people and constitute their understanding (Williams, 1973). For Gramsci, the dominant class imposes a way of life, their cultural hegemony through force and consent which is provided by values, norms, ideas that support the continuity of existing order and institutions that determine this order, and an acceptable amount of disagreement. With this content, subordinates develop a commitment to the existing system through legitimized rules (Lears, 1985). Hegemony has a complex structure that needs constant renewal and recreation. Gramsci defines two components of structure: civil society, and political society. Civil society consists of private organizations for the formation of social and political consciousness like churches, schools, clubs, etc. while political society consists of public institutions that have direct dominion like the government, court, and police. The dominant group uses its power in both components differently. The free consent of people to the existing orders is tried to be established within civil society, and the coercive apparatus of the state is used at the political society level (Bates, 1975).

Education has a role in the hegemony construction since schools are transferring to the dominant culture (Williams, 1973). They process people and process knowledge that contributes to the cultural and ideological hegemony of dominant groups (Apple, 2013). Processed knowledge in school is not neutral knowledge, rather it is legitimate knowledge because of complicated power relations and conflict between different groups (Apple, 2002). The legitimate knowledge that is defined by the ones who have power. School is an agency of selective tradition which indicates the definition of dominant culture's components as tradition of all, transferring some meanings and practices as legitimate while ignoring or changing others (Williams, 1973). In summary, from a conflict point of view, education serves the benefits of dominant groups for preserving unequal distribution of power, wealth, public good, and reproduction of inequalities. This point of view led to some theories which analyze the role of education in the reproduction process.

Reproduction theories aim to explain the relations between the economic system of society, educational experiences, forms of consciousness, and cultural activity (Collins, 2009). Reproduction theories that are influenced by the Marxist perspective, reproduction of production relations to maintain the existing social order that favors the ruling class, correspondence theory of Bowles and Gintis, and Althusser's approach towards ideology are highly important. On the other hand, some perspectives emphasize social and cultural reproduction, unlike the Marxists' emphasis on economic structure.

The economic-oriented reproduction perspective of Bowles and Gintis, correspondence theory analyzes the economic role of education. According to this theory, classroom dynamics reflect the class interactions and distribution of the workforce that are shaped by hierarchically organized values, norms, and skills (Giroux, 1983). They indicate that increasing conflict in society is reflected in the educational system. Education does not promote equality since economic achievement is not independent of the social origin of individuals. Family backgrounds of individuals influence not only educational attainment but also educational and economic consequences (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). In modern societies, education functions to the needs of a capitalist production system for a skilled and disciplined workforce and provides a method of social control system. Thus, the increasing economic importance of a skilled and disciplined workforce causes an increase in the importance of educational inequalities to sustain and reproduce the class system (Bowles, 1977). The importance of education for the economic system can be understood through the relation between the organization of schools and forms of consciousness in society, interpersonal behaviors, and personal traits that are reinforced in schools. The structure of the school and the fostered social relationships within it correspond to the structure of the labor system. Thus, there is a similarity between the structure of the educational system and the economy (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). The social relations in schools that are defined by emphasis on discipline, punctuality, and respect for authority reflect the social relations in the workplace (Bowles, 1977). The function of adapting individuals to the social division of labor depends on the social class of children and the school itself. Since the expectations from managers and workers are different, schools that train individuals for different

occupations and positions differ in terms of their curriculum and structure by representing the class structure and different features of lower and upper professional positions (Hurn, 1985, as cited in Tan, 1990). In summary, the importance of education for the labor system is the production of the workforce by providing technical and cognitive skills and the reproduction of social relations by legitimizing unequal social structure via the meritocracy myth and adapting children to hierarchical relations and labor systems.

Althusser also attempted to analyze how relations of production are reproduced to sustain the dominance of the dominant class. The Marxist perspective defines repressive apparatuses of the state that include force or threat of force against those who oppose but it can be costly or ineffective in making people act in ways and thus maintain dominance of the ruling class. Therefore, Althusser, a Neo Marxist, defines Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (Feinberg & Soltis, 2019). Althusser adds ISAs to repressive apparatuses of the state for the reproduction of labor power. He indicates that in addition to the reproduction of skills and competencies, there is a need for the reproduction of a submissive attitude to obey established social order (Demaine, 2003). According to Althusser, people who do not hold the means of production sell the use of their labor power to those who hold them as dominant classes. To reproduce the condition of production there is a need for reproduction of the means of production and reproduction of labor power which requires reproduction of skill and obedience to the dominant ideology (Althusser, 1995/2014). The reproduction of labor power happens through ISAs (Demaine, 2003). The ISAs are systems of state institutions that function by the ideology of the dominant class (Hirst, 1976, p. 387). The ISAs can be the scholastic apparatus, the familial apparatus, the religious apparatus, the political apparatus, the associative apparatus, the information and news apparatus, the publishing and distribution apparatus, and the cultural apparatus and there are institutions corresponding to each ISA like schools, churches, the parliament, etc. (Althusser, 1995/2014). The scholastic or educational apparatus is in the dominant position in capitalist society since there is no other ISA that takes individuals and holds them in its mechanism for many years as schools do without any cost to individuals, long hours a day, and at least 5 days in a week (Althusser, 1995/2014). Thus, schools play a significant role in maintaining the dominant ideology. As can be seen, these

theories are very much oriented toward economic reproduction and relations of production and the role of education in this process. However, they fail to understand complex relationships with schools and other institutions and their mechanistic and deterministic approach does not give place for culture or resistance in the theory of schooling. Thus, cultural reproduction theory is interested in the ability of capitalist societies to reproduce themselves by connecting schooling to culture, class, and domination (Giroux, 1983).

The cultural reproduction of Bourdieu and Passeron analyzes the ways of the production and reproduction of unequal distribution of power in society through the transmission of culture (Apple, 1978). For them, the functions of education are the socialization of individuals to fit social norms and values, transferring culture, and the selection of individuals for different positions from a functionalist perspective. However, they attempt to explain the functions of education in the reproduction of dominance of some groups (Bredo & Freinberg, 1979). Thus, it can be said that the culture that is transferred from generation to generation is the culture of dominant groups. Bourdieu defines three forms of capital which are economic, cultural, and social capital. Cultural capital can be converted to economic capital and institutionalized in the form of educational qualification (p. 242). The distribution of cultural capital is again unequal and children from different social classes own different amounts of cultural capital. The scarcity of culture which is related to unequal distribution of it and profits from it ensures the existing class structure of society (Bourdieu, 1986). There is a relationship between education and the distribution of cultural capital. The educational system contributes to the reproduction of the social system by legitimizing the heredity transmission of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Since the culture of the dominant group is legitimized by schools and individuals from the dominant group also hold the cultural capital, educational success is more likely than others (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964/2012). There is an indirect influence of dominant groups on the educational system which is defining legitimate knowledge and meanings and providing daily activities corresponding to that knowledge and meanings rather than teaching obedience (Bredo & Freinberg, 1979).

Bourdieu and Passeron define the pedagogical practice as “symbolic violence” of dominant groups since it is the imposition of cultural arbitrariness by an arbitrary

power to reproduce (p.35) the relation between classes and cultural arbitrariness of dominant groups. They criticize the functionalist approaches for not analyzing the influence of symbolic relations on the reproduction of power relations. They indicate that the pedagogic practice that suits the interest of dominant groups tends to reproduce the distribution of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/2015). This imposition of cultural arbitrariness mustn't be provided via using force. Bourdieu and Passeron mention the pedagogic authority that actualizes the pedagogic practice and has power over pupils. Children tend to accept the transferred knowledge as legitimate since it is provided by a legitimate pedagogical authority through pedagogic practice (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/2015). Thus, the culture of dominant groups is reproduced through education that legitimizes the norms and values of that culture. The relation between class structure and education is mentioned before, for Bourdieu and Passeron it can also be seen in the higher education system. According to their analysis, the attainment of higher education is highly related to the social class of individuals. The representation of individuals from lower socioeconomic classes in higher education is highly low when compared to individuals from higher socioeconomic classes since their chances to attend higher education are quite low (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964/2012). The differences among individuals are not limited to class differences. The chances of females from lower socioeconomic classes attending higher education are lower than males from the same class while the difference is small for higher socioeconomic classes. Lastly, departments of individuals are differentiated according to their gender, females prefer departments that are identified as feminine such as teaching, psychological counseling and guidance, and design (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964/2012). Thus, the education system contributes to the reproduction of not only the class structure but also gender roles in society through the reproduction of the dominant culture.

To sum up, all these theories with different perspectives are mainly interested in how education affects or contributes to the structure and functioning of society. Both theories with macro-perspectives are criticized for not paying attention to what is happening within the school and perceiving school as a black box (Apple, 1979). Functionalists are criticized for being conservative and over-emphasis on social order (Saha, 2011), conflict and reproduction theories are criticized for being overly

deterministic (Macris, 2011). These theories are also criticized by the interactive approach mostly for accepting individuals as almost entirely products of socialization by ignoring their creativity and autonomy. These macro approaches are also criticized for not considering the richness and complexity of individuals. They mainly focus on the general framework of education without considering the inside of the school, the relationship between different parties in school, and day-to-day situations in a classroom (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). Interpretive theories that tend to focus on daily interactions in schools are developed as a reaction to macro-level theories. They emphasize that macro-level theories are not capable of understanding the dynamics of everyday school life that have a great effect on children's future (Ballantine et al.,2017). Unlike these macro perspectives, the micro perspective of interpretive theory gives importance to the experiences of individuals and small groups within an education system since it accepts individuals as active participants in shaping their lives rather than the product of society (Ballantine et al.,2018). The interpretive approach highlights everyday activities in schools, autonomy and freedom of individuals, meaning given by individuals to their behaviors, interactions, and subjective understanding to analyze education and its influences and change (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). Two important understandings are developed from this perspective. Firstly, labeling theory suggests that children behave according to expectations from them and how they are labeled, secondly, rational choice theory indicates that individuals interact according to the assessment of cost and rewards (Ballantine et al.,2017).

In short, macro-level theories are criticized for ignoring human agency. Feinberg and Soltis (2019) indicate that functionalist and conflict theory must understand how people perceive the world. They need to understand daily relationships within schools, reactions of individuals against some situations. These theories have been criticized for looking from an overly macro perspective, but they also have a great influence on approaches toward education. Although functionalist and conflict theories have opposite views on education, both of them emphasize the significant role of education in the maintenance of existing social order and in raising individuals according to society's expectations. They also highlight how the content, the organization, and the structure of the educational system are affected by society and its existing order.

2.2.Conservatism

The history of conservatism dates back to the early 19th century, the emergence of conservative thought is related to great and unimaginable changes in social conditions. With technical innovations, there were changes in society, economic, and political systems. Conservatives were against these newly emerged liberal ideas like the free market, social mobility, diversity of cultural and religious beliefs, and breaking away from traditional values and authority. They defended the closed markets, stable ways of human life, and traditions (Fawcett, 2020). The reaction against the change which symbolized through the French Revolution (Heywood, 2004), the criticism was uttered by Burke, he opposed this revolution because they were against their traditions and values (Özipek, 2006). As can be understood from the name of the term, conservatism is about the desire to conserve existing order, and institution. According to conservative ideas, human beings tend to conserve things that are safe and familiar and be part of something continuing, preexisting social order which can be society, community, religious institutions, etc. (Scruton, 1984). Conservative thought includes fear or rejection of change, it defines traditional social order, institutions, and values as protectors of the fabric of society to give people a sense of belonging and equilibrium (Heywood, 2004). In conservative thought, the things that are opposed by conservatives are more obvious than things that they support and for that reason, conservatism has been identified as a negative approach that includes resistance or doubt toward change (Heywood, 2017). The foundation of their resistance to change about their beliefs in tradition, human imperfection in society, hierarchy, authority, and property (Heywood, 2017). In general, conservatives have doubts about developed theories and abstract principles, they rather choose to trust in tradition, history, and experience (Heywood, 2004, p.138).

The cornerstone of conservatism is tradition which is identified as the source of knowledge and wisdom, and the product of society's experiences gained over a long period of time (Erdoğan, 2004). Traditions are tools of people who are incapable of fixing complex issues alone due to their limited personal experiences against issues by providing them concrete information and wisdom as a result of humanity's actions over thousands of years (Beneton, 1988/1991). The accumulation of knowledge in society

which is traditional cannot be acquired by individuals (Erdoğan, 2004) and these traditions define the rules by which society is formed (Fawcett, 2020). Tradition also establishes a sense of identity and belonging since individuals recognize customs and actions and feel familiar (Heywood, 2017). It is difficult to define conservatism because traditions are specific to societies (Erdoğan, 2004). For example, in Japan, preserving tradition means loyalty, hierarchy, and duty while in Iran, conservatism is represented through an authoritarian character (Heywood, 2017). From the definitions of tradition, the view of human imperfection can be seen. Conservatives believe that humans are imperfect with their limited capacity to understand the complex structure of society and the universe they live within (Özipek, 2014). Humans are dependent creatures who cannot live without society and fear isolation and instability. People tend to seek security, stability, and familiarity (Heywood, 2017).

Conservatism is against the idea of individualism by emphasizing people's needs for society. Individuals cannot exist without societies, they were born without power and need others, and they learn from society (Beneton, 1988/1991) and so, society is an organic formation arising from the necessities of people. Society shapes individuals (Erdoğan, 2004). Conservatives prioritize society over individuals, they emphasize social order. They criticize modernist and liberal views for their individualistic approach that disturbs society and social order (Beneton, 1988/1991; Fawcett, 2020). Unlike traditional conservatism approaching negatively to freedom of individuals to preserve social order, people's obligation to be part of society makes the concept of freedom positive for social conservatism. People act freely when they learn and accept their duties and obligations (Heywood, 2017). The social order brings authority and hierarchy which are major parts of society from the conservative perspective. Everyone has different roles and functions in society and the differentiation in role, function, and power is required for social order (Nisbet, 2017). Inequality and hierarchy are natural features of organic society (Scruton, 1984).

Conservative thought emphasizes some components of society like family, and religion, and pays attention to protecting these components (Özipek, 2006). These traditional institutions are conservative forces. Religion makes people believe something greater than them (Scruton, 1984) which is also related to the idea of the

imperfection of humans (Özipek, 2004). People who have religious faith believe in the existence of a perfect, omnipotent being and accept the authority and rules of this being. Beneton indicates that although all conservatives are not religious people, they highlight the social functions of religion in terms of creating a source of authority, tradition, and order, bringing people together, making a person a member of a sub-society, and introducing rules of acting (Beneton 1988/1991). The components of conservative thoughts in Türkiye are different from the approach in other countries. In Türkiye, there is a tendency to understand conservatives as religious people (Türköz & Türköz, 2022). Conservatism in general mentions the role of religion in social order (Genç & Coşkun, 2015). However, in Türkiye religion is the fundamental component of conservatism. In Türkiye conservatism can be defined as the desire to protect religion, tradition, and family rather than resistance to change and protection of the status quo (Türköz, 2011). Since religion is an important part of the Turkish understanding of conservatism with family and traditions, it is important to understand religion-related issues in the field of education, families, individuals, etc. Thus, the following section will continue with RE by considering parents also.

2.3. Religious Education

RE includes providing religious culture and giving religious identity to individuals. This education can be given by parents or primary caregivers in the family, religious teachers in the school, and religious commissaries in other places (Bilgin, 1981). Thus, family, state, and private institutions can be actors in the field of RE. There are different implementations on RE. Whether RE is allowed or not, and whether the state provides RE are closely related to how the state perceives religion (Kuru, 2011) since one of the most important indicators of a state's approach toward religion and secularization is RE (Grigoriadis & Gurcel, 2012, p.1). In this section, the history of RE in Türkiye, RE in different countries by focusing on Christian, Jewish, and Islamic RE and lastly the relationship between religion and parenting will be mentioned.

2.3.1. History of Religious Education in Türkiye

Türkiye is an interesting country in this field since there are a state-affiliated religious institution, vocational religious schools, and compulsory religious courses despite

being secular (Kuru, 2011). Türkiye is also in an important position in terms of RE considering Islamic education because Türkiye made one of the most remarkable educational operations in contemporary Islam through the transition from religion-centered education in a religion-centered state to a secular education system with the establishment of the nation-state of Türkiye (Genç, 2012). Since then, the place of religion in public education and RE education types have been a matter of debate (Grigoriadis & Gurcel, 2012). There have been various practices of RE in the Turkish education system from not including RE to compulsory RE (Kaymakcan, 2006) since the beginning (Şahin & Keskin, 2019). The relationship between the period and RE is important in the history of the republic since different implementations have existed in this field from the absence of RE in formal education to giving it optionally and later including it in the program as an elective course and finally becoming compulsory education alongside the different systems from 8 years of unerrupted education to 4+4+4 (Şimşek, 2013). In the following sections, phases of RE in the Turkish Republic will be discussed from the foundation of the republic to current implementations.

In the early republican period, The laic education policies of the young republic of Türkiye were associated with the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the republican regime (Zengin, 2017). The modern Turkish Republic was founded by considering the Western political model (Şen and Starkey, 2020). The idea of a nation-state prevailed over the idea of an Islamic state for the new regime after the independence war with the abolition of the sultanate in 1922, and the caliphate in 1924. This victory paved the way for various reforms in law, education, language, and culture (Berkes, 1998). The educational reforms during this period, combined with other reforms, served the aim of establishing a modern society (Gürsoy & Çapcıoğlu, 2006). In the early republican era, there were radical and rigorous works in the field of education from primary schools to higher education to take advantage of the power of education for constructing a nation-state and rearranging the lives of individuals (Ayhan, 2000). Berkes (1998) highlights that the existence of both secular and religious ways of education in the Ottoman period created bifurcation among individuals which led to conflict and clashes. With the idea of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire because of the inability to create a nation with various education systems, Republican elites believed in the significance of a single education system for all society to raise faithful

citizens (Gençkal Eroler, 2019). With the law accepted in the republican era, the education system was unified (Bilgin, 1993). The law on the unification of education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu), the most important educational reform (Çalal, 2018; Akyüz, 2011), was enacted in 1924. With this law, all madrasas and schools were affiliated with the MoNE (Şimşek, 2013). The 4th article indicates the opening of IHSs and theology faculties for raising religious intellectuals (Şimşek, 2013) and closing the religious order (tariqas) (Berkes, 1998). Actually, laicization efforts in education started with the curricular letter that banned religious omens and signs in schools (Adem, 2008, as cited in Uçar& Sayın, 2017) and continued with other reforms. 8 of the laws that came into force after the declaration of the republic were called revolutionary laws and their immunity was guaranteed with the 1961 constitution and the 1982 constitution stating that these laws' provisions cannot be considered and interpreted as unconstitutional. The law on the unification of education is one of these 8 laws with special status (Öcal, 1998). This law is also important in terms of religion since the newly established laic state apparatus, MoNE, was held responsible for giving RE instead of religious authorities (Furat, 2020).

After the execution of the law RE was started to be given within the state schools. The faculty of theology affiliated with Daru'l Fünunkana (which would be Istanbul University later) was opened (Öcal, 1998) but this faculty was closed due to a lack of students (Öcal, 2008). Schools to raise religious officials were opened for students from madrasas that were closed after being connected to MoNE (Öcal, 1998). In the beginning, Quran lessons in these schools were taught in the Latin alphabet, then both Arabic and Latin alphabets were used in two separate lessons until the 1950s when the Quran started to be taught in only the Arabic alphabet (Öcal, 2017). It can be said that the law did not end RE on the contrary, it was that providing laic and RE within the modern education system. However, in the mono-party period (1923-1946) there were some issues in the implementation of RE. IHSs and the faculty were closed, and religion lessons were removed from each grade's curriculum in the 1930s (Kaymakcan, 2006). The MoNE did not fulfill the duty given by the law to provide RE for almost ten years until 1946 (Bilgin, 1993). This situation was related to the idea of republican elites. They found laicization of the state schools significant since it was thought that through schools the aim of a national and laic state could be reached more easily

(Kanadođlu, 2013). According to them, modern and civilized Turkish society with a national identity in which religion has little role can be achieved through the separation of the state and political affairs from religion. Thus, they made some institutional and structural changes to provide laicization (Keyman, 2007). There were several reforms according to this worldview worth mentioning, even if they were not directly in the field of education. The day the Law on the unification of education was accepted, the Ministry of Sharia and Foundations (Şeriyye ve Evkaf Vekaleti), and the caliphate was abolished. The PRA and the General Directorate of Foundations were established in the place of the ministry (Berkes, 1998). This article demonstrated the efforts for civil law rather than sharia. The most important reform in the field of law was the acceptance of the Turkish civil code, the criminal code, and the commercial code adapted from the and the repeal of religious courts parallel to this in 1926 (Ozankaya, 1990). Religious clothing of religious officials out of work, religious titles were banned, and lodges and shrines were closed (Berkes, 1998). Lastly, the Arabic alphabet was replaced with the Latin alphabet in 1928, and a call to prayer was made in Turkish by considering laicism and nationalism (Şen& Starkey, 2020).

It is important to refer to laicism's involvement in the Constitution since republicans aimed to take the power of religion and its agents by restricting them to belief and worship areas through the separation of religion from the state (Lewis, 2002/2018). The article that indicated the country's religion as Islam was removed from the 1924 Constitution in 1928. The phrase "Turkiye is a laic state" was added to the 2nd article of 1924 Constitution (Çapcıođlu, 2009, p.27). The 1961 Constitution defined Turkiye as a national democratic, laic, social constitutional state. With this article, laicism became a feature of the state (Ertan, 2007). The 1982 Constitution continued to use the phrase "laic state" while sorting the principles of the state in the 2nd article and protected these principles with the 3rd article by stating that they cannot be changed and changing them cannot be offered (Uçar& Sayın, 2017). Analyzing laicism is important since the state's approach toward laicism affects the policies of RE. Kuru (2011) defines two approaches toward laicism: exclusionary laicism requests the absolute absence of religion in public spaces while passive laicism is more tolerant of religion in public spaces. With the shift from exclusionary laicism to passive laicism in the multi-party period, the state provided more freedom to religion (Turan, 2009).

In the *multiparty period*; Türkiye's socioeconomic relationship with Western democracies had been improving and the state had been entering a new era with the transition to a multi-party system after the Second World War. Thus, there were some shifts in educational policies, and religion became a matter of debate politically and culturally (Kaymakcan, 2009). After the transition to the multi-party period, both parties were more moderate towards religion and RE (Öcal, 1998; Giorgetti & Batır, 2008) to get Muslim votes (Zürcher, 2017/ 2018). Different members of the parliament started to express the absence of religion with the multi-party system after 1946. The absence of RE provided by the state, or lodges, led to uncontrollable RE and increased some groups exploiting religion (Turan, 2009). The necessity of RE was mentioned loudly and became an important political topic. Through this process, RE in primary and secondary schools was put into practice, and IHSs and theology faculties were opened (Şimşek, 2013). In the RE program of the state in 1949, protecting the principle of Turkish reforms and the rights of parents to provide RE were highlighted (Giorgetti & Batır, 2008). In the process that started with the DP coming to power in 1950, works on RE education were continued, in 1956 it became part of the formal secondary school curriculum as a selective course, and in 1959, the Higher Islam Institute was opened for the higher education of IHSs graduates (Kaymakcan, 2006). During the 10 years of government, DP opened IHSs, and governments that came after the DP also continued to increase the number of these schools to get votes (Akyüz, 2021). In the DP period, laicism and nationalism were refined in a way that they were not against religion, thus religion was neither prevented by laicism nor excluded by nationalism. This view laid the foundation of conservative nationalism in place of secular nationalism later (Gençkal Eroler, 2019, p.59).

The 1960 and ongoing process is significant for the Turkish Republic with the military coup d'état in a more accurate definition, the military intervention since the aim was not a regime change (Çelik, 2008). On the 27th of May 1960, the military announced the abolition of the DP government, and the establishment of the National Unity Committee chaired by Cemal Gürsel for governing the state (Zürcher, 2017/ 2018). During this process, the reports were prepared to identify the current situation in RE and provide improvement (Öcal, 2017). Regarding RE in schools, selective religious lessons were added to the high school curriculum by the Justice Party in the 1967-1978

academic year (Akyüz, 2021). The Directorate of RE was established in 1961, and IHSs and Higher Islam Institutes were connected to this institution (Gündüz, 1998). In the 1970s, developments in RE continued. Like the faculty of theology, the faculty of Islamic sciences was opened under the Atatürk University in the 1971-1972 education year (Öcal, 2008). Higher Islam Institutes continued to be established until they were turned into theology faculties and connected to universities in 1982 (Gündüz, 1998). After the 1973 selection, the coalition government founded by the Republican People's Party (RPP) and National Salvation Party (NSP) opened Imam Hatip High Schools (IHHSs), and the following governments continued to open IHHSs until 1980 (Öcal, 1998). The number of students preferring IHHSs has been increasing with the granting of university entrance rights to their graduates after giving high school status in 1973 (Öcal, 2008). RE also continued to be selective in other types of state schools.

Altaş (2002a) emphasizes the growing place of religion in formal education due to policies in line with people's demands. Before the coup d'état on the 12th of September 1980, selective RE and compulsory moral education were taught in schools. The number of IHHSs increased and their graduate students had equal opportunities with other high schools regarding university attendance. There was a faculty of theology, a faculty of Islamic sciences, and higher Islam institutes (Kaymakcan, 2006). However, there have been some issues in this field. Discussion about the place of religion in education and selective RE continued until the 1980s (Şimşek, 2013). After the 1980 coup d'état, the opening of new IHHSs was accepted by the National Security Council (NSC) a constitutional institution consisting of authorized generals of the Turkish military (Şahin& Kesik, 2019). Most importantly, the military government made important decisions about RE; selective RE and compulsory moral knowledge education were joined under religious culture and moral knowledge (RCMK) as a compulsory lesson for primary and secondary schools (Kaymakcan, 2006). Compulsory RE is about the protection of laicism and keeping religion under the supervision of the state (Erken, 2020). Furat (2020) emphasizes two idiosyncratic features of policy in Turkish public schools. Firstly, RE is the responsibility of the state rather than any religious authority including PRA. Secondly, according to the 24th article, the curricula were not developed around any denomination of Islam, moreover, they included different belief systems other than Islam (Furat, 2020).

Religious lessons without focusing on any denominations unlike selective religious lessons based on Islamic doctrine (Zengin, 2017) aimed to provide national solidarity and information about the society for its people. (Aşkıoğlu & Genç, 2012). However, Altaş highlights similarities between compulsory and selective religious lessons. In compulsory lessons that aimed to develop respect and indulgence to other beliefs the principles of Islam, concepts of Allah and the prophet, and Islamic belief and moral systems occupied a huge space in the curriculum of compulsory lessons (Altaş, 2002a). Therefore, it is hard to mention pluralistic and inclusive RE. The issues in the curriculum like respect and freedom of religion were also mentioned in the constitution. However, neither the idiosyncratic features of religious lessons nor the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion and belief could end ongoing debates about compulsory religious courses. Schools have been seen as a tool of the state to impose principles of religion and there have been some efforts against compulsory religious courses through domestic and international legal channels (Altaş & Kaya, 2023). Türkiye lost two cases at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) because of violating the freedom of parents to raise and educate their children according to their religious beliefs and philosophical views with compulsory RE. In the case of Hasan and Eylem Zengin vs. Türkiye (2007) and Mansur Yalçın and Others vs. Türkiye (Yıldırım, 2022), the ECtHR decided that compulsory RE with its non-objective and non-pluralist content was inappropriate for the religious diversity in Türkiye and providing freedom for parental beliefs (Kaymakcan & Hendek, 2022). Some students have the right to withdraw from these lessons, but it also creates some issues. Children of Alevi, deist, atheist, or agnostic families do not have the right to be exempt from RCMK lessons, according to decisions on RCMK in 1986, Christian and Jewish children were not held responsible for practicing knowledge of Islam (Köylü, 2015) and they were given the right to be exempt with declaring their beliefs (Hendek, 2019) but forcing them to declare their beliefs could create a risk of discrimination. Thus, not only the existence of compulsory RE but also exemption from it (Yıldırım, 2022). The military regime also allowed IHHSs graduates to enter any faculty by changing the article that allowed them to enter universities only towards the education they received (Akyüz, 2021). People who took religion-based education preferred other faculties and had different professions rather than religious officials. Therefore, a vocational school that aimed to raise religious professionals expanded its sphere of

influence, and religion was in the same way. All these decisions were related to the last phase of the increasing effect of Islam on the national identity since the 1950s, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis that accepted Islam as an inseparable part of Turkish national identity unlike the Kemalist view (Gençkal Eroler, 2019).

Turkish-Islam synthesis was introduced by Hearth of Enlightened consisting of right-wing intellectuals (Güven, 2005) against the effects of left-wing intellectuals on the social, political, and cultural arena. According to this idea of synthesis pre-Islamic Turkish culture and Islam have strong similarities that make it special. It was highlighted that Turkishness and Islamic beliefs formed the existing Turkish culture (Zürcher, 2017/ 2018). Turkish identity integrated with Islam was accepted even by laic military members, including Kenan Evren who would become the president of Türkiye with the coup d'état and it affected education policies and content of education (Zürcher, 2017/ 2018). In addition to the increasing number of IHSs and students in these schools, discourses about Atatürk's relationship with religion have begun to increase in the content of courses. The RCMK program included Atatürk's opinions about Islam and laicism (Öcal, 2017) and national values, flag, etc. (Yürük, 2010). Atatürk's opinions about Islam, representation of Atatürk as Muslim and laic and Muslim republic regime were added to the curriculum of the History of Revolution to connect Kemalism and Islam (Gençkal Eroler, 2019). Thus, two devices of the state, education, and religion, were used together to control society. The religious-nationalist who defended the idea of unifying Islamic values into the nation's culture under Turkish-Islamic synthesis dominated politics and state education in post-1980. Turkish Islamists have achieved to integrate the worldview emphasizing unrest in society without Islamic faith and promoting Islam for the salvation of society in state schools (Kaplan, 2005). The increasing effect of Islam on politics and conservatizing efforts on education was faced with a military intervention in 1998. Contrary to the increased effects of religion in education since the multi-party period, there were some limitations of RE after the military memorandum (the post-modern coup) in different aspects. The military memorandum was against the coalition government of a center-right True Path Party (TPP) with the Islamist Welfare Party (WP) which was deemed as anti-systematic and Islamist and monitored since the municipal election in 1994 (Aslan, 2016) as a major partner due to its actions seemed as Islamic reactionism

(irtica) (Cizre & Çınar, 2003). Headscarf issues, Quran courses, IHSs, religious sects and their rapprochement with the government, and state officials who engaged in reactionary activities were matters of debate in the period before February 28 (Çelik, 2008). In a regular meeting of the NSC on the 28th of February 1997, an unusual document entitled “The Measures to be Taken Against Religious Reactionist Hostilities Against the Regime” included decisions of the NSC (Aslan, 2016, p. 368) to inhibit Islamization of the state and enforce the secular system (Cizre & Çınar, 2003). The council decisions highlighted the necessity of strict laicism for democracy, and the military forced the government to follow these decisions immediately, but the prime minister refused to sign and resigned at the end of the 6 months, and decisions were accepted by the new government (Şahin & Kesik, 2019). The decisions included the obligation of 8 years, uninterrupted education, closing Quran courses and middle school level IHSs, strict implementation of the law of dressing (the hat act) means strict headscarf ban in universities, prohibition of Sufi orders (tariqat) (Genç, 2012). During this process, the military staff defined Islamic reactionism as a more significant national threat than other external factors (Narlı, 2005) and took religion-related activities and places under strict control (Aslan, 2016). The visibility of Islam in the political, economic, and public arena declined with the restriction of religious activities on social and economic life, the restriction of religious activities within the military, and the restriction on the education of NCS in the process of the 28th of February (Bahçekapılı, 2014). The part of the 28 February process regarding RE was putting the NCS decision into practice, so Imam Hatip middle schools were closed with the 8-year, uninterrupted education, unofficial Quran courses were closed, university entrance of IHHSs students were limited by making preferring fields other than theology difficult with the coefficients (Çelik, 2008). After these decisions, the number of students in IHHSs declined like in other vocational schools due to restraints in university entrance with the coefficient gap (Öcal, 2007). The government that was selected after the 28 February process, followed similar policies to NSC’s decisions. The implementations of RE did not remain limited to the IHSs and formal education, Quran courses were also affected by religion-related limitations regarding NSC’s decisions. With the change in law, an age limit was introduced for RE in 1999 (Bahçekapılı, 2014). The article which was added to the law on Establishment and Duties of the PRA to make regulations on Quran courses in 1999 indicated that Quran

courses are opened by the PRA for individuals who graduated from primary school to learn the Quran and its meaning, to memorize the Quran, and to gain religious information. Individuals who have completed the 5th grade can attend summer Quran courses under the supervision and control of the MoNE (Öcal, 2017).

The Supreme Court found the decision about summer Quran courses after fifth grade constitutional on the grounds of children's maturity to understand abstract concepts with the transition to abstract operations from concrete operations and not disturbing children's school education (Kanadoğlu, 2013). The decisions that limited both formal and informal RE and restrictions targeting religion during the February 28 period had a strong influence on the politics in Türkiye and prepared the ground for the government of a conservative democratic party, Justice and Party (JDP), and important transformations of education policies and RE.

2.3.1.1. The current situation: 4+4+4 and the PRA's Quran courses. The February 28 period had important consequences in Turkish political history since the traditionalist and reformist wings of the National View movement separated after the February process which led to the establishment of JDP that has been defining the national identity of Türkiye in the 2000s (Gençkal Eroler, 2019), by the reformist wing (Aslan, 2016). Unlike the traditionalist group whose political actions were dominated by religious issues, the JDP defined itself as conservative democrats rather than Islamists, but religious issues have been on the political agenda of the government (Cizre & Çınar, 2003). RE has been among these issues and there have been some actions of the JDP government.

The new education system called 4+4+4, the reopening of Imam Hatip middle schools, the introduction of new religious courses, the abolishment of the age limit for Quran courses, and the establishment of new Quran courses are some important issues that occurred regarding RE under the rule of the JDP since 2002. Besides its influence on different fields, the 4+4+4 Education system is quite important for RE due to providing reestablishment of the secondary stage of RE, imam hatip middle schools. Gençkal Eroler emphasizes the increasing effect of religion through more attention to the ideological function of education after 2011. The period started with eliminating the disadvantage of IHHSs by removing the coefficient gap in university entrance before

2011 and continued with restoring the position of the secondary stage of IHSs by introducing the new education system, 4+4+4 (Gençkal Eroler, 2019). With this approach, change in the education system was represented as the abolishment of decisions of the February 28 period, “a black mark on the history of Turkish democracy”(Akçabay, 2014, p.223). A law called 4+4+4 was enacted amid controversy by publishing in 2012 without making any pilot study (Gün& Baskan, 2014). With these amendments, the statement of 8 years of uninterrupted primary education was replaced with elementary and secondary school and 12 years of uninterrupted education. This 12 year of education consists of 3 independent schools: 4 years of primary school, 4 years of secondary school, and 4 years of high school (Öcal, 2017). This law lets children and parents choose religious or general education middle school since the law also indicates the opening of IHSs at the middle school level (Genç, 2012). Thus, this law paved the way for Imam Hatip middle schools that were closed in the February 28 period and their number started to increase. Despite a pause in the number of Imam Hatip middle schools, and students in these schools, there has been great growth in that area (Karateke, 2021). In this period, some successful schools were transformed into IHSs (Akçabay, 2014).

In IHSs, the curriculum is developed around Sunni Islam which can be seen in compulsory lessons like compulsory religious courses in IHHSs as Arabic, Quran, Vocational Arabic, History of Religions, and Islam Culture and Civilisation, and the absence of lessons about other beliefs (Şahin& Kesik, 2019). With the increasing number of IHSs and religious lessons, the number of theology faculties and students in these faculties increased since RE teaching programs were taken from the education faculty and connected to them (Genç, 2018). Thus, with more people in IHSs and theology faculties, Islam has become more visible both in society and in different stages of education. The rationale for IHSs at the middle and high school levels and RE at higher was to train future religious officials, but with their Islam-oriented program, they served the aim of practicing Muslims (Furat, 2020). Şaraplı (2021) indicates that the function of IHSs for JDP, a conservative party, is to produce officials with conservative Islamist ideology. The quite famous statement of the president, raising a religious generation, was an indication of the educational goals and policies of the government (Gençkal Eroler, 2019).

The increasing effect of Islam on education was not limited to the opening of IHSs, 3 new religious courses were introduced within the new education system alongside the compulsory RCMK course defined as a lesson to provide general information about religion rather than focusing specifically on Islam as the major sources of religion (Genç, 2012). Although this definition, the dominance of Islamic principles in the new curriculum of the course. The curriculum of RCMK includes forms of worship in Islam, information about Allah and the prophet, moral values, and effects of Islam on cultural life with only one topic about other religions at the primary and elementary school level (MEB, 2024a). Meanwhile, the RCMK curriculum at the high school level includes Islam-based doctrines, except for the topics on different beliefs in the 11th and 12th grades (MEB, 2024b). In fact, the aim of the lesson is related to providing knowledge about the Islamic faith (MEB, 2024a; MEB, 2024b). In addition to this compulsory, Islam-oriented lesson, the number of religious courses increased with the introduction of three selective courses in middle and high school curricula in 2012 to teach “Islam as a system of faith” (Furat, 2020, p. 226); these courses are The Holy Quran, Basic Religious Knowledge, and The Life of Our Prophet, it is also important that with this lesson the MoNE defined the prophet of Islam as our prophet (Akçabay, 2014) and transferred this approach through different selective religious courses. These courses are selective, but people are forced to choose them when selective courses are decided by school administrators without the children’s wishes (Şaraplı,2021) or influenced by politicians or opinion leaders (Gençkal Eroler, 2019). Thus, education was used for teaching and promoting religion (Şaraplı, 2021, p.199), especially the Sunni interpretation of Islam (Akçabay, 2014).

Other important decisions regarding RE were about Quran education and the entrance of Quran courses. Quran education has a long period in the history of Turkish RE, dating back to the former Turkish Islamic states. Along with the RE given by state schools in the Ottoman period, different institutions called Dâru’l-Kurrâ were giving Quran education and Darü’l-huffâz was training hafiz until the republic (Zengin, 2011). Thus, in the Ottoman period, the Quran was part of both formal and non-formal education. With the establishment of the republic and the law on the unification of education and establishment of the PRA, all madrasas and other schools giving RE closed and IHSs opened for raising religious officials instead and Dâru’l-Kurrâs was

replaced with Quran courses (Öcal, 2004). In accordance with this law IHSs opened, and the need for an institution to train hafız emerged. Thus, the PRA was authorized for this education, and Quran courses affiliated with the PRA opened (Zengin, 2011). Öcal (2004) emphasized the insufficient number of Quran courses at that time and existing courses were also closed in the first years of the republic citing the alphabet reform and the ban on Arabic letters in 1928. In the 1930s, authorities allowed some khojas to establish courses only for teaching people the Quran and prayers, provided that they were over at the age of 12 in some cities (Öcal, 1998) while Quran education continued unofficially and secretly in villages (Öcal, 2008). The process started with the transition of the multi-party period especially the election of the DP in 1950 and continued until the February 28 period, the exponentially increasing number of Quran courses was remarkable. The DP government both opened Quran courses and allowed unofficial Quran education (Öcal, 2004). In the 1960s, the approach of the state towards Quran courses changed from raising religious officials to non-formal education institutions for adults and children (in summer courses) (Zengin, 2011). Subsequent governments, even during the military coup periods, continued to open Quran courses and their numbers peaked in 1997 (Öcal, 2004). The legal regulations that introduced the age limit affected the situation in Quran courses. The number of students in long-term Quran courses, summer courses, and Quran courses to train to be hafız and the number of courses declined noticeably after February 28 (Bahçekapılı, 2014).

The situation on Quran courses started to change with the election of JDP in 2002, Quran courses became widespread again (Öcal, 2004) and the limitations of the February 28 period were abolished (Öcal, 2017). The regulation on the Quran courses and dormitories and boarding houses of the PRA published in 2012 and included the phrase “for citizens who wish” without any age restriction (Öcal, 2017). With the abolishment of the age limit, the number of Quran courses and students in Quran courses started to increase (Bahçekapılı, 2014). This change also paved the way for Quran courses to be opened at the preschool level since there was no age requirement for entrance. Quran courses of PRA for 4-6 age group children started to be opened in the 2013-2014 academic year as a community-based educational institution (Sak, 2024). In the 2013-2014 academic year, the courses opened in 10 cities for pilot study

under the RE Project for 4-6 Age Group Children, and courses started to be opened all over Turkiye in the 2014-2015 academic year. With this attempt, a RE project targeted the 4-6 age group developed for the first time in the history of the republic (Yağcı, 2020). The reason for this project was related to Quran courses for adults whose participants were generally mothers of young children. These participants demanded RE for their children, and this contributed to the abolishment of the age limit (Dinç, 2024). This program aims to provide proper RE for children, Genç (2019) indicates that education for young children given by PRA is significant for providing moral, and religious information and Quran education and ensuring healthy religious development of individuals. This program was developed around values education (80%) and Quran education (20%) to teach national and universal values alongside the religion, Allah, the prophet, and the Quran (Dinç, 2024). The general aims of this program are to create awareness of Islam, children's transfer values to daily life, children's knowledge of the Quran in shape and sound, to ensure a love of Allah and the prophet in children, to provide healthy religious development and positive experiences regarding religious concepts and principles, and to support children's holistic development (DİB, 2022, p. 6). Through this education, children are meeting with religious concepts and other national concepts in the early years of their lives. The educational areas of the program are course adaptation, religious information, values education, the Quran, complementary gains, and nutrition and cleaning. The education in these areas is given in both half-day courses that cover 25 or 30 hours of education in a week and full-day courses (DİB, 2022). The education area that takes up the most space in the program is values education that consists of respect, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, helping and sharing, empathy, justice, social decorum, patience, love and mercy, and national and religious values (DİB, 2023a). Looking at the achievement table of the program, it seems that the values are associated with Allah and the prophet as much as possible. For example, one of the achievements of responsibility indicates that a child says that people are responsible to Allah, or a child learns the concept of Muhammedü'l Emin (emphasis on the honesty of the prophet) (DİB, 2023a). Therefore, it can be inferred that children learn universal values through religious concepts. To mention other areas, the content of religious information includes Allah, the prophet, the Quran, prayer, fasting, and religious places. Quran education includes Arabic letters and pointing, reading the Quran at the

end of the process, and memorizing surahs (sections of the Quran) without their meanings except one prayer called success prayer (DİB, 2022). Education in Quran courses is not limited to RE since all development areas are targeted, the area of complementary gains is similar to the target achievements defined by the MoNE. Topics of this area are colors, geometric shapes, amount, dimension, place and directions, numbers, senses, emotions, symbols, time, and opposite concepts (DİB, 2022). There are books for children and instructors based on the curriculum of the Quran courses. In the instructors' books activities, stories, or dramas are presented for each topic as examples. Education for all these areas is provided through games and activities presented in these books. There have been some changes, updates, and development work in the curriculum (Sak, 2024) and instructors are supported with in-service seminars (DİB, 2023c) for better education. The number of these courses has been increasing according to people's demands, since the beginning (Sak, 2024). According to the 2023 activity report of the PRA, 208.936 children were given RE in 5.988 Quran courses of the 4-6 age group (DİB, 2023c).

There are some debates about these courses in terms of instructors' appointments, curriculum, and materials. The competency of instructors is controversial since graduation from the preschool teaching department is not required and there is a need for monitoring and evaluating works for education in these institutions (Tunca et. all, 2021). On the other hand, regarding the competency of instructors, a certificate in early childhood education is requested from instructors who do not have education in this field (Dinç, 2024). However, some studies demonstrate that sometimes instructors feel pedagogically incompetent to support different development areas of children (Genç, 2019; Yağcı, 2020) and although in-service training or having a certificate is helpful for instructors, these implementations might not be enough (Acur, 2019; Dinçer, 2019) and there is a need for more support for instructors' improvements. There are some issues in the curriculum of courses and materials, in terms of developmentally inappropriate subjects and abstract concepts that are hard to understand for children in the curriculum (Genç, 2019). Although it is accepted that there have been improvements in the curriculum and materials (Acur, 2019), abstract concepts of the 2018 curriculum like faith, angels, and meanings of prayers were removed from the 2022 curriculum (Çelik & Çakmak, 2023), it is suggested that materials should be

more age-appropriate and interesting for children (Karaca, 2020) and there should be some for improving methods of teaching abstract concepts since a RE cannot be completely free of abstract concepts (Çelik & Çakmak, 2023). Despite the ongoing debates and issues, PRA's Quran course program occupies an important place in the early childhood education field since the PRA is the second institution after the MoNE regarding the number of services (Sak, 2024).

To sum up, conservatism in education due to the growing influence of religion, Islam has been increasing despite military interventions, and it became more visible with the discourse of raising religious generations (Akçabay, 2014). It is important that RE aims to develop a national identity rather than the phenomenon of ummah without national discourse (Köylü, 2015). Thus, a national identity integrated with religion is produced through RE within various settings including Quran courses and families. But RE is not an issue that is taken seriously or discussed only in Türkiye. Other countries, whether secular or affiliated to any religion, have developed different implementations of RE. In the next section, examples of these different implementations will be mentioned.

2.3.2.RE in Different Countries

RE is not provided only in Türkiye, different countries are also providing education in different religions from early childhood to university. I would like to mention some of these RE programs. Since there have been various faith systems around the world throughout history, there have been different RE programs in different countries. Therefore, in this part, I would like to narrow down these programs by focusing on Christian education and Jewish education, especially the ones that are provided in Israel and I will mention RE in some Islamic countries very briefly.

Firstly, as is mentioned above, a country's attitude towards secularism influences how it approaches religion. Indirectly, it affects how the country provides RE. Oruç (2013) indicates that the relationship between religion and the state affects the RE policies of this country, the content of the education, and how and to whom it is provided. They are also influenced by the demographic structure of this country, its history, cultural and religious diversity within society, and the structure of religious groups. Thus, it is

possible to find different examples in this area even for the same religion. For example, European countries with historical ties to Christianity where most of the population is Christian have diverse approaches to RE from prohibiting it in public schools to offering education for different religious beliefs (Alberts, 2010). Oruç (2013) states four views for RE; secularity model in which RE does not exist in public schools, for all without declaring specific religion, allowing different RE for legally recognized religions, and providing an education for a specific religion. In a country like France where the secularity model is accepted, not only RE but also all religious symbols like the headscarf and kippah are banned in public schools. On the other hand, private schools including preschools of different religious groups like Church schools, and Jewish or Muslim schools are allowed. In a country like England where the RE for all approach is adopted, there is no specific religious group, and different RE according to the population of the school alongside the Christian education for all students. Private religious schools including preschools are also allowed. In countries like Germany and Belgium, RE is provided for legally recognized religions in public schools according to peoples' interests. Lastly, some countries provide RE for specific faiths like Christianity and prohibit others in public schools. From a similar approach, Alberts (2010) mentions integrative and separative RE. In an integrative approach that is accepted by England, children who belong to different religious beliefs or no faith at all participate in the same religious class to learn about different religions. The separative approach of Germany allows separate confessional RE for different beliefs that are legally accepted as a religious community like Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism or children to not participate in any of them. Children cannot be forced to take RE, they generally take moral courses instead (Robbers, 2008). Different implementations for RE starting from the preschool stage are available around the world and they are worth mentioning by starting with Christian education.

Christian RE has been existing for countries in various forms. The place of the Catholic church in education has evolved from being responsible for the general education of Christian countries to being responsible for teaching the Catholic faith in those countries that became secular in time (Groome, 2014). The way of providing this education, and the content has changed within and between countries. Before mentioning the situation in Western countries, I would like to emphasize that Christian

RE exists even in Muslim countries from the preschool level. For, in the Islamic Republic of Iran where religious discourse is quite dominant in the education system (Ashrafi et. al, 2022), people from different religions than Islam (Jewish or Christian) allow open religious schools (Sharifian, 2018). In Western countries, although it shows some differences, Christian education is provided by public and private schools and various churches according to the country's approach. As mentioned above, differences have created various ways of Christian RE; confessional education or non-confessional version which can be also provided as a separate subject or part of other subjects. Confessional RE aims to provide knowledge for a specific faith like the Catholic church while the non-confessional approach aims to inform about the concept of faith and different religions (Bobinac, 2007). I am emphasizing Western countries because Christianity can be accepted as a significant part of their identity in terms of ethics, culture, morality, law, language, art, perspective, etc. (Llorent-Vaquero, 2018). Thus, RE in these countries mainly focuses on Christianity with some similarities and differences. For instance, in Ireland where there is a state church like in England, Norway, or Finland, RE that aims at children's moral and spiritual development and providing religious knowledge is under the responsibility of the church as an elective course. The course that mainly focuses on Christianity, especially Catholic belief, includes information about other religions and non-religious worldviews. In Austria, RE shows similarities with Ireland but it is compulsory. On the other hand, there is no Christian education in public schools in Slovenia, which has a predominantly Catholic population like these two countries. The RE is non-confessional and provides information about religions and ethical issues (Bobinac, 2007). Similarly, in France, there is no RE even a non-confessional version in public schools since the state was held responsible for providing secular education with the constitution (Messner, 2008). In England and Wales, there are non-confessional RE in public schools and the content of this compulsory lesson differs according to the school's region since it is prepared by local authorities that include the Standing Advisory Council on RE which consists of different religious groups. In these countries, schools are obligated to provide RE, and children must attend religious courses and morning prayers unless their parents refuse (Davie & Catto, 2008). In the Netherlands where there is no law about religion, RE that covers all religions objectively is provided in public schools and some schools provide confessional selective courses for different faiths (Bijstervel, 2008). In Italy

where there is a confessional RE for Catholic belief from preschool, there are selective courses for other religions but in different statuses. Teachers of Catholic education are funded by the state while other courses provide general information about that religion with the approval of the Church and school administrations and their teachers are funded by the religious community (Ferrari, 2008). In short, although there are different implementations, RE is an important part of public preschools in almost all Western countries with a predominantly Christian population. Besides religious lessons in public schools, almost all these countries including France where RE is prohibited in public schools. In France, state-funded private schools consist of Catholic schools and there are also state-funded Jewish and Muslim schools even though they are facing some concerns (Ferrara, 2023). Similarly, schools that are linked to religious communities are very common in the Netherlands, two-thirds of all schools are religious schools (Bijstervel, 2008). There are many people with different religious beliefs in these countries and these religious schools can be significant for them to learn their religions and socialize with people from the same beliefs. Among these different religions and denominations of Christianity, Judaism is an important one since it is one of the oldest non-Christian beliefs in Western countries. For example, the Jewish community has legal entity by being accepted as a religious community among other Christian communities by the state in Germany for a long time (Doğan, 2008). Thus, while talking about RE, it is important to mention Jewish education, and to understand it, there is a need to analyze the education system in Israel besides Jewish education in different countries.

There is only one country in the world that is Jewish or has a predominantly Jewish population, unlike many countries that are Christian or Muslim or have predominantly Christian or Muslim populations. Judaism is an important part of the national identity of Israel, and it affects the public education system. When we say Judaism, it does not represent a religion only, it is about the civilization of a nation, reflecting their identity and history. Religious and national elements have a strong relationship in which they are inseparable (Herman, 1989; as cited in Tal, 2013). Therefore, all school types and levels offer RE in Israel's education system including Jewish education, and religious Jewish education. RE in Israel has not only religious but also historical, national, economic, and political background and therefore it is a complex situation (Maoz,

2007). There are five school types in Israel which are state schools, state religious schools, private schools, independent religious schools, and Arab schools for non-Jewish people (Singer, 2019). It can be seen that besides RE in all state schools that focus on the Bible, Jewish traditions, culture, and history (Kamowitz-Hareven, 2023) and religious schools, there are independent religious schools for Haredi people who are Orthodox Jewish. Haredi schools (Chinuch Atzmai) almost entirely focus on RE like Torah studies with very few secular subjects. They offer single-gender education in an alternative system. Religious texts like the bible, Jewish history, and Jewish holidays are the focus of this school (Maoz, 2007). Shamai (2000) emphasizes the hegemony and dominance of religious content in public schools via official and unofficial curricula. The official curriculum includes different forms of Jewish studies and the Bible which is compulsory from the second grade. The study demonstrates various goals and expectations of people (teachers) from Jewish education. Continuity of Jewish people and culture from a survivalist perspective, contracting and contributing Jewish identity, creating a sense of belonging to the Jewish community and security, and being familiar with Judaism are accepted as common goals of this education. These goals involve the protection of traditions, providing a link with the Jewish community and identity (Tal, 2013). Therefore, it is more than teaching religion, it is also related to identification with a nation. In the education system of Israel, there are also some complex situations alongside the heavy emphasis on Judaism due to its cosmopolitan social structure. The existence of people from different national and religious groups influences the education system. For example, Arabic schools are part of the general state schools that fulfill requirements and are funded by the state (Maoz, 2007). The Arab education stream in Israel which is provided in the Arabic language draws importance to the characteristic, and cultural heritage of the Arab community of Israel (Aram& Ziv, 2024). It is also important that although, the dominance of Jewish discourse in education, like in other countries, types of RE for different faith are allowed. Private religious schools of different denominations of Christianity, RE for Muslims, and Christians in Arab schools that change according to the population of schools are recognized by the Ministry of Education (Maoz, 2007). Apart from the RE in Israel, I would like to emphasize Jewish education in different countries. As mentioned above, Jewish RE is not limited to what is provided in Israel, many countries allow it starting from the preschool level both in

public and private schools. In the USA where religious schools are allowed as private institutions, there are many Jewish schools including preschools (Vogelstein et al., 2023). In England, approximately one-third of all state-funded schools are religious schools, and Jewish schools are the third most common religious schools after schools affiliated with the Church of England and the Catholic church (Davie & Catto, 2008). Similarly in France (Messner, 2008) and Germany (Robbers, 2008) Judaism is among the recognized religious groups and Jewish religious schools receive financial aid from the state. The curriculum of the RE in some countries like England (Oruç, 2013), Germany (Doğan, 2013), and Holland (Bijstervel, 2008) is obligated to include information about Judaism. These schools are also obligated to offer some information about Islam. Although Islam is not among the recognized religions in some countries, there are Islamic contents on con-confessional religious lessons or Islamic religious lessons in public or private schools. On the other hand, there are some countries whose religion is Islam, and their education system will be mentioned.

In some countries like Malaysia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, the official religion of the state is Islam even though there are people with different beliefs. Just like in Israel, the great emphasis on religion in social and political life influences the general education system and RE as well. For example, more than half of the population with Malay and non-Malay people are Muslim in Malaysia where the official religion is Islam and society differences due to race, culture, and religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and others (Ishak & Abdullah, 2013). In Malaysia where both religious and secular schools exist, at all levels of education including the preschool level, teaching Islam is compulsory for all Muslim students under the name of Islamic studies in public or private schools while non-Muslim students are taking moral education (Borhan, 2004). In these lessons Arabic, Quran education (reading and memorizing), prayer education, and obligatory duties are taught (Ishak & Abdullah, 2013). Similarly, in Iran with predominantly Muslim (Shia) population, there are also people from different races or ethnicities ties, and religions (Shorish, 1988). Islam is a dominant discourse within the education system since both the official religion of the state and the majority of the population's religion is Islam. Since Islamic Revolution in 1979, the one of most significant goals of education has been to provide RE for children to raise devout and committed individuals (Ashrafi et al.,

2022). Schools in Iran are among the schools that spend the most time on RE in the world. They are two different sets of religious courses from primary school to the end of high school. The one is compulsory for Muslim students and the others are for non-Muslim students with recognized religious faith. In Iran, apart from Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism are recognized religions, and people with one of these faiths are accepted as religious minorities (Mehran, 2007). Iranian education aims to provide and promote principles of Islam and Shi'ism, but the constitution allows people from recognized faiths to take RE or enroll in special schools according to their faith (Ashrafi et al., 2022). The RE for Muslim students emphasizes the strong Shi'i identity, the obedience to Islamic values and rules while the RE for non-Muslim students highlights the similarities of different religions, and respect for others. In these courses, faiths other than recognized ones are not mentioned (Mehran, 2007). The situation of RE is not different in other countries with Islam as an official religion. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, Islam has a great impact on general education that aims to promote loyalty and obedience to religious rules (Prokop, 2003). There are REs in both general and religious schools. Religious schools offer more religious courses besides secular subjects (Omar,2020). The content of RE consists of Quran education with recitation and interpretation, Islamic jurisprudence, and the prophet. Other classes like literature and history also include religious content (Prokop, 2003). It is important that unlike the countries that I mentioned or others with predominantly Muslim countries like Egypt or Sudan (Omar, 2020), there is no possibility of taking RE for non-Muslim people in Saudi Arabia (Prokop, 2003). To sum up, Islamic education is dominant in Muslim countries which also provides RE for non-Muslim people except Saudi Arabia like Western countries with predominantly Christian populations. After mentioning the general situation of RE in different countries, I would like to continue with RE in the early years for different religious beliefs in different counties by focusing on Muslim, Jewish, and Christian preschools since the main area of this study is religion-centered education in the early years.

In many countries, whether there is an official religion or secularism in their constitution, many countries allow religious preschools like other schools. For example, there is no age limit for RE in the Netherlands, so children can attend RE given by any sort of religious group. Children are allowed to attend children's churches

or Sunday schools for RE after the ceremony (Bijsterveld, 2008). In Austria, it is also possible to find religious preschools, the study of Stockinger with Catholic and Islamic private preschools in Vienna shows some similarities and differences. In both of these schools, while the majority of children belong to the religion that the school is affiliated with, there are some children with different religious beliefs, since these schools emphasize respecting and accepting different beliefs. However, in Christian (Catholic) preschool religion is part of everyday life for every child with Christian education, prayers, stories, and celebrations of religious festivals without forcing, while Islamic preschool offers selective RE in different rooms and does not celebrate any religious festivals. If parents want RE that includes the Quran and other religious topics, their children take it separately for about 20-30 min. in a day (Stockinger, 2018). On the other hand, Oruç's study about Islamic preschools and primary schools in England indicates that the school is established with Islamic philosophy. Religion is dominant in the curriculum of the school (20% of it) like church schools, and it includes Islamic studies (Quran and sunnah, etc.), Arabic language, and Islamic art and music while other religions are taught according to Islamic perspective. In this school religious places like mosques are visited, and Islamic festivals are celebrated (Oruç, 2017). As it is expected, there are Islamic preschools in Muslim countries. Although in Malaysia, all preschools provide RE, there are also preschools specifically called Islamic preschools. These schools accept Islam as a way of life, it is not limited to a particular time. In these schools, children learn the Quran, and obligatory duties like prayers (in Arabic), and ablution (Borhan, 2004). On the other hand, in Saudi Arabia, we cannot mention specifically Islamic preschools, since preschool education is developed around the traditional Muslim and national discourse. The curriculum includes the integration of Islamic education and the study of the Arabic language (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). Iran also provides preschools with Islamic orientation like Quranic schools and Friday prayer daycare to enable parents to participate in Friday prayers (Sharifian, 2018). Lastly, schools with Islamic principles target the holistic development of children including religious, physical, moral, and spiritual development (Boyle, 2001). Similar pedagogy is also followed by Christian preschools in many countries. Opiela (2020) indicates that Catholic pedagogy that is followed by sister servants while providing early childhood education in Africa and South America aims to foster all dimensions of child development including moral, cultural, social,

emotional, and intellectual alongside providing religious information. The study in Catholic early childhood settings in the USA demonstrates that this education aims to teach children about their faith and support their Catholic identity and relationship with Jesus by providing opportunities to experience and discover through play (Frabutt & Waldron, 2013). Catholic preschools in Ireland also focus on the Christian faith, the word of God, prayers, and Christian morality but, their numbers are quite low (O' Farrell, 2023). These examples can be increased since there are different types of Christian early childhood settings in many countries including Muslim ones. For example, in Egypt, there are Christian schools that are affiliated with the church or missionary schools (Omar, 2020). In Iran, the constitutions permit people whose religions are recognized (Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians) to open preschools only for children from the same religious group (Sharifian, 2018). It means that in Iran, alongside the Islamic preschools, there are Christian and Jewish preschools which I would like to mention briefly. Jewish preschools exist both in Israel and other states. Tal (2013) emphasizes not only providing a developmentally appropriate education for children but also the process of connecting children with the Jewish community and being consciously part of it through Jewish preschool education. The core areas of public preschool education in Israel address biblical heritage beside other developmental areas for all schools, their language is Hebrew, follow Jewish festivals, and weekly Shabbat (except for Arabic schools) (Brody et al., 2023) but as mentioned above, there are also religious state schools and independent religious schools. State religious schools provide a more religious atmosphere and a more religion-centered curriculum (Aram & Ziv, 2024). The religious discourse (Judaism) in the curriculum of independent schools is quite dominant with very little room for secular topics. It is important that this religious-centered, single-sex education starts from preschool with Torah studies and includes high schools called Yeshiva (Maoz, 2007). Like the ones in Israel, in the USA, curriculums of private Jewish preschools, whether based on denomination affiliation or not, are developed around Jewish culture and values, they follow the Jewish calendar and Shabat. These schools aim to provide adaptation to American culture and prepare children for primary school while supporting the relations within the Jewish community (Vogelstein et al., 2023). To sum up, Jewish preschool education that exists in Israel or not, aims to support the holistic development of children and their connection with Jewish culture and identity.

In conclusion, in this section, some systems of RE are mentioned considering differences and similarities and focusing on Christian, Jewish, and Islamic beliefs. It is revealed that although content, status (compulsory/ selective), and provider (state/private) of the education differ according to states' approaches, RE is offered in many countries. This education is important for the development of children. However, parents are also significant actors in this process, so it is important to mention religion-centered parenting to understand the religious development of children. The following section will focus on the relationship between religion and parenting.

2.3.3. Religion and Parenting

Families are important for religious doctrines since family functions for the protection and transmission of religious rules and values while religion affects inter-family communication (Ertürk, 2024). Religion affects relationships within families because of the parenting approach and expectations of parents from their children, and what they transfer to their children are influenced by their religious beliefs or attitudes toward religion. Different studies show the effect of parents' religious attitudes on children in terms of their development, parenting styles, etc.

Firstly, the religious beliefs of parents may affect how they approach children and child development due to features of a religious belief. Wilcox indicates that religions are developed around a belief system that emphasizes a specific description of good life and proper ways of acting like serving God, being honest, trustful, helping others, etc. The perspective of a religion that has developed over a long period of time has a robust influence on the moral characteristics of its members since these members have been involved in it for a lifetime (Wilcox, 2008). Thus, it can be said that religious faith affects people's understanding, actions, and relations profoundly (Dollaithe et al., 2018). Their understanding influences their parenting approach. For example, Bartowski and Ellison (1995) highlight that Protestants' faith in distinctive doctrines of biblical interpretation and the concomitant preoccupation with authority and their belief that human nature including the nature of children is fundamentally sinful, and the related concern with punishment and salvation (p. 31) is related their tendency to prefer traditional and hierarchical authoritative parenting. Protestant doctrine accepts

the Bible as the impeccable word of God, and biblical passages that are cited for child-rearing highlight the leadership of parents and obedience of children to authority (Acevedo et al., 2015). The effect of religion on parenting can be also seen in different religions. Wilcox's study with orthodox religious groups (conservative protestants, traditional Catholics, and Orthodox Jews) indicates that the Bible for Protestants, the Talmud for Jews, and interpretation of the Catholic church are the authoritative and moral guidance for people from these religions. Not only their religious beliefs encourage them to spend more time forming the religious identity of their children but also, they accept fostering their children's morality according to traditions as their parental duty (Wilcox, 2008). Not only their religious beliefs but also, the intensity of parents' relationship with religion influences their expectations of children. Alwin (1986) indicates that regardless of their denominations, parents who frequently attend church activities have more tendency to value obedience. Similarly, the study in Turkiye conducted with Muslim families demonstrates that religious belief is one of the most important factors for child-rearing values. The religiosity of Turkish parents increases their tendency to emphasize obedience to authority and good manners while it is inversely related to the valuing independence of children (Acevedo et al., 2015). In short, no matter which religion they follow, religious affiliations of people affect their parenting approach. The important thing in the relationship between parenting and religion is the parents' role in the transmission of religious values and traditions to children. Participation of parents in transferring religious knowledge and values, practices and traditions is important and undeniable. Parents play a significant role in this process (Hayes & Pittelkow, 1993). According to De Roos et al. (2003) how children understand religion, the God concept is associated with their parents' religious attitudes alongside religious preschool education. Children with religious mothers have a more abstract, and loving God image since they encounter this kind of expression more often. For instance, a conversation between parents and children about religion, especially if it happens in a child-centered way, promotes children's religious exploration and socialization. Through enjoyable conversations, children internalize religious values more than with less-enjoyable conversations (Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008). Hoge et al. (1982) also indicates that although there is not a very strong bond between parent and child in the transfer of religious values, value transfer is higher in families where disagreements between parents and children are low,

parents have a similar and certain religious orientation, and conscious religious socialization takes place. On the other hand, the study of Hayes and Pittelkow (1993) on the relation between parents' religious orientation and their children's orientation in later life demonstrates a strong religious transmission. Parents' religious beliefs affect how their children approach religion later. Thus, it can be said that whether strong or weak there is a relation between the religious beliefs of people and their parents, but this situation is also associated with children themselves. This transmission of religious values and traditions whether through parents or RE is also related to children's ability to acquire them since religion is not just a transfer of faith from parents to children (Dillen, 2007), children are active participants in this process. The study on children's religious and spiritual development demonstrates that this is a "transformational, directive, and peer-relational" (p. 264) process that is related to children's active involvement through being connected to a source in the moral universe (Harris, 2007). Fowler and Dell (2006) indicate that through improvement in the cognitive abilities of children, they become more capable of understanding religious concepts, and they improve from a general, fantasy-like understanding to a more conscious and individualistic understanding of religion. Elkind mentions different stages of children's religious development. Children develop an understanding from the global, undifferentiated impression of their religion to the concrete conception of their religion to the functional conception of religion, and lastly abstract conception of religion (p. 38). Through these stages, children first learn their religions like their surname, then learn features of their beliefs and their similarities and differences with other beliefs. After that, they start to understand the reasons for religious concepts and develop a rationale for religion. Lastly, they become able to understand abstract religious concepts from their toddlerhood to adolescence (Elkind, 1964). It can be inferred that at a very early age, children who are exposed to religion develop a simple understanding and it improves and becomes deeper throughout the developmental processes.

In conclusion, there are different approaches toward the relationship between society and education but all of them highlight a strong connection between the structure and features of society and education. RE and the conservative approach to education affect society. But these significant elements cannot be separated from people, both

parents and children are important factors in this process, so it is important to understand the relationship between religion and people, parents and children. In Turkiye, there have been some shifts that affect this relationship and understanding of society. Aksoy and Deniz (2018) mention the Sunni-Islam-based religious transformation of society that is associated with the religionization of education in Turkiye in recent years. Meral (2015) emphasizes critiques against the government for embedding Sunni Muslim religious national identity. Quran courses for the 4-6 age group program, which is the main topic of this study, is a significant part of this religion-based education policies and implementations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Methodology is a broader term referring to the framework for research. It consists of theories and practices of research including proper methods for data collection and analysis, participants, and the role of the researcher (Braun & Clark, 2013). Therefore, this chapter of the study includes research design and settings, participants, data collection, data analysis, the role of the researcher, and trustworthiness. The qualitative design was used to describe instructors' and parents' perceptions of religion-centered child-rearing practices in Quran courses and home settings. The single instrumental case study was utilized as a method of study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data about participants' common and distinguished experiences and thoughts regarding religious and moral education for children in their early years. The study was conducted in two Quran courses of PRA in Ankara for the 4-6 age group where preschool-age children are given religious and moral education alongside the standard education defined by the MONE. There were 16 participants in the study; six were instructors of the courses, and 10 were parents of children who received education in Quran courses. The interviews were conducted in person with flexible duration according to participants. The transcription of interviews and coding, categorizing, and definition of themes over the written data of the interviews were carried out by the researcher manually with the virtual assistance of an artificial intelligence tool, ChatGPT. Lastly, the researcher's role, the process of obtaining the trustworthiness of this research, and its limitations are addressed at the end of the section.

3.1. Research Design

This research aims to describe the perspectives of parents and course instructors in Quran courses regarding religion-based child-rearing practices. By focusing on family

and course environments and culture, values, attitudes, and habits both course instructors and parents have been given a voice during fieldwork. Qualitative research design and an instrumental case study method were chosen for this study due to the researcher's interest in the experiences of individuals within their working environments (instructors), family relationships, child rearing, education practices regarding religion, and belief systems through their reflections. Qualitative research is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2018) as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world"(p. 43) and with an array of interpretive and material actions that constitute qualitative research, the world becomes visible. Qualitative research with its interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), is conducted in natural settings to understand social phenomena based on people's definitions of them through analysis of people's experiences, documents, or interactions and communications (Flick, 2007). As a result of the critique of the positivist idea of the existence of an observable, single reality for everyone (Braun and Clark, 2013) qualitative research emerged with the effect of post-positivist views including feminism, constructivism, critical approach, and post-modernism (Şimşek, 2018). Qualitative methods were seen as crucial for identifying and theorizing different constructed versions of reality and for the ways people are both constructed by and constructors of reality (Braun& Clarke, 2013, p. 7). In qualitative research to collect data that is sensitive to participants and settings multiple sources including interviews, observation, and documents are used (Creswell, 2007).

Qualitative research can be experiential with an interest in collecting and interpreting the meaning, views, perspectives, and experiences stated in the data or critical to understand the factors affecting, and the effects of, the specific meanings or expressions (Braun& Clark,2013). In this study, critical qualitative research was utilized since it is driven by a desire to understand factors that are affecting and affecting by (Braun& Clark, 2013,) religion-based child-rearing. Yin (2016) highlights the specialized types of qualitative research such as action research, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, and phenomenology. The method of this research, the case study, is "an intensive study of a single case or a small number of cases" (Gerring, 2017, p.28). A case which is the unit of analysis of this method can be an individual, an organization, an incident, a decision, an action, a location

(Denzin& Lincoln, 2018), a state or similar entities, or social groups (Gerring, 2017). No matter how it is defined, there should be an argument seeking to describe or explain specific phenomena. (p.27) and individuals constitute cases of research that aim to analyze the behaviors of individuals (Gerring, 2017).

The production and reproduction of conservatism through religion-centered child-rearing through Quran courses of PRA was the main problem of this study. Based on this problem the case of this study was the Quran courses of PRA for children aged 4-6 years to understand the religion-based child-rearing process in society. Thus, the unit of analysis for this research is this group of individuals comprised of instructors and parents. To collect data, one of the popular methods of qualitative research (Flick, 2007), semi-structured interviews were used. In this study, the common form of interviews, which is the process of one-on-one meetings with each participant, was preferred. Since the main concern (religion-centered child-rearing practices) was attempted to explain by selecting the case (Quran courses of PRA for children aged 4-6 years) to illustrate different perspectives (Creswell, 2007), the research was conducted in a single instrumental case study.

3.2. Research Questions

The main research question of this study is about production and reproduction of conservatism by regarding the perspectives of instructors working in Quran courses of PRA for children aged 4-6 years and parents of children taking education in these courses. The main research question of this study is divided into two sub questions about the role of Quran courses and the role of family in this process. Thus, research questions are:

1. How is conservatism produced or reproduced through religion-centered child-rearing practices and early childhood education?

1a. What roles do Quran course instructors play in child rearing practices and early childhood education?

1b. What role does the family in child-rearing practices and early childhood education?

3.3. Context of the Study

For the protection of the anonymity of courses, names and exact locations of courses cannot be shared, however, the research setting should be described to provide more detailed and concrete information about the features of Quran courses, content of the education given these courses, and circumstances of instructors.

The research was conducted in two Quran courses affiliated with PRA in Yenimahalle in Ankara. Therefore, the Provincial Office of Mufti and the District Office of Mufti are responsible for them. They are part of the institution's informal religious services for children. Informal religious services for children consist of Quran courses for 4-6 age groups and Quran courses for 7-10 age groups. The courses where the research has been conducted are in the first group, they provide Quran and values education for children aged 4 to 6. According to the course list released by the District Mufti's Office (Yenimahalle District Mufti's Office 2023-2024 4-6 Age Quran Course List, 2023), there are 29 Quran courses for 4-6 age group in Yenimahalle district and there will be 31 courses in the next year according to the new list (Yenimahalle District Mufti's Office 2024-2025 4-6 Age Quran Course List, 2024). The two courses were chosen due to their availability and crowdedness. One of the courses gives full-day education and the other one gives both full and half-day education. In full-day education, children are on the course from early morning to early evening (8.00 to 17.00). In half-day courses, children are given education from early morning to midday.

The content of the curriculum is the same for all courses but in full-day education, the course program is divided into two parts: religious studies education and values education. In the first half of the day, children are given religious studies education and in the second half of the day, after lunch, they are given values education. There are also complementary achievements that are equivalent to standard preschool educational achievements defined by the MONE and Quran education. In half-day education, the curriculum is taught without any division at the half of the day.

According to recent regulations for Quran courses (2023-2024 Eğitim-Öğretim Yılı Kur'an Kursu Uygulama Esasları, 2023), there are different education programs for children aged 4 to 6 including half-day education programs with 30 or 25 hours of

lessons per week and full day education program with 60 hours of lessons per week. Start and end times will be decided by the provincial or district office of the mufti and will be the same for each course, for dual education times also will be the same for all. If it is possible in terms of the physical environment and number of pupils, classrooms will consist of children of the same age from 4 to 6 (DİB, 2023b). The research was conducted in the classrooms that are created according to this principle, there are classrooms for 5-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and 6-year-olds. In one of the courses, there are 3 classrooms; one is given full-day education and the other two are given half-day education. The one with full-day education is for a mixed-age group of 16 students, one of the others is for the 5-6 age group with 15 students and the last classroom is for 4-year-olds with 16 students. There are 46 students in total in the course. The other course has 2 full-day education classrooms, one for the 4-5 age group with 16 students, and the other for the 5-6 age group with 17 students. There are 33 students in total in the course. Each course is established alongside a mosque and shares almost the same courtyard as mosques. Apart from a few religious references, the preschool-like physical settings of courses do not differ from an ordinary preschool. To give a few examples of religious references present in courses, there is writing about the beauty of learning the Quran and a board of cards illustrating the important moments from the prophet's life. The study started just before Ramadan and continued during Ramadan, thus preparations for Ramadan and its celebrations were witnessed. In each course, Ramadan decorations that were reminiscent of traditional streets with candles were made, and the stage was decorated with balloons, a lectern, and ornaments to have children's photos taken. The materials that are used in courses are decided, prepared, and distributed by PRA, according to the recent regulation Quran Activity Books for the 4-6 Age Group which are prepared for both instructors and pupils separately, Elif Ba Teaching Activities Example Book for instructors, Elif Ba Book with Activities for 4 to 6 Age Groups will be used for this education (2023-2024 Eğitim-Öğretim Yılı Kur'an Kursu Uygulama Esasları, 2023). Elif Ba is a letter sequence that shows the phonemes and the writing system of the Arabic language (Ertem, 1995). Instructor books provide guidelines for child development and education on values and religion. Literary works for children (picture books) preferred in courses belong to the institution itself or the Turkish Religious Foundation (TRF) which is also associated with the PRA, founded in 1975 to support PRA (Uzunoglu,1994). These books focus

on spiritual and moral development, some of them have religion-related topics like the prophet, Allah, or religious places. Regarding RE, the approach of Quran courses is based on the principles of the prophet focusing on humanitarian values and informing children about Allah, worship, and the Quran with age-appropriate practices. Providing love of Allah in children, familiarity with worship, early Quran studies, and moral development of children besides religious development are the main concerns of this education (Sağlam, 2018). In the curriculum of courses, the topic of religious information including prayer, praise, I love my God, my prophet, holy book, and my religion, etc. is integrated with universal values like love and mercy, respect, responsibility, justice, patience, and kindness and national values (Sağlam, Yorulmaz, & Kotan 2018a; Sağlam, Yorulmaz, & Kotan, 2018b). Spelling, and understanding of the Quran have been a significant part of Islamic education methodology in terms of being a subject of education and defining education principles. Therefore, the Quran courses for 4-6 age groups aim to make children familiar with the Quran, learn the letters of the Quran, memorize short suras of the Quran and prayers, and have basic religious knowledge (Yorulmaz, 2018). From this point of view, this course education has a holistic approach by targeting all development areas of children alongside their religious and moral development (Sağlam, 2018). Children are not expected to learn the entire Quran, according to the course curriculum, children are taught spelling and writing of Arabic letters and pointing (Elif Ba) through games and activities and they start to read the Quran. Basmalah, the Islamic confession of God's oneness (Kelime-i tevhid) and faith (Shahada, Kelime-i şehadet) are taught in courses (Sağlam et al., 2018a; Sağlam et al., 2018b). Kelime-i tevhid is a sequence of words that indicates the oneness and greatness of Allah and the prophethood as Allah's relations with human beings, Shahada is the first of Islam's five pillars, it represents the witness and acceptance of Allah as only God and Prophet Muhammed as the god's messenger (Çelebi, 2019). Children are expected to learn and memorize 12 prayers and short surahs and, the meanings of some prayers and surahs are given if they are accepted as appropriate to teach while others are taught without their meanings. (Sağlam et al., 2018a; Sağlam et al., 2018b).

Although education hours for children are different in courses, the working hours of instructors are the same for all Quran courses, they work half-day, before or after noon.

Instructors in the half-day courses are responsible for teaching the entire curriculum while instructors in full-day classes are responsible for religious studies education or values education according to working in morning or afternoon sections. But all instructors are obligated to know and teach the entire curriculum, their subject can change according to working time. For instance, one of the instructors was giving values education while working in the afternoon section last year. This year, she is responsible for religious studies education due to working in the morning section. Therefore, instructors are expected to be competent in teaching different aspects of the curriculum which is the integration of religious, moral, and standard preschool education. They are provided and obligated to participate in the in-service training programs on different topics regularly. It is also important that four instructors with preschool-age children send their children to courses they work on but not to the classes they are responsible for. It means that these instructors are also parents, and they are looking at the Quran course not from the instructor's perspective but also from the parent's perspective and support the tendency to emphasize the motherhood features of female instructors.

3.4. Participants

The study aims to analyze religion-based child-rearing practices and early childhood education settings. To do this research, instructors who work in Quran Courses of PRA for children aged 4 to 6 and parents who send their children to these courses were decided as the target population. Children's development is related to the contexts children live within including physical environments, family and peers, neighborhood, institutions like school, and culture (Lightfoot, et al., 2018). Bronfenbrenner's theory of development defines different systems that affect human development and emphasizes the relationship between humans and immediate settings and. A microsystem involves activities, roles, and interactions a developing individual engages in within a specific setting characterized by distinct physical and material features (p. 22), and settings where individuals develop face-to-face interactions like home, classrooms, playground, religious settings, etc., are microsystems of a person. Interactions among two or more settings in which the developing individual is actively involved are defined as a mesosystem (p. 25) and for children, it can be the relationship

between family and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, both family and Quran courses have significance for children as their immediate environment in terms of being familiar with religious concepts and practices. To understand the home and course context in terms of religion-based child-rearing practices comprehensively, both instructors and parents are selected for interviews. The sampling strategy of the study was criterion sampling and convenience sampling. Thus, sampling required a definition of criteria to select individuals (Creswell, 2007) and selecting individuals who meet the required criteria considering their convenience in terms of time, proximity, and willingness to participate (Robinson, 2013). The selection criteria were defined as being a parent in Quran courses of the PRA or being an instructor.

The participants were reached through the District Office of Mufti. After the approval of the Human Subjects Ethics Committee and the Provincial Office of Mufti in Ankara, the researcher contacted the Directorate of Educational Services of Yenimahalle Mufti's Office, and they gave permission to do research in two Quran courses. Two courses were chosen because of their crowdedness. Both have 4 instructors, and the researcher reached them through their administrators. In one of them, the researcher had a chance to talk to every instructor about their participation after explaining the study briefly and to talk only with the administrator in the other course. six of eight instructors agreed to participate in the study. On the other hand, parents were reached through administrators of courses, the researcher wrote a letter that explained the study and they sent emails to parents in both courses. Five parents agreed to take part in the study in each course. With the participation of 16 people consisting of six instructors and 10 parents, convenience sampling, which is the second stage of sampling, was conducted by selecting samples according to their accessibility and availability (Yin, 2016). Gender was not among the sample selection criteria, but the gender distribution of instructors represented the population of instructors in Quran courses, all the participants of my study were female and in Mufti's Office, it is said that all instructors in the Quran courses for children at the age of 4 to 6 are female. 16 participants were seen as appropriate for this study by considering data saturation that has widespread acceptance as a methodological principle (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1893). The concept of data saturation is about the redundancy of information taken from participants since no news or themes arise from data in thematic analysis (Braun& Clarke, 2021).

Because of the dependence of the situation on the data set, there is no participant number that is correct for every research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is associated with the data set, and responses of participants. In this study, it was decided that data saturation had been reached with 10 parents and six instructors because new codes or categories did not emerge from data set. Table 1 demonstrates a summary of information about instructors. Protecting the privacy of participants is recommended as the ethical code of qualitative research (Yin, 2016). Therefore, all participants including parents and instructors are given pseudonyms to provide anonymity. Pseudonyms that are not the same as any participant's real name are chosen from a dictionary randomly.

Table 1. *Information of instructors*

| Participants (Pseudonym) | Background Information |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Azra | -33 years old -Master's degree in Arabic language and literature -bachelor's degree in religious studies -bachelor's degree in child development -certificate in educational sciences -early childhood education seminars offered by PRA -2 years of experience in adult courses and 9 years in early childhood education -currently teaching full curriculum (half-day course) |
| Buse | -38 years old -ongoing master's education in sociology of religion -bachelor's degree in Turkish language literature -bachelor's degree in religious studies -ongoing education in child development on open university -pedagogic formation -5 years of experience in early childhood education -currently teaching religious knowledge (full-day course) |
| Ceren | -47 years old -bachelor's degree in religious studies -hafiz -certificate in child development from the public education center -19 years of experience in youth and early childhood education (8 years in PRA) -currently teaching full curriculum (half-day course) |

Table 1 (cont'd)

| | |
|-------|--|
| Çağla | -associate degree in religious affairs -associate degree in child development -9 years of experience in youth and adult education and 6 years in early childhood education -currently teaching religious knowledge (full-day course) |
| Deniz | -31 years old -bachelor's degree in religious studies -certificate in child development from the public education center -6 years of experience in early childhood education -currently teaching values education (full-day course) |
| Elif | -38 years old -ongoing Master's in the sociology of religion -bachelor's degrees in religious studies -pedagogic formation -12 years of experience in adult courses and 5 years in early years -currently teaching values education (full-day course) |

The instructor sample of the study consists of 6 instructors whose age range is between 31 to 47. Years of experience of instructors differ greatly from 5 to 19. They are female due to the policy of PRA, all instructors in other courses belonging to the institution are in the same position. The questions that are asked to instructors are the same for each of them while they have similar content to the questions that are asked to parents.

Instructors have education in the field of religious studies and early childhood education at different levels. According to recent regulations for the appointment of preachers, Quran course instructors, imams, muezzins (Vaizlik, Kur'an Kursu Öğreticiliği, İmam-Hatiplik Ve Müezzin Kayımlık Kadrolarına Atama Ve Bu Kadroların Kariyer Basamaklarında Yükselme Yönetmeliği, 2011) instructors in all levels from children to adult education should graduate at least IHHSs and receive designated score from professional information exam to apply oral exam for appointment. According to recent regulation for Quran courses (2023-2024 Eğitim-Öğretim Yılı Kur'an Kursu Uygulama Esasları, 2023) appointed instructors are expected to have a certificate given by the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning in the field of child development and degree at the field of child development and education are not expected this certificate or instructors who already have education

who have bachelor degree can work without this certificate, provided that they will receive the certificate in this academic year. Therefore, instructors in this study differ in educational background. The gender distribution of parents is the same with instructors, all of them are female. One of the administrators mentioned the difficulty of reaching fathers. All parents are also married, the summary of information about parents is represented in Table 2 .

Table 2. *Information of parents*

| Participants | Personal Information |
|---------------------|--|
| Filiz | -35 years old -mathematics teacher -ongoing master's in mathematics education -have 2 children, 1 in a Quran course |
| Gamze | -38 years old -housewife -bachelor's degree in food engineering -have three children, 1 in an IHS, 1 in a Quran course |
| Helin | -36 years old -vocational teacher in an IHHS -married -ongoing university education in psychology -two children, 1 in a Quran course |
| İrem | -40 years old -housewife -bachelor's degree in religious studies (open university) -ongoing open university education in Turkish language and literature -have 3 children, 2 in IHSs and 1 in a Quran course |
| Jale | -34 years old -landscape architect (currently not working) -bachelor's degree in both landscape architecture and anthropology -1 child in a Quran course |
| Karsu | -37 years old -housewife -bachelor's degree in sociology -ongoing master's in psychology -have 3 children, 2 in IHSs, and 1 in a Quran course |

Table 2 (cont'd)

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Leyla | -30 years old -housewife -high school graduate -have 2 children, 1 in IHS, 1 in a Quran course |
| Mine | -40 years old -Quran course instructor in the PRA -bachelor's degree in religious studies -ongoing master's in religious studies -have 2 children, 1 in a Quran course |
| Nazlı | -35 years old -housewife -bachelor's degree in Arabic language -have 1 child in a Quran course |
| Olçay | -41 years old -mathematics teacher -master's degree in mathematics -have 1 child in a Quran course |

There are 10 parents (all female) in the parents' sample of the study and the number of children they have varies from 1 to 3. They have been asked the same question, and this set of questions has also similar content to the set of questions that are asked to instructors. The age range of parents in this sample is between 30 to 41 and they differ in educational and professional backgrounds.

3.5. Data Collection

3.5.1. Data Collection Method

One of the common ways of data collection in qualitative research is interviewing by allowing interviewers to understand people's points of view (Creswell, 2016). To have expressions of participants free from the researcher's perspective and influence, and to enable participants to construct their responses, open-ended questions and responses are used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2015). There are different modes and types of interviewing, the modes of interviewing refer to the format of conducting while types refer to the form of organization. The modes of interviewing are face-to-face synchronous online chat, email, and telephone (Gibson& Brown, 2009). This process can be done through one-on-one interviews with only one participant at a time or focus

group interviews to understand the shared perspectives of a group of individuals (Creswell, 2015). The types of interviews are structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews consist of predefined and pre ordered questions that are asked with the same sequence and wording to all participants. Semi-structured interviews have key themes and questions but allow flexible order and wording according to the context. Unstructured interviews consist of non-predefined questions about the issue of research (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were utilized for data collection, and face-to-face interviews with one participant at a time were preferred. Two semi-structured interview forms that have similar concepts were used with instructors and parents. Although they do not include the same questions, they are formed according to the same topic. The interview questions were developed to collect information about the reproduction of conservative thoughts and religion-based child-rearing practices in both home settings and course settings and they were gathered under some specific terms for it. The interview questions for instructors (APPENDIX B) were grouped under the title of the course-instructorship (kurs-öğreticilik), curriculum (müfredat), conservative school culture (muhafazakar okul kültürü), and family-course relations (kurs-aile ilişkileri). The interview questions for parents (APPENDIX C) were grouped under the title of parenting (ebeveynlik), conservative family culture (muhafazakar okul kültürü), values and religious practices (değerler ve dini pratikler), and education (eğitim). Through these questions, the importance of RE in the early years and what is transmitted to children according to instructors and parents were aimed to understand.

3.5.2. Data Collection Procedure

The interview questions were shared with four experts for their opinions after several revisions under the supervision of the advisor. Two of the experts are associated professors in the early childhood department of a state university, and two of the experts are assistant professors in the educational sciences department of two state universities. The two interview guidelines -one for instructors and one for parents- took their final form in accordance with their comments. The final version of the question settings was sent to the approval of the Human Subjects Ethics Committee

(HSEC) at METU and the required permissions were obtained from the Provincial Office of Mufti in Ankara after the approval of the committee. The interview process was started with the consent of the Office of Mufti. Before the actual interviews, pilot interviews were not done due to the limitation of the number of participants. However, in the process of interview questions preparation, the researcher was taking a qualitative research class from the sociology department at METU and was assigned to conduct interviews. The researcher prepared interview questions related to the topic for the assignment, and they were revised by the professor of the class. Although it was not an exact pilot study of the research, interviews were conducted with 7 parents who sent their children to Quran Courses of PRA for children at the age of 4 to 6 before by using quite similar questions that were prepared with similar concepts. This assignment gives the researcher a more comprehensive understanding of the key concepts. The key characteristics and values of qualitative interviews defined by Ravitch and Carl (2016) are “relational, contextual/ contextualized, non-evaluative, person-centered, temporal, partial, subjective, and nonneutral” (p. 153). Interviews were conducted by paying attention to these key characteristics. The interview process requires reciprocity and trust between the researcher and participants (relational) with the pursuit of understanding people without judging or evaluating them (non-evaluative) and putting the participants and their experiences in the focal point (person-centered). Interviews are conducted in complex ecosystems of participants (contextual) in a particular moment in time that affects what is shared (temporal), and the researcher should be aware of the effects of what is happening in her/his life during the interview process (partial). Since interviews aim to understand people’s perspectives and experiences, they are subjective and unneutral (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Instructors are reached personally via the District Office of Mufti, and parents, and participants are reached through emails that are written by the researchers and sent by the administrators. All participants signed the consent form (APPENDIX D) before their interviews. 4 out of 6 instructor interviews and 7 out of 10 parent interviews were recorded with the approval of participants. Interviews of participants who did not permit audio recording were conducted by taking notes manually. The interviews were prepared and conducted in the Turkish language since it is the native language of all participants. Interviews with both instructors and parents were conducted inside the courses and meeting rooms. The places were selected by considering their suitability

for instructors, and proximity for parents. Meeting outside could not be a proper option because the research was conducted in the time of Ramadan. This situation, being inside of the courses, helped the researcher to make a trace of observations of the course environment and some daily school activities like lunchtime, the prayers for meals, individual Quran lessons, Ramadan preparations, and celebrations, since observation within the course and classroom environments was not allowed. The interview process started before Ramadan and continued during Ramadan, thus preparations and celebration with traditional drums were observed.

Alongside the interviews, a review of documents was conducted at a basic level to obtain further information about the organization of the research setting and to make contributions to the literature section of the research. A researcher can benefit from existing documents that are significant resources of context and history to have a deeper understanding of the study area by providing additional data and a form of data triangulation (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). It was not a systematic document analysis but for the educational content and practices of Quran courses, policies, and goals of the institution for courses, the appointment and working conditions of instructors, official documents like training materials, mission statements, and regulations, and popular documents like blogs, newspapers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) were reviewed.

3.6. Data Analysis


For analyzing qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with instructors working in Quran courses for 4-6 age group children and parents sending their young children to Quran courses, the thematic analysis method was used. Gibson and Brown (2009) state that thematic analysis indicates analyzing data by focusing on “commonalities, relationships, and differences across a data set” (p.127) to search for clustered themes in the data. Yin (2016) identifies five phases of the cycle for analysis, these are (1) compiling, (2) disassembling, (3) reassembling, (4) interpreting, and (5) concluding (p.185). Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) define phases of data analysis as preparation and organization of the data for analysis, reading all the data, coding all the data, construction of a description and themes, and lastly representation of description and themes. In this research, data were analyzed along similar lines. The auditory data from recorded interviews and notes taken from unrecorded interviews

were transcribed by the researcher and read multiple times. The analysis continued with the coding of transcribed text. Code is a word or short phrase that gives a summary or essence of the data portion, the process of coding involves organizing and categorizing codes according to their similarities (Saldana, 2013). According to Creswell (2016), coding involves transcribing data, reading each text, and coding them, listing all codes, grouping the codes against redundancy and overlap, and writing themes. Thus, all codes are listed and grouped after the coding of all text in this study. In this study, the inductive coding approach is preferred, it means that codes are developed directly from data. Direct phases or themes are used to develop codes rather than theoretical frames (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019, p. 263). Saldana (2013) defines two cycles of coding in data analysis, in the first cycle, the data is divided to analyze. In the first cycle of this study, attribute coding that is about identifying descriptive information was preferred to provide demographic information of participants and in vivo coding by using short phrases directly from actual language in participants' responses was used (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). After this process, codes are organized and categorized. With the second cycle of coding a sense of categorical, thematic, and conceptual organization from the codes of the first cycle is aimed. For this, focused coding which is a following process of in vivo coding was preferred to form the most apparent and proper categories for data by looking for codes that are important and mentioned frequently (Saldana, 2013). During this process, themes from coded data and categorizations emerged. The theme is the outcome of coding, categorization, or analytic reflection (Saldana, 2013, p.14). The themes were constructed from what participants shared opinions through interpretations of the researcher. Themes of the study divided into three groups; parents, instructors, and all participants themes are:

- 1.The theme of parents is *religious identity*
- 2.The theme of instructors is *being a religion instructor as an identity form*
- 3.Themes of all participants are *religion-centered child-rearing and shaping character*

Themes, categories, and codes will be mentioned in the following section, findings. Since the study is a master thesis with a relatively low number of participants(16

individuals) coding and thematic analysis of the data were done manually by the researcher (Saldana, 2013), the virtual assistance of an artificial intelligence tool, ChatGPT, was utilized in some portions of the data. ChatGPT was used as an assistant researcher in the process of coding and constructing themes. Firstly, some information including the summary of the research, purpose of research, and its questions, and information about participants who were interviewed with was shared with the tool. Secondly, it was asked to do coding for thematic analysis from the shared short passages from participants' answers. The same passages were also analyzed by the researcher. The tool was asked to develop some themes from given codes. Lastly, these two sets of codes and themes that are constructed by the researcher and the tools were compared and used for thematic analysis. Figure 1. shows the example of coding process with ChatGPT.

 **Text Segment**

"Ama dini temelli eğitimle büyüyen çocukların ahlaken, sorun çözme becerileri ya da aile hayatı bakımından daha iyi olacaklarını düşünüyorum."

Themes and Codes

1. Benefits of Religious Education (Din Temelli Eğitimin Faydaları):

- Code: "Moral Development"
- Details: Belief that religious education fosters moral development.
- Code: "Problem-Solving Skills"
- Details: Belief that religious education enhances problem-solving skills.
- Code: "Family Life Improvement"
- Details: Belief that religious education positively impacts family life.

Coded Text

- Text: "Ama dini temelli eğitimle büyüyen çocukların ahlaken, sorun çözme becerileri ya da aile hayatı bakımından daha iyi olacaklarını düşünüyorum."
- Themes:
 - Benefits of Religious Education (Din Temelli Eğitimin Faydaları)
 - Code: "Moral Development"
 - Code: "Problem-Solving Skills"
 - Code: "Family Life Improvement"

Explanation

- Benefits of Religious Education (Din Temelli Eğitimin Faydaları): This theme captures the perceived advantages of religious-based education on various aspects of a child's development and life.
 - Code: "Moral Development": Emphasizes the belief that religious education contributes to the moral development of children.
 - Code: "Problem-Solving Skills": Suggests that religious education enhances children's abilities to solve problems.
 - Code: "Family Life Improvement": Indicates the belief that religious education leads to better family life dynamics.

Figure 1. Coding with ChatGPT

3.7. The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research subjectivity and reflectivity are valued. Research is a subjective process in which researchers bring their experiences, perspectives, and conjectures (Braun and Clark, 2013). Reflectivity as one of the central themes of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2015, p. 568) indicates the reflection of the knowledge produced in the research and the role of the researcher in that process. The reflection of the research process and tools is functional reflectivity and the reflection of the researcher in the study is personal reflectivity. (Braun & Clark, 2013). According to Patton (2015), reflectivity is about the self-observation of the researchers by asking what they know, how they know, and how their perspective is shaped.

The role of the researcher is a significant consideration in qualitative research since its primary instrument is the researcher (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), and the definition of the researcher's values, perceptions, and experiences becomes a requirement (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, it is important to define my role as a researcher by considering my experiences, knowledge, and perception.

I graduated from early childhood education and was interested in early childhood education policies. When I started my master's degree, I wasn't sure what I should study in this field. There were people around me sending their preschool-aged children to Quran courses and these education settings were mentioned in educational research documents. I started to search for preschools with RE since they were becoming a widespread alternative education approach.

I come from a conservative and religious nuclear family with devoutly religious relatives who are part of religious communities (cemaatler). They gave Quran education in Quran courses and participated in religious conversations while their children were sent to courses to learn the Quran and be hafiz. I had RE experiences in PRA's summer Quran courses in mosques when I was in primary school, at that time RE in early childhood was not allowed by the state. Thus, my systematic RE did not start until I was around 10 years old except for religious practices, and religion-related traditions I saw in my family environment like Ramadan and holy days. I remember learning Elif Ba and starting to read the Quran every summer until school started and

starting again the next year. Later, private preschools giving RE called infant schools became popular in my neighborhood, and many conservative, religious families began to send their children to those schools. During my university education, state-controlled religious early childhood education, and Quran courses of PRA for 4-6 age group children were becoming increasingly common among my acquaintances and relatives. So, I have experienced and observed RE within the family and Quran course settings.

When I started to conduct interviews, I was aware of the effect of my identity. Thus, I was careful to preserve my neutrality as a researcher, I paid attention to using neutral language and avoided religious references as much as possible. When I brought to my experiences, my education in the field of early childhood education, observations on religion-based child rearing, and loudly desired aspiration of raising pious generations together the research was designed. I came up with a research question that aimed to understand the relation between religion-based child rearing and conservatism.

3.8. Trustworthiness

Validity in qualitative research also refers to trustworthiness indicating that the researcher confirms the accuracy of the findings that are faithful to what participants shared, in other terms, it demonstrates the quality and the rigor of the study (Ravitch& Carl, 2016, p.188). Several methods are recommended to check the accuracy of findings, such as triangulation, member checking, using rich, thick descriptions, and peer debriefing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study some of these methods were followed since identifying and discussing multiple procedures are recommended for research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Transcriptions of their interviews were shared with one parent and one instructor for accuracy, after that codes and themes were shared with the same participants for the process of member checking. The researcher minded giving detailed information about research settings to provide rich descriptions. For peer debriefing, the codes and themes were reviewed by the advisor of the researcher who studies reproduction theories. Coding of the transcripts of four participants was requested by the advisor for cross-checking or intercoder agreement.

3.9. Limitations

There are two limitations of this study that are related to data collection procedures. The first limitation was the absence of the pilot study which was recommended before the actual study since it is useful for reviewing and correcting different aspects of the final version of the study (Yin, 2016). The researcher had personal contact with people neither working in Quran courses for 4-6 age nor currently sending their children to these courses. The PRA did not allow the researcher to conduct interviews before the approval of the Human Subjects Ethics Committee (HSEC) which requires the last version of the study. The limited number of participants was another reason for not conducting a pilot study.

The second and last limitation was the absence of field observation. Multiple sources of information like observation, interviews, and document analysis are used for in-depth data collection in qualitative research (Yin, 2016). In this research observations within classrooms were planned to use a source of data but, the PRA and instructors did not allow the researcher to be in the classroom or course except during interview times. Thus, interviews were the only source of data except for a basic-level document review.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

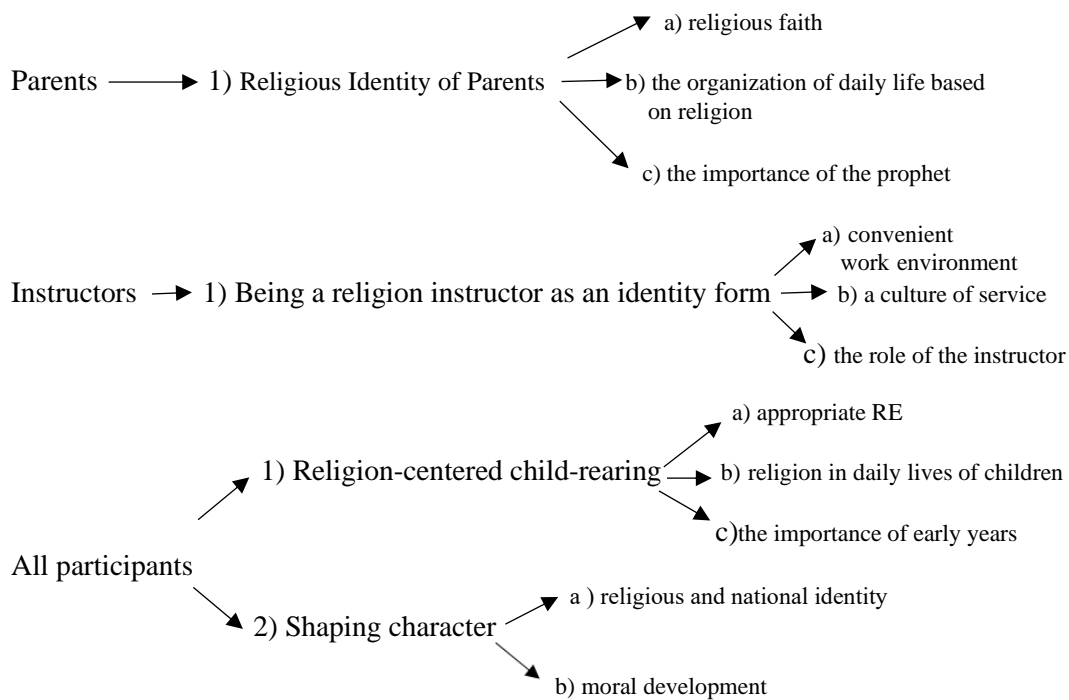


Figure 2. Themes and categories

This chapter of the study results revealed from the thematic analysis of the data collected through semi-structured interviews with parents and instructors will be mentioned. Since two groups of people are interviewed with similar but different sets of questions focusing on the religion-centered child-rearing process, some themes are special to one group of people along with themes shared by all participants. It means that themes emerged from the analysis of parents' or instructor's interviews only while others are joint themes of parents and instructors.

This study aims to understand the religion-centered child-rearing process by focusing on Quran courses of the PRA for children aged 4-6 years and also the production and

reproduction of religious conservatism. As Figure 2 demonstrates, the data analysis revealed a theme for each group and 2 themes for all participants. The theme of the parents is *religious identity*, and subthemes are a) *religious faith*, b) *the organization of daily life based on religion*, and c) *the importance of the prophet*. For instructors, the theme is being a religion instructor as an identity form and subthemes are a) *a convenient work environment*, b) *a culture of service*, and c) *the role of the instructor*. The common themes that emerged for these two groups of interviewees are 1) *religion-centered child-rearing* with sub-themes of a) *appropriate RE*, b) *religion in the daily lives of children*, and c) *the importance of early years* and 2) *shaping character* with sub-themes of a) *moral development* and b) *religious and national identity*. Throughout this chapter, the statements that are related to these themes will be presented with the information of people who say their pseudonyms to indicate that they are parents or instructors; there will be *P* letter for parents and *I* for instructors.

4.1. Theme 1: Religious Identity of Parents

Religious belief as a significant part of people's identity definition influences their ways of thinking, living, and parenting. The analysis of this theme is provided based on interviews with parents who send their young children to Quran courses of the PRA. Religion-related experiences of parents are structured over the theme of religious identity. Parents define the importance of religion in their lives in terms of their faith, life preferences, parenting, and the prophet's guidance. Thus, the religious identity of parents and its reflection on their lives generate the main discussion of this section.

4.1.1. Subtheme 1: Religious Faith

Under this subtheme, the people's understanding of religious faith is aimed to be explained by analyzing their definition of religion. When the meaning of religious faith for people happens to be questioned, the importance of belief for people's lives, how it is at the center of everything, its influences, and how it regulates their thoughts. Thus, three categories emerged from these answers: *the fundamental importance of belief*, *the pleasure of being Muslim*, and *belief as a source of power*.

The fundamental importance of belief stems from the fact that it is at the center of everything and is accepted as an indispensable part of people's identities. Participants

mention the priority of their religious beliefs in their lives which are accepted as tests of God and emphasize the afterlife:

The importance of religion... for me, it is my reason for coming to life, what can I say more? It is all I can care about at first anyway, since our purpose in coming to this world is a test, thank God, I look at it a little differently because I was raised with this sensitivity, so I care more, at first it is in the center.

[Dinin önemi... hayata geliş sebebim zaten benim için, daha ne diyebilirim? İlk başta önemseyebileceğim tek şey zaten, bu dünyaya geliş amacımız bir imtihan olduğu için çok şükür ki bu hassasiyetle büyütüldüğüm için biraz daha farklı bakıyorum, daha önemsiyorum yani, ilk başta merkezde o var.] (Leyla, P)

This central role of religion makes it a necessity or need for people. Participants define their faith as an identity and influence their actions:

(While pointing out her religious belief) I can say that it is my identity. So, Islam is indispensable for me. Because I believe, in my belief, this life will end and everything I planted, everything I did in this life will come back to me one by one in the afterlife. And I, as a human, as a mother, as a daughter, as a servant, I want to give this account easily.

[(Dini inancımı işaret ederek) benim hayatımdaki kimliğim diyebilirim. Yani İslamiyet olmazsa olmazım. Çünkü ben inanıyorum ki benim inancıma göre bu yaşam bitecek ve bu yaşamda ektiğim her şey, yaptığım her şey öbür dünyada benim karşımdan tek tek çıkacak. Ve ben insan olarak, anne olarak, evlat olarak, kul olarak bu hesabı kolay vermek istiyorum.] (İrem, P)

Religion is a must, like bread or water for me. It regulates my social and emotional life. Throughout history, humankind has always felt the need to believe in something. Belief in God, belief in the afterlife, the need to pray are such needs for me too.

[Din olmazsa olmazım, eklemek gibi su gibi benim için. Sosyal ve duygusal hayatımı düzenliyor. İnsanlık tarih boyunca hep bir şeye inanma ihtiyacı duymuş. Allah inancı, ahiret inancı, dua etme ihtiyacı benim için de böyle bir ihtiyaç.] (Jale, P)

Participants mention not only the importance of religion but also *the pleasure of being Muslim*. They indicate that this pleasure is related to the happiness they feel from their faith and the characteristics of Islam. According to them, Islam is the most proper version of religion for regulating people's minds, and answering their every question and need:

So, it is at the center of our lives in every sense. It is at the center of our lives in every sense, in terms of cleanliness, respect, and personal care. I really do not want to think about what kind of people we would be if we did not have our religion. I really love religion, let me put it that way. I'm glad I'm a Muslim, I'm glad we have our Islam religion.

[Yani hayatımızın merkezinde her anlamda. Temizlik anlamında, saygı anlamında, kişisel bakım anlamında her anlamda hayatımızın merkezinde. Ben gerçekten dinimiz olmasaydı nasıl insanlar olurduk düşünmek istemiyorum yani. Dini gerçekten çok seviyorum öyle söyleyeyim. İyi ki Müslümanım, iyi ki İslam dinimiz var diyorum.] (Olca, P)

Islam is a universal religion. So, I am not saying, it is a phase brought about by the last prophet, it is the final point. But of course, it is not that this point cannot be

expanded with jurisprudential issues. The religion of Islam answers to all the problems that people need during their development phase. Thus, I feel lucky in my religious position, to have the religion that I should have.

[İslam dini âlemşümul bir din. Yani son peygamberin getirdiği bir evre demiyorum, son nokta. Ama bu nokta tabii ki içtihadı meselelerle genişletilebilemez değil. İnsanların gelişim evresinde ihtiyacı olan sıkıntılarının tamamına İslam dini cevap verir. Dolayısıyla inançsal pozisyonda yani en olması gereken dine sahip olduğum için kendimi şanslı hissediyorum.] (Mine, P)

The pleasure of religion is also related to the idea of believing in something bigger than people, more powerful, and knowing what is best for them. The category of *belief as a source of power* emerged from this idea. Participants indicate that religion, the belief in God, and the afterlife make things easier for them. According to them, it gives the power to handle some situations since they believe that God knows better:

There must be that belief, that faith, that love of God, the fear of God, the presence of someone, that there is a power above you, and the pleasure and comfort of surrendering to that power. A place where you can take shelter when you are desperate when you are a sinner, a place where you can take shelter when you cannot tell anyone... So, what do my friends who do not believe in God do? Well done. Because when I cannot make it, do it, I say, Lord, you have wisdom, I say there is something and I solve the problem.

[Temelde olmalı o inanç, o iman, o Allah sevgisi, Allah korkusu, birinin varlığı, senden üstünde bir gücün olduğu ve o güce teslim olmanın verdiği haz, rahatlık. Çaresiz olduğunda, günahkâr olduğunda sığınacağın bir kapı, kimseye anlatamadığında sığınacağın bir kapı...O yüzden o inanmayan arkadaşlarım ne yapıyorlar? Helal olsun yani. Çünkü ben baktım başaramıyorum, beceremiyorum, Rabbim bir hikmetin vardır diyorum, bir şey vardır diyorum ve problemi çözüyorum.] (Filiz, P)

Religion is the meaning of life for me. Without religion, it is hard to find the strength and ability to tolerate. For example, belief in the afterlife keeps me from making mistakes and I know that everyone will be rewarded for what they have done.

[Din hayatın anlamı benim için. Din olmadığında dayanma gücü ve tahammül edebilme yetisi bulmak çok zor. Mesela ahiret inancı hem beni tutuyor yanlış yapmaktan hem de herkesin yaptıklarının karşılığını alacağını biliyorum.] (Helin, P)

Participants also highlighted the regulatory power of religion over people's thoughts. They state that religious rules have positive effects on the organization of their lives, principles, and actions:

For me personally, I think it puts my life in order very well. For example, it prohibits gossip. But what happens when we do? You know, when we do, other than sin, it causes a lot of confusion. We become overwhelmed or chaos ensues. Or the person we gossiped about may go and tell someone else. For example, I think you have put it in order even in this. I can say that it is the most important thing that puts my life in order.

[Bireysel olarak benim için, yani benim hayatımı çok güzel düzene soktuğunu düşünüyorum. Mesela dedikoduyu yasaklıyor. Fakat işte yaptığımız zaman ne oluyor? Hani günahın haricinde şey yapıyoruz ya bir sürü kafa karışıklığı oluyor. Bunalyoruz

ya da kargaşa çıkıyor. Ya da dedikodu yaptığımız kişi başkasına gidip söyleyebiliyor. Mesela bunda bile bir düzene soktuğunu düşünüyorum. Benim için hayatı düzene sokan en önemli şey diyebilirim.] (Karsu, P)

Religion is a way of life. In every area, in terms of economic or social, in general terms, it puts my life in order.

[Din bir yaşam biçimi. Her alanda, ekonomik olsun, sosyal hayat olsun genel anlamda hayatımı düzene sokuyor.] (Nazlı, P)

All these concepts mentioned above are correlated with the importance of religion for people, take place in participants' lives differently, and reflect their approach towards the concept of religion, Islam, and God at the same time. Religion is at the center of participants' lives as a source of power, pleasure, and strength. The strength of religious belief is related to the subjective well-being of individuals. This is related to the attendance of religious activities, meanings, and values that are provided by the religion and religious communities as a source of power (Colón-Bacó, 2010). According to parents, religion provides resistance in difficult situations and meaning to people's lives by giving the image of God who is strong and capable of doing everything. In this study, the strength of religious belief is also related to the daily lives of participants since they organize their lives according to its rules.

4.1.2. Subtheme 2: The Organization of Life Based on Religion

As mentioned above, religion has regulatory power over people, but it is not limited to their thoughts. It also affects people's actions. During the interviews, the influence of religion in the participants' lives was questioned and results demonstrate that it occupies quite a large space in their lives. Participants define religion as a lifestyle that is designed by religious rules and practices:

Religion is our way of life. It is important for us that we try to build every moment of our lives in line with our Lord's consent and within the framework of the rules he has set. For us, religion is not such a separate thing. It is not like there is religion here but not there. According to him, every moment, every second of our lives, when we go to bed and when we wake up, is framed by this.

[Din bizim yaşam biçimimiz. Bizim için önemi Rabbimizin rızasının doğrultusunda, O'nun koyduğu kurallar çerçevesinde hayatımızı her anını ona göre inşa etmeye çalışıyoruz. Bizim için din böyle ayrı bir şey değil. Şurada din var da burada yok gibi bir durum söz konusu değil. Hayatımızın her anı, her saniyesi yatarken, kalkarken bununla çiziliyor çerçevesi ona göre.] (Gamze, P)

Religion is very central to our lives, appearance, and worship are shaped accordingly. Thanks to religion, I am more forgiving in my relationships. It does not affect our activities, but I do not go to a tavern for example. Of course, my circle of friends is

shaped in line with my beliefs, but I don't have any discrimination, the important thing is that the person I meet is human and conscientious. Sure, my very close friends are people who are more similar to me and close to me.

[Din hayatımızın çok merkezinde, kılık kıyafet, ibadetler ona göre şekilleniyor, ilişkilerimde daha affediciyim din sayesinde. Aktivitelerimizi çok etkilemiyor ama bir bara, bir meyhaneye gitmiyorum mesela. İllaki arkadaş çevrem de inançlarım doğrultusunda şekilleniyor ama bir ayırım yok önemli olan karşımdaki kişinin insan olması, vicdanlı olması. Tabii çok yakın arkadaşlarım daha bana benzeyen, yakın insanlar.] (Helin, P)

But religion is everywhere in our lives; eating, how we bathe, and even nail cutting has something to do with it.

[Ama din hayatımızın her yerinde yani, yeme-içme, nasıl banyo yaparız, tırnak kesmenin bile bir şeyi var.] (Filiz, P)

As can be seen from these explanations, participants' religious beliefs have a huge effect on lives in terms of their daily routines, social preferences, family lives, and relations. Thus, this sub theme appears in three categories: *daily routine according to religious practices, social and economic life, and parenting.*

Daily routine according to religious practices emerged from participants' similar responses regarding religious practices and their influence. During the interviews, all participants (parents) stated that they fulfilled their daily religious duties, they fast. Many of them also added that they read the Quran or different religious books:

So, our daily duties because there is no hypocrisy in obligations. I perform my prayers alhamdulillah, here comes our month of Ramadan. Apart from that, I pay attention to reading the Holy Quran. But read tafsir along with it. From the life of our Prophet, from the lives of the companions. But of course, we also read many different books.

[Yani günlük vecibelerimiz çünkü vecibelerde riya olmaz. Namazlarımı kılıyorum elhamdulillah, işte Ramazan ayımız geliyor. Onun dışında Kur'an-ı Kerim okumaya dikkat ediyorum. Ama yanında tefsir okumaya. Peygamber Efendimizin hayatından, sahabe hayatlarından. Ama tabii bunun yanında başka çok farklı kitaplar da okuyoruz.] (İrem, P)

(While mentioning religious practices) Of course, the answer to this question is that a Muslim must fulfill all the obligations regarding how they are stated in the Holy Quran. So, when we say religious ritual, of course, it is prayer, fasting, obligatory alms, pilgrimage if possible, or other conditions.

[(Yaptığı ibadetlerden bahsederek) Tabii ki bunun cevabı Müslüman olan birinin Kur'an-ı Kerim'deki geçen yönüyle farzların tamamını yerine getirmesidir. Yani dini ritüel derken tabii ki bu namazdır, oruçtur, zekattır, eğer imkân olduysa hacdir veya diğer şartlardır.] (Mine, P)

Worships and other religious rules are an important part of participants' daily routines, some of them indicate that they organize their daily lives according to prayer times:

My life is according to prayer times, I act according to prayer times. My day starts with morning prayer, I have some programs according to prayer times, and I have courses and training, and I attend these. I attend such courses as tafsir lessons and hadith lessons. Within the family, we sometimes sit and talk about small stories and short stories. My eldest son is going to scouting, in a course where they do something from an Islamic perspective. For example, he has been going for two weeks now, he has been involved in a project to perform the five daily prayers, something new has happened with it, a new bulletin has been opened in our house, and there have been actions to encourage my son to pray if you ask anything.

[Hayatım namaz vakitlerine göre, namaz vakitlerine göre hareket ediyorum hayatımda. Sabah namazıyla hayatım başlıyor bu şekilde namaz vakitlerine göre programlarım var, gittiğim kurslar, eğitimler var, onlara katılıyorum. Tefsir dersi, hadis dersi gibi çeşitli kurslara gidiyorum. Aile içinde de ufak çaplı kıssalar, hikayeler şeklinde bazen oturup konuşuyoruz. Büyük oğlum izciliğe gidiyor bir kursla, kurs biraz İslami bakış açısıyla bir şeyler yapıyorlar. Mesela kaç haftadır, iki haftadır gidiyor, şu an beş vakit namazını kılma projeleri var ona dahil oldu, onunla yeni bir şey oldu, yeni bir bülten açıldı evimizde, oğlum da namaza teşvik edici hareketler oldu yeni bir şey sorarsanız.] (Leyla, P)

My daily prayers are I pray, I fast, I read the Quran. For example, I organize my day according to prayer times.

[Günlük ibadetler işte namaz kılıyorum, oruç tutuyorum, Kur'an okuyorum. Mesela günümü namaz vakitlerine göre düzenliyorum.] (Nazlı, P)

So, like this, getting up early in the morning, I try not to go to bed after morning prayer. That means I have free time mentally. I am having a good time. Getting up early, getting my work done early.

[Yani şöyle, sabah erken kalkmak, sabah namazından sonra yatmamaya özen gösteriyorum. O da benim zihinsel olarak da zihin olarak da açık bir vaktim oluyor. Güzel bir vaktim oluyor. Erken kalkmak, işlerimi erken yoluna koymak.] (İrem, P)

Participants do not confine their perception of worship to some religious rituals like praying or fasting, almost all of their actions including charity work, clothing, and shopping options are related to their religious beliefs. Therefore, the category of *social and economic preferences* involves other religion-related social and cultural life choices of participants. While mentioning what they do as religious rituals, Karsu and Jale mention helping others, alms, smiling, and being kind or merciful alongside worship:

So, these are the obligations, of course, especially. But of course, we try to do non-obligatory things. For example, caressing the head of an orphan and greeting him. I think these are very special too. You know, the obligatory acts of course are to pray to fast, to give obligatory alms, and what we don't actually know about is giving alms. For example, socially, I believe this. I think that if alms were really given to them by such rich people or by good people today, there would not be many poor people left in our country. We try to do these as much as we can.

[Yani bunlar farzlar tabii ki özellikle. Ama nafileleri de yapmaya çalışıyoruz tabii ki. Mesela bir yetim başı okşamak, selam vermek. Bunların da çok özel olduğunu düşünüyorum. Hani farzlardan tabii ki namaz kılmak, oruç tutmak, zekât vermek ve aslında bilmediğimiz mesela sadaka olayımız. Mesela toplumsal olarak şuna

inanıyorum. Sadaka gerçekten bu kadar zenginler tarafından verilseydi ya da bugün iyi olanlar tarafından ülkemizde çok da fakirin kalmayacağını düşünüyorum. Bunları da yapmaya çalışıyoruz elimizden geldiğince.] (Karsu, P)

In fact, worship is prayer, I try to read the Quran, I fast, we sacrifice an animal for God, and we try to give alms. I also care about things that are not exactly like worship; honesty, being cheerful, and smiling are sunnah.

[Aslında ibadetler namaz, Kur'an okumaya çalışıyorum, oruç tutuyorum, kurban kesiyoruz, sadaka vermeye çalışıyoruz. Ben bir de tam olarak ibadet gibi olmayan şeyleri önemsiyorum işte dürüstlük, güler yüzlü olmak, tebessüm etmek sünnettir.] (Jale, P)

Filiz, who is a math teacher, indicates how her faith affects her profession:

I pray, I hope it will be accepted. I am fasting. Apart from that, I am careful to give alms. Sometimes, for example, I remove a stone from the road for the sake of Allah. So, maybe I'll get off with it. You know, there are stories like that. Well, I caress my head and smile. Being compassionate towards students, towards my own students. Not making it difficult, making it easier, and everything. Because mathematics is already a problem. I do that kind of thing.

[Namaz kılıyorum inşallah kabul olsun. Oruç tutuyorum. Onun dışında sadaka vermeye dikkat ederim. Bazen mesela yoldaki bir taşı Allah rızası için kaldırırım. Belki oradan yırtarım diye. Hani vardır öyle hikayeler falan. Ben bir işte başıokşamak, gülümsemek. Öğrencilere karşı merhametli olmak, kendi öğrencilerimi karşı. Zorlaştırmamak, kolaylaştırmak, her şeyi. Matematik zaten başlı başına bir bela olduğu için. O tür şeyler yapıyorum.] (Filiz, P)

Almost all the participants indicate their sensitivity to the Palestine boycott while doing shopping. They also try to raise their children's awareness about this Palestine boycott:

I am very careful about the boycott, I am very strict about it. For example, I did not buy water for my son once. My sone was thirsty outside, there were boycott brands in the market, so we were close to home. It was not a distance where he would be very thirsty course, I would not leave a child thirsty, but I did not buy it. People said 'Lady buy water for a child' but I did not. I am trying to give boycott awareness to my son at a young age.

[Boykota çok dikkat ediyorum baya katırım bu konuda mesela bir kere oğluma su almamıştım. Oğlum dışarıda susamıştı markette de boykot markaları vardı, yani eve de yakındık, çok susuzluk çekeceği bir mesafe değildi tabi çocuğu susuz bırakmam ama almadım insanlar falan abla çocuğa su al n'olacak dedi ama almadım. Boykot bilinci vermeye çalışıyorum oğluma küçük yaşta.] (Nazlı, P)

I am more compassionate this way, and I strive for my children to be more compassionate people to , to be compassionate to animals and disabled people. I try to make them love fasting without forcing it. I take them to mosques, and when I help them, I make sure they participate in this process. Especially in the Israel-Gaza issue, they witnessed non-Muslims oppressing both Muslims and non-Muslims. We have deeply internalized the boycott. Concepts such as compassion, good morals, and kindness to neighbors are important.

[Ben daha merhametliyim bu şekilde, çocuklarıma da daha çok merhametli insanlar olmaları, hayvanlara, engellilere merhametli olmaları için çabalıyorum. Orucu sevdirmeye çalışıyorum zorlamadan. Camilere götürüyorum, yardım yaptığım zaman

bu sürecin içine olmalarını sağlıyorum. Özellikle İsrail-Gazze meselesinde Müslüman olmayanın Müslüman olan, olmayana eziyetine şahit oldular. Boykotu çok içselleştirmiş durumdayız. Merhamet, güzel ahlak, komşuya ikram gibi kavramlar önemli.] (Helin, P)

When I asked about her scarf resembling a traditional Palestinian keffiyeh and whether she shared her attitude with her children or not, Gamze defined it as her responsibility:

Of course, I say, this is something for me, for example, boycott, speaking Palestinian, this is a responsibility for me, in fact, it is an obligation for me. Because I live this by believing. The child also grows up with this. He sees it in the environments he enters. So, we participate in demonstrations, attend seminars, etc. He also grows up seeing these. Of course, I want him to grow up with that sensitivity.

[Tabii ki diyorum ya bu benim için bir şey mesela boykot, Filistin'i konuşmak bu benim için bir sorumluluk, yani benim için bir yükümlülük aslında. Bunu inanarak yaşadığım için. Çocuk da bununla büyüyor. Girdiği ortamlarda da görüyor. Yani eylemlere katılıyoruz, seminerlere katılıyoruz vesaire. O da bunları görerek büyüyor. O da o hassasiyetle yetişsin istiyorum tabii ki.] (Gamze, P)

Olcaý also indicates that she feels responsible to warn people about boycott:

We are also careful in every way, even when shopping at the supermarket. For example, you see that there is oppression in Palestine right now. We are going to the market. You know, there are people I try to warn. I get very bad reactions from time to time. But I see him as my religious brother. And I try not to buy boycott products, for example. I can't remain insensitive if someone near me has brought it. Even though I guess that sometimes I will be exposed to really bad words, I cannot be in all conscience, and I feel the need to warn him/ her. In that sense, there is religion in every sense of our lives.

[Biz de her anlamda yani alışveriş yaparken markette bile dikkat ediyoruz. Mesela şu anda işte Filistin'de bir zulüm var görüyorsunuz. Markete gidiyoruz. Hani uyardıya çalıştığım insanlar oluyor. Zaman zaman çok kötü tepkiler alıyorum. Ama ben din kardeşim olarak görüyorum. Ve bunu da örneğin boykot ürünlerini almamaya çalışıyorum. Yanımda birisi almışsa duyarsız kalamıyorum. Bazen gerçekten kötü kelimelere maruz kalacağımı tahmin etsem de vicdanını rahat edemiyorum, uyardıya ihtiyacı duyuyorum. O anlamda hayatımızın her anlamında her yerinde din var.] (Olcaý, P)

Apart from the Palestinian boycott, shopping, and social life choices of participants are also related to the fact that alcohol is considered haram in Islam. Although all participants are careful about it, how strict they are on this issue varies. Many of them are strict about not buying something from a market that sells alcohol or not going to places with alcohol, some of them are not that rigorous. Mine indicates that she pays attention to this, but she does not have a stringent stance on this issue. Jale and İrem also indicate that they are careful about it but not too much in their cultural activities:

I prefer not to shop at places where (alcohol) is sold as much as I can. But I do not continue this in a very difficult process with my children or myself. In other words, we need to ask where the religious order is not to shop in a place where alcohol is

available. When we give this answer exactly, I think the answer is this: I would prefer not to be in those quotation marks if the money flow is provided to that channel and it does not continue, it is in a situation contrary to God's command. But if it is a necessity, I do not have something like that we definitely shouldn't enter, we shouldn't buy, we shouldn't do it or I don't buy alcohol, but I don't say things like 'no, no, no, don't do' for places where alcohol is sold. So, I can express it clearly.

[Elimden geldiğince (alkol) satılan yerlerden alışveriş yapmamayı tercih ediyorum. Ama bu konuda çocuklarımla veya kendimle çok sıkıntılı bir süreçte de ilerletmiyorum bunu. Yani alkolün olduğu bir yerde alışveriş yapılmaması dinin emrinin neresinde sormak lazım. Onun cevabını tam verdiğimizde, yani onun cevabı bence şu, o kanala para akışının sağlanıp onun devam etmemesi, Allah'ın emrine muhalif bir durumda seyretmesi, yani o tırnak içerisinde olmamayı tercih ederim. Ama zorunluluk bir durum söz konusuysa çok böyle kesin ki girmemeliyiz, almamalıyız, yapmamalıyız ya ben içki almıyorum ama içki satılan yerde hayır hayır sakın sakın gibi de şeylerim yok. Yani onu net olarak ifade edebilirim.] (Mine, P)

(Religious rules) affect culturally but we are not too strict. We are careful not to go to places with alcohol. I was not paying much attention before. In fact, I was a believer before, but I wasn't paying attention to many places. Now I'm careful not to go or go shopping, that is, eating or drinking.

[Kültürel olarak illaki etkiliyor ama çok katı değiliz, alkollü mekanlara gitmemeye özen gösteriyoruz. Daha önce çok dikkat etmiyordum aslında önceden de inançlıydım ama çok mekâna dikkat etmiyordum şimdi gitmemeye ya da alışverişe özen gösteriyorum, yeme içme yani.] (Jale, P)

Apart from that, of course, we choose places that are more suitable for us for our other activities. The artistic activities we eat or go to. Actually, we do not limit it to artistic activity. You know, we go to the cinema, we go to the theater, we do a lot of things with our children. His wife still does the same thing when we go alone. We don't put them into such a limitation. But for example, I try to consider the place where I eat as a place without alcohol.

[Onun dışında yaptığımız diğer faaliyetlerimizi de tabii ki bize daha uygun mekanlar seçiyoruz. Yemek yediğimiz ya da gittiğimiz sanatsal faaliyetleri. Hani sanatsal faaliyet olarak sınırlandırmıyoruz aslında. Hani sinemaya da gidiyoruz, tiyatroya da gidiyoruz, çocuklarımızla birçok şey yapıyoruz. Eşi yine de aynı şekilde baş başa gittiğimiz zamanlarda. Onları öyle bir sınırlandırmaya çok koymuyoruz. Ama mesela bir yemek yediğim mekânı içkisiz bir mekân olarak değerlendirmeye çalışıyorum.] (İrem, P)

On the other hand, some participants are clear that they do not buy something from a store where alcohol is sold or go to restaurants or other places with alcohol:

I don't really shop where alcohol is served. Yes, I have such conservatism too. So, if that's what it's called, I'll accept it. This runs in my family too. So, I don't shop at places with alcohol. In fact, for example, Gaza is on our agenda right now. I have been boycotting for over 20 years, maybe more. So, I can say that it has become my lifestyle.

[Ben alkollü yerden gerçekten alışveriş yapmam. Evet böyle tutuculuklarım da vardır. Yani bunun adı buysa bunu kabul ederim. Bu benim ailemde de var. Yani alkollü yerden alışveriş yapmam. Hatta mesela şu an gündemimizde Gazze var. Ben 20 yılı aşkındır, belki daha fazladır boykot yapan biriyim. Yani hayat tarzıma hale geldi diyebilirim.] (Karsu, P)

Olcay, who is a teacher, highlights her extreme rigor in shopping preferences considering alcohol regardless of the situation like hunger:

We do not go (to places with alcohol). No, we don't go. For example, we try not to buy anything from stores where alcohol is sold. I even remember it in college. I was left without bread at a late hour. There was only one place, and it was selling alcohol. That night, for example, I didn't eat. I mean, I went to bed hungry just to avoid taking it from there. To be honest, we generally try not to go to crowded places with music. Like that.

[Gitmeyiz (alkollü mekanlar). Yok gitmiyoruz. Mesela alkol satılan yerlerden genelde bir şey de almamaya çalışıyoruz. Hatta üniversitede hatırlıyorum. Ekmeksiz kalmıştım geç bir saatte. Sadece bir yer vardı, alkol satıyordu. O gece mesela yemek yememişim. Yani öyle aç aç yatmıştım sırf oradan almamak için. Kalabalık ortamlarda müzikli falan yerlere genelde gitmemeye çalışıyoruz açıkçası. Öyle.] (Olcay, P)

Another rule of Islam that is important for participants of this study is modest dress codes. All participants of the study, both parents and instructors, were wearing hijab and some parents mentioned comfort and happiness with hijab:

For example, I wear a hijab. It could be a basic example, but I feel freer in this. I can do whatever I want. For example, people I want can see me. If it is an order in this sense. So, I can say this.

[Mesela ben tesettürlüyüm. Hani çok şey bir örnek olabilir ama mesela bunun içinde daha özgür hissediyorum. İstedığimi yapabiliyorum. İstedğim kişiler görebiliyor beni mesela. Bu anlamda bir düzene eğer. Yani bunu söyleyebilirim.] (Karsu, P)

Later, especially after my son was born, my life changed. Of course, first, I started paying attention to my clothing. I mean, I would feel very bad when I was praying, for example, trying to put on a scarf or something. I am entering the house of God. I pray and I do not enter here as God wants. Sometimes, for example, if there wasn't a suitable place in the corner, I couldn't put on my skirt or cover my hair. It would be crowded, there would be men and so on, and I would feel very bad. First, my intention was to wear a hijab. Thank God. Right now, for example, it makes me very happy to enter the mosque with my hands and arms so freely and start praying.

[Sonradan özellikle oğlum dünyaya geldikten sonra hayatım değişti. Tabii ki öncelikle giyim kuşamıma dikkat etmeye başladım. Yani namaz kılarken mesela eşarp falan takmaya çalışırken kendimi çok kötü hissedirdim Allah'ın evine giriyorum. Namaz kılıyorum ve Allah'ın istediği şekilde girmiyorum buraya. İşte bazen mesela kenarda köşede uygun bir yer yoksa eteğimi geçiremezdim, saçımı kapatamazdım. Kalabalık olurdu, erkekler falan olunca çok kötü hissedirdim kendimi. Öncelikle niyetim kapanmaktı. Çok şükür Allah nasip etti. Şu anda mesela camiye elimi kolumu böyle rahatça sallayarak girip namaza durmak benim için çok mutluluk verici.] (Olcay, P)

Some participants indicate that hijab is more than about dressing, it is for protecting women:

If there is a specific shape (for hijab), it would be mentioned in the Holy Quran. When one understands what the Holy Quran means when it says hijab, one learns not to follow formalism. I never perceive it through form either. So, for me, the hijab is actually an order for men, not women. In other words, it is an order to protect the woman. Therefore, in today's world, of course, these are my thoughts, they may be

open to discussion. Does the fact that women are present in every field in the capitalist order, that a very serious flow of money is provided through women, and unfortunately, this is imposed on women with the perception of freedom, really liberate or protect women?

[Eğer belirli bir şekil olsaydı (tesettür için) Kur'an-ı Kerim'de yer alırdı. Kur'an-ı Kerim tesettür derken neyi kastettiğini kavradığında insan şekilcilik üzerinden gitmemeyi öğreniyor. Ben de asla şekil üzerinden algılamıyorum. Yani tesettür benim için aslında kadın üzerinden değil, erkek üzerinden bir emirdir. Yani kadını koruma amaçlı gelen bir emirdir. Dolayısıyla günümüz dünyasında tabii ki bunlar benim düşüncem, tartışmaya açık olabilir. Kapitalist düzende kadının her alanda olması ve çok ciddi bir para akışının kadın üzerinden sağlanması ve maalesef kadına özgürlük algısıyla bunun dayatılması, kadını gerçekten özgürleştiriyor mu veya koruyor mu?] (Mine, P)

So here I want the child to see this from his mother. Even though this is marketed outside, the female body is valuable. We only wear hijab to protect ourselves. In other words, we wear it to protect ourselves rather than out of fear of God. We only show this to those who are halal, that is, our spouse.

[Yani burada çocuk, anneden şunu görmesini istiyorum ben. Her ne kadar dışarılarda bu pazarlanmış olsa da kadın vücudu değerlidir. Biz bunu sadece kendimizi korumak için kapatıyoruz. Yani Allah'tan korktuğumuz içinden ziyade kendimizi korumak için kapatıyoruz. Bunu sadece helal olana, işte eşimize gösteriyoruz.] (Filiz, P)

From participants' expressions, modesty is not limited to dressing. It is a form of consciousness that influences their attitudes in their social lives, their behaviors. Some participants mention their preference for avoiding mixed-gender places:

(Religion) affects my clothing. I wear a hijab. I do not often go to places where men and women are together. It affects everything. For example, I do not use a credit card because of interest. Before we got married, I asked my husband if he would accept it. [Kılık kıyafetlerimi etkiliyor, tesettürlüyüm. Kadınli erkekli yerlere pek gitmem. Her şeyi etkiliyor mesela kredi kartı kullanmıyorum faiz yüzünden evlenmeden önce eşime de sordum kabul eder misin diye.] (Nazlı, P)

We pay attention to the boundaries in male-female relationships. We try not to do things that God does not want, such as waste and so on. In other words, we are trying to act within the circle of halal, you know, with the truths we believe in. As I said in our family life, there is a boundary for everyone, men and women, even between mother and child. So, taking that into consideration, we should act in a love-oriented, respect-oriented manner, as I said, within the framework of the will of our Lord.

[Erkek kadın ilişkilerindeki sınırlara dikkat ediyoruz. İsraf vesaire Allah'ın istemediği, şeyleri yapmamaya çalışıyoruz. Yani helaller dairesinde hareket etmeye çalışıyoruz hani inandığımız doğrularla. Aile hayatımızda da dediğim gibi hani kadın erkek herkesin anne evlat arasında bile bu şeyin bir sınırı vardır mesela. Yani onu da dikkate alarak sevgi odaklı, saygı odaklı yine dediğim gibi Rabbimin rızası çerçevesinde nasıl hareket etmemiz gerekiyorsa.] (Gamze, P)

It also influences participants' circles of friends in different ways. For some of them, their beliefs do not affect their friendship while others state that they have friends with different approaches to religion, but their close circles have similar views on religion:

For example, I have a friend. She is quite different. We still see each other, and we still laugh about how we have a good relationship with her. Our perspectives on life are really different. But this was not my choice. I meet the person I love or that family. [Mesela bir tane arkadaşım var. Çok farklı. Hala gülüşürüz onunla biz seninle nasıl anlaşıyoruz diye. Hayata bakış açılarımız gerçekten farklı. Fakat bu benim tercihim olmadı. Sevdiğim insanla görüşürüm yani ya da o aileyle.] (Karsu, P)

I mean, I'm very, very close to my friends who don't believe, and who I know don't believe, and who know that I believe too and that I belong to a sect. As long as I don't cross his boundaries and insult her, as long as she doesn't cross my boundaries and insult me or my values. Other than that, I have no problems. Because everyone is responsible for their own work. But there is also something like this. A rose smells like a rose next to a rose. If you stand next to the carcass, you will smell like a carcass. Even if you are not a carcass, it will jump or hit you. Considering this, I don't actually go and sit in a bar and say I live according to Islamic principles. I have no business going to a disco. Can I explain what I mean? I try to live in this manner. Because a person is associated with the community and environment he is in, and because he resembles them, grapes darken as he looks at them.

[Benim hiçbir şekilde inanmayan, inanmadığını da bildiğim ve benim de inandığımı, bir tarikata mensup olduğumu bilen arkadaşlarımla da çok çok samimiyim yani. Ta ki ben onu sınırlarını aşıp ona hakaret etmediğim sürece, ta ki o bana aşır sınırlarımı bana hakaret etmediği sürece veya benim değerlerime. Onun dışında benim hiçbir problemim yok. Çünkü herkes kendi işinden sorulur. Fakat şöyle de bir şey var. Gül gülün yanında gül gibi kokar. Leşin yanında durursanız da leş gibi kokarsınız. Leş olmasanız bile sıçrar veya üstünüze. Bunu da düşününce ben aslında İslami usullere göre yaşıyorum deyip de gidip de bir bara oturmuyorum. Gidip de bir diskoda işim yok benim. Anlatabiliyor muyum ne demek istediğimi? Bu minvalde yaşamaya çalışıyorum. İnsan bulunduğu o toplulukla, ortamla anıldığı için ve ona benzediği için üzüm üzüme baka baka kararır.] (Filiz, P)

As can be seen from some references on the relationship between participants and their children, their religious faith affects participants' parenting perspectives. Thus, the category of *parenting* was included within this sub-theme. Their parenting view is not only related to religion. Responsibility, unconditional love, being a role model, and learning with children, were included in the parenting definition of participants:

Responsibility, first and foremost, is not actually a selfish thing, but rather that parents meet all the needs of the child and do this properly. I think loving and being loved is the most beautiful form.

[Sorumluluk en başta, aslında bencilce bir şey değil de çocuğun bütün ihtiyaçlarını ebeveynlerin karşılması, bunu da hakkıyla yapmak. Sevmek ve sevilmenin en güzel hali olduğunu düşünüyorum.] (Helin, P)

First of all, I think I should pay attention to my behavior and actions. I cannot make them experience something unless I experience it myself. I cannot explain anything to them. This is actually the case in our religion. The religion of Islam is actually 90% living and 10% explaining. First, we need to live morally.

[Her şeyden önce hal ve hareketlerime dikkat etmem gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Ben yaşamadan bir şeyi onlara yaşatamam. Bir şeyi onlara anlatamam. Dinimizde de aslında bu böyledir. İslam dininin aslında %90'ı yaşamak, %10'ı anlatmaktır. Önce yaşamamız gerekiyor ahlaki olarak.] (İrem, P)

Responsibility, education, like you train him, and you train yourself. It's actually a journey. I can define parenthood as a journey, we accompany each other on the journey of life.

[Sorumluluk, sorumluluk, eğitim yani onu eğitiyorsun kendini de eğitiyorsun gibi. Bir yolculuk aslında. Ebeveynliği bir yolculuk olarak tanımlayabilirim, hayat yolculuğunda birbirimize eşlik ediyoruz.] (Leyla, P)

On the other hand, accepting children as God's trust, and raising children according to their beliefs are some religion-related statements regarding parenting issues. They also emphasize raising moral and patriot children:

So, I frankly thought about being a parent. It means many things. So, if I were to put it in one sentence, responsibility for me means being a parent. So, they are God's trust, being sufficient for them in every aspect. These can be expanded. But if you ask which word alone can describe it, it is the responsibility.

[Yani ebeveyn olmanın benim için ne ifade ettiği üzerine düşündüm açıkçası. Birçok şey ifade ediyor. Yani onu bir cümleye almak istesem benim için sorumluluk demek ebeveyn olmak demek. Yani Allah'ın emaneti, onlara her yönüyle yetebilmek. Bunlar genişletilebilir. Ama tek başına hangi kelime karşılar dersenez sorumluluk.] (Mine, P)

For me, parenthood is a responsibility, so responsibility. Raising conscious individuals for future generations by taking moral priority. To raise morally focused individuals rather than career focused individuals. Whether it is national values or religious values, I think national values cannot exist without religious values in the first place. Of course, I don't know if I can raise children like this and become Mehmet the Conqueror, but I intend to raise children with that feeling. To me, this is motherhood, this is parenting.

[Ebeveynlik benim için sorumluluk ya sorumluluk yani. Gelecek nesillere bilinçli, şuurlu bireyler yetiştirmek, ahlakı öncelik alarak. Kariyer odaklı değil de ahlak odaklı bireyler yetiştirmek. Milli değerleri olsun, dini değerleri en başta zaten dini değerleri olmadan milli değerler olmuyor diye düşünüyorum. Bunun şeyinde yetiştirip işte, tabii Fatih Sultan Mehmetler olur mu bilmiyorum ama o nezdinde yani o duyguda çocuklar yetiştirme niyetindeyim yani. Bana göre annelik yani bu ebeveynlik bu.] (Filiz, P)

I think there is no one ideal way of raising children, so it varies from society to society. It is different for each society. But for me, the ideal child is a good citizen to the country and nation, a good servant to Allah, and a good ummah to the prophet. What is important to me is to be an example to the child, the child does what he sees. The tree bends when he is young and learns by seeing when he is young.

[Bir tane ideal çocuk yetiştirme bence yok yani bu toplumdan topluma değişir. Her toplum için farklı. Ama benim için ideal çocuk vatana millete hayırlı vatandaş, Allah'a hayırlı kul, peygambere hayırlı ümmet demek. Benim için önemli olan çocuğa örnek olmak, çocuk gördüğünü yapar. Ağaç yaşken eğilir, küçükken görerek öğrenir.] (Nazlı, P)

Being a parent, so raising a new generation, and building a society, it is also raising individuals who are in accordance with God's will for us.

[Ebeveyn olmak, yani yeni bir nesil yetiştirmek, toplum inşa etmek ve bizim için de ayrıca Allah'ın rızasına uygun bireyler yetiştirmek asıl hedefimiz bu.] (Gamze, P)

This sub-theme is developed around daily routine according to religious practices, social and economic life, and parenting. The way of living their lives in every area

including family lives, parenting approach, relationships, cultural activities are very much related to the religious beliefs of participants and so religious rules. First, the daily lives of participants are organized mostly according to their daily religious duties. They also have some religious routines. Secondly, their cultural activities and shopping preferences are related to religious rules. They emphasized their religious identity above, they are acting according to this visible, religious identity in public spaces. Palestine boycott is a significant part of their shopping preferences. Ishak et al.(2018) indicate that people's participation in boycotts is related to their moral values, and also religious affiliations. Parents in this study might support these boycotts because Palestinians are accepted as brothers/sisters due to the ummah approach alongside to humanitarian perspective. Lastly, their parenting is influenced by religious principles. Islamic doctrine that sees children as innocent individuals in need of care influences parents to see them as God's trust. They might also feel obligated to transfer religious knowledge and values. For learning, teaching, and implementing these religious rules and practices, participants have the Holy Quran as a guidebook and other religious books. For them, there is also an important exemplary person in front of them, the prophet Muhammed. He is the most significant human figure in Islamic belief, so almost all participants mention him as being a guide.

4.1.3. Subtheme 3: The Importance of the Prophet

The last sub-theme of religious identity is the importance of the Prophet. According to participants, the prophet Muhammed has an impact on them in many ways, he is a role model for them with his parenting, honesty, morality, and lifestyle. They believe in the accuracy of his behaviors, his thoughts, approaches on some issues and benefits of his habits:

When we consider religious life, or more precisely Islamic life, methodologies were actually formed later with a lot of effort, as I can see by reading it now. For example, this is also valid in our normal lives. Our Prophet says to drink the water sitting down. He said this 1400 years ago. But now, in research, we see that water is actually more beneficial to the intestines or stomach when drunk while sitting. So right now, science is solving this. But it was already solved 1400 years ago. A lady comes to our prophet, and she is pregnant. She asks how she should raise it. He says you are late. So, actually, if we put aside a lot of our theories right now, our Prophet actually experienced these. And he also gave advice.

[Dini yaşamı yani daha doğrusu İslami yaşamı aldığımızda aslında metodolojilerin sonradan bir sürü çabayla oluştuğunu hani ben şu an okuyarak da görüyorum. Mesela

bu normal hayatımız içerisinde de geçerli. Efendimiz suyu oturarak için diyor. Demiş 1400 yıl önce demiş bunu. Fakat şu an araştırmalarda suyun oturarak içildiğinde aslında bağırsaklara ya da mideye daha fazla fayda sağladığını görüyoruz. Yani şu an bilim çözüyor bunu. Fakat 1400 yıl önce zaten çözülmüş. Efendimize yine bir hanım geliyor hamile. Nasıl yetiştirmesi gerektiğini soruyor. Geç kalmışsın diyor. Yani aslında şu an kuramlar işte bizim bir sürü şeyi bir tarafa koyarsak zaten Efendimiz aslında bunları yaşamış. Ve tavsiye de etmiş.] (Karsu, P)

The prophet's influence is important for Muslims, but in this study, the main areas of interest in this theme are his exemplary personality and parenting advice. Thus, there are two categories: *the guidance of the prophet* and *the prophet as an ideal parent*. According to the participants, the prophet is a flawless person, he is the most accurate person to follow. His personality, fatherhood, humanity, lifestyle are their guide for living. They mention that they are not only eager to follow in his footsteps in every area of life but also want their children to see him as a role model in every aspects of their lives:

Now, when the boy (her son) wants to hit the cat here, I ask him what our Prophet would do, and he stops. When he shakes the tree, I say, "We are his ummah, my son, let's behave like the Prophet", he says, "Okay mom" and does not hit the tree. Did I explain what I meant? So, when it comes to this, when the Prophet is the limit, the thing stops for us, the thing that is done stops. In fact, they often ask me, mother, what would our Prophet do? I always tell them anyway. What would our Prophet do, no other person, this, me, or anyone else? Always ask yourself. I want it to have a place in their lives like this.

[Şimdi benim çocuk burada kediye vurmaya istediğinde Peygamber Efendimiz ne yapıyordu onu diyorum, bırakıyor. Ağaca salladığında Peygamber Efendimiz gibi onun ümmetiyiz oğlum öyle davranalım dediğimde tamam anne diyor ağaca vurmuyor. Ne demek istediğimi anlatabildim mi? Yani böyle olunca, sınır Peygamberi olunca bizde şey duruyor, yapılan şey duruyor yani. Hatta çoğu zaman bana şunu soruyorlar, anne Peygamberimiz ne yapardı? Ben zaten hep onlara söylüyorum. Onu, bunu, beni, başkasını değil Peygamberimiz ne yapardı? Hep sorun kendinize. Hayatlarında bu şekilde yer etmesini istiyorum.] (Filiz, P)

Apart from that, we pay attention to the kinship in our circle of friends and family life, we are afraid of offending or tiring our circle of friends, and we try to bring everything that is in the prophet's life to our own home, but at a very minimum level, it is something we are doing with great difficulty right now.

[Onun dışında arkadaş çevremizde, aile hayatımızda sılayı rahime dikkat ediyoruz, arkadaş çevremizde daha böyle kırmaktan ve yormaktan çekiniyoruz, tamamen peygamber yaşantısında ne varsa onu kendi evimize geçirmeye çalışıyoruz ama çok minimum düzeyde yani şu an çok zorlanarak yaptığımız bir şey.] (Leyla, P)

For example, I am an angry person. When I get angry, I try to make him hear by saying that I have to act like our Prophet, that you have to calm down. I'm trying to really put our Prophet in the middle of our lives. I'm trying to live like him or when I could not live, I'm constantly trying to reassure him that if we had a prophet this would not have happened. He wouldn't do it like that, or he might do something like this. [Mesela sinirli bir insanım ben. Sinirlendiğim zaman Peygamber Efendimiz gibi

davranmam gerekiyor, sakın olman gerekiyor diye onu işittirmeye çalışıyorum. Peygamber Efendimizin hayatımızın gerçekten ortasına koymaya çalışıyorum. Onun gibi yaşamaya çalışıyorum. Ya da yaşayamadığımda da Peygamberimiz olsa böyle olmazdı. Şöyle yapmazdı. Ya da şöyle yapardı diye sürekli dinlendirmeye çalışıyorum.] (Olcay, P).

The prophet's sunnah which is the common name used for what he said, did, and approved (Bedir, 2010) is taken into consideration by parents. They believe that his sunnah is beneficial and these benefits are identified by scientific research. Parents also indicate that they give importance to transfer some of the prophet's sunnah to their children if it is possible:

My main idea, of course, is to raise (my child) according to our prophet's sunnah. Our main example is the prophet. Our prophet knew how to treat people in the most correct way, and her behavior towards her grandchildren, children and others is the best example.

[En temel düşüncem tabi ki (çocuğumu)peygamber efendimizin sünnetine göre yetiştirmek. Bizim en temel örneğimiz peygamber. Peygamber efendimiz insanlara en doğru şekilde davranmasını biliyordu, torununa, çocuğuna, başkalarına davranışları en doğru örnek.] (Nazlı, P)

When I research, I see that the prophet did not do anything in vain. So, I see that it is with a concept of wisdom, and I take care with my children as well. In other words, my children from a young age prefer to start from the index finger and come to the thumb last when cutting the nails. The meaning of this is the unity and uniqueness of the index finger, symbolizing the belief in monotheism. But that doesn't mean that. Is it against the sunnah when you start from the thumb? You can start. It's your choice. But I think there is an effect of loving the prophet, feeling affection for him, doing something he did, researching his life in search of wisdom, and thus strengthening the sense of religion. Therefore, I try to practice sunnah with my children.

[Araştırdığımda gerçekten peygamberin boşa yapmadığını görüyorum. Yani bir hikmet kavramıyla olduğunu görüyorum ve çocuklarımla da özen gösteriyorum. Yani büyük çocukların küçük yaştan itibaren mesela tırnakları kesilirken şahadet parmağından başlamayı tercih ederler, en son baş parmağa gelmeyi tercih ederler. Bundaki mananın şahadet parmağındaki birlik ve teklik, tevhit inancı olduğu simgesidir. Ama bu şu demek değil. Baş parmağın başladığı zaman sünnete muhalif midir? Başlayabilirsin. Bu senin tercihidir. Ama orada peygamberi sevmeye, muhabbet duymayla ve onun yaptığı bir şey yaparak, bir hikmet aramayla onun hayatını araştırmanın ve beraberinde din duygusunun sağlamlaşmasının bir etkisi olduğunu düşünüyorum. Dolayısıyla ben de çocuklarıma sünnetleri uygulamaya gayret ediyorum.] (Mine, P)

I do not try to transfer sunnah to my child which I cannot answer, so I cannot just say it is sunnah, so that is why we do this. My son is a child who asks a lot of questions, he questions everything, if I do not have an answer to why he is like this, why that, I don't transfer him. But it turns out that the sunnah of the Prophet is beneficial for human health. For example, I say drink water while sitting down, he asks why, I say circumcision, I look up the benefits on the internet, I tell my son about it, so I try to pass it on.

[Ben kendim cevabını veremediğim sünnetleri çocuğuma da aktarmaya çalışmıyorum, yani bunu niye yapıyoruz işte sünnet deyip geçemem. Benim oğlum çok soru soran

bir çocuk, her şeyi sorgular o niye öyle bu niye böyle diye cevabım yoksa aktarmıyorum. Ama peygamber sünnetlerinin insan sağlığı için yararlı olduğu ortaya çıkıyor mesela suyu oturarak iç diyorum, neden diyor sünnet diyorum, internette faydalarına bakıyorum, oğluma da söylüyorum o şekilde olunca aktarmaya çalışıyorum.] (Jale, P)

The category of *the prophet as an ideal parent* consists of parents' responses to the ideal child-raising method. Some of the participants indicate that they are trying to research and follow the prophet's way of parenting, and his attitudes toward his children:

So, I try to raise according to our prophet's child education, make more reading on his behaviors, and the education he gave. Knowing him more. In fact, after I became a mother, I wanted to get to know our Prophet more. Because his thing impressed me so much. For example, I was very impressed by the way he carried his own daughter on his shoulders and walked her through the streets before he became a prophet, in the treatment of girls during the period of ignorance. In other words, our Prophet attaches great importance to the girls. For example, Zeynep means her father's ornament. I also gave great importance to my daughters in his direction. My husband also appreciates it very much. Likewise, of course, we value our son very much. I mean, we don't discriminate between girls and boys in any way, but they are very precious to me.

[Yani ben peygamber efendimizin çocuk eğitimi üzerine yetiştirmeyi, onun davranışları, onun verdiği eğitim üzerine daha fazla okumalar yapmaya çalışıyorum. Ona daha fazla tanıma. Yani aslında anne olduktan sonra peygamber efendimizi daha çok tanımak istedim eşimi. Çünkü onun şeyi beni çok etkilemişti. Mesela cahiliye döneminde kız çocuklarına yapılan o davranışta kendi kızını daha henüz peygamber olmadan önce omuzlarını alıp da o sokaklarda gezdirmesi beni çok etkilemişti. Yani kız çocuğuna çok kıymet veriyor peygamber efendimiz. Mesela Zeynep babasının süsü demektir. Ben de kız çocuklarıma onun doğrultusuna çok kıymet verdim. Eşim de çok kıymet veriyor. Aynı şekilde oğlumuzda da tabii ki çok kıymet veriyoruz. Yani hiçbir şekilde kız erkek ayrımı yapmıyoruz ama benim için çok kıymetliler.] (İrem, P)

For me, child-raising is neither Piaget nor Montessori nor anything else, the important thing is to raise children according to the sunnah of our prophet. My only goal is to raise children according to the sunnah, he is the best example in everything, he is compassionate, and he loves children very much. He loves his grandchild, and while he is praying, his grandson climbs on his back and does not get up from prostration because he loves his grandchild. When he doesn't get up, we draw an inference from there. He cannot be angry with the child, he is merciful. When one of the companions said, "I have 10 children, I swear I never kissed one of them," the Prophet said, "How merciless are you?" He even tells you where to kiss the child. Here it is necessary to kiss on the forehead. He says never kiss her feet. They said yes, but then scientific studies are being carried out around the world. Then you see that everything he says has a scientific explanation.

[Benim için çocuk yetiştirme ne Piaget ne Montessori ne başka bir şey, peygamber efendimizin sünnetine göre çocuk yetiştirmek önemli olan. Benim tek amacım sünnete göre çocuk yetiştirmek, o her konuda en iyi örnek, merhametli, çocukları çok seviyor. Torununu seviyor, o namaz kılarken torunu sırtına çıkıyor torununu sevdiği için secdeden kalkmıyor. E kalkmayınca da biz de oradan bir çıkarımda bulunuyoruz. Çocuğa kızılmaz, merhametli bulunuyor. Sahabenin biri benim 10 tane çocuğum var vallahi birini öpmedim deyince sen ne kadar merhametsizsin diyor Peygamber

Efendimiz. Çocuğu öpmek gerektiğini hatta nereden öpülmesi gerektiğini hani söylüyor. İşte alından öpmek gerekiyor. Ayağından kesinlikle öpmeyin diyor. Bunlar evet böyle demiş ama sonra bilimsel çalışmalar yapılıyor dünya çapında. Sonra bakıyorsunuz söylediği her şeyin bir bilimsel açıklaması var yani.] (Filiz, P)

This sub theme showed the significance of the prophet for participants. All of his ways to carry out his routines like cutting nails, drinking water, and having a shower, his morality and his way of parenting can be examples for them in their lives. They follow in his footsteps for similar circumstances and approach their children and families according to his guidance. They accept the prophet as a role model for children. Sunnah of the prophet, his behaviors, and his words are paid attention by participants. They want their children to love and respect the prophet and act like him. Hewer (2001) emphasizes the importance of the prophet as par excellence for Muslim people. He indicates that the prophet provides codes of living and guidance for relations through his life, what he said, and what he approved of. Therefore, it can be said participants accept a way of conservative life through the prophet as an exemplary person, father, husband, servant, etc.

In general, this section demonstrated that parents' religious faith, the Quran, religious rules, and prophet for his parenting, morality, and lifestyle play significant roles in their lives. Their thoughts and behaviors as a person, a mother, a citizen, a friend, and a wife, etc. are all related to Islamic principles. They emphasize scientific proof for the prophet's actions. Thus, participants not only follow religious rules and the prophet's footsteps but also think that it is the proper, healthier way. This theme demonstrates the importance of religion for the participants. Their lives, daily routines, relations, social lives, and parenting are all influenced by Islamic principles. They do not have only religious rules but also the prophet as an exemplary person to follow. Children are somehow introduced to religion in their families. But family environments are not the only places where children meet with religion. Quran courses are a significant part of this process and like parents, instructors have a great influence on children's religious development. The following section will continue with the theme, *being a religious instructor*, that emerged from the instructors' responses. Since there is another group of participants independent of parents, there is an independent theme of instructors.

4.2. Theme 2: Being A Religious Instructor

This theme constitutes the instructors' points of view on religion and giving RE to young children in the Quran courses of the PRA. Their reasons for participating in this process, thoughts about the PRA, and experiences as religious instructors constitute this theme. Thus, subthemes are *the convenient work environment*, *the culture of the service*, and *the enrichment of the content*. Each sub theme involves instructors' point of views to this education, their reasons to choose here, and their roles as instructors.

4.2.1. Sub-theme 1: The Convenient Work Environment

Being an instructor of the Quran courses is a little different than other employment options since it is very much related to people's religious faith and conservative thoughts. There is a closer relation between the personal beliefs of people and their professions as religion instructors than other professions. All the instructors in this study declared their faith in Islam. Their religious beliefs influence their work preference and make these Quran courses convenient for them. The suitability of the work environment is associated with *modest dressing* and a *conservative environment*.

Firstly, *modest dressing* is an important factor for instructors to work for Quran courses. As I said all participants including instructors are women in hijab and it affects their preferences. When I asked, why they are working for the PRA rather than other places like the MoNE, Elif mentioned the headscarf issue:

The reason was entirely the headscarf. Let me put it this way, just as a brief note, the year I took the university exam, my score was 196, 200 was the highest score and my only choice could only be the faculty of theology. I couldn't go anywhere else, only the class size was 40 people. In other words, only 40 people were accepted at that time. In other words, the scores and the university scores were the same, changing by such a fraction. Even being able to enter there, I am in, even being able to enter the theology department was a great success. That's right, I didn't think of anywhere else, and the reason I couldn't think of it was the headscarf. If there were, if there were no headscarf, I would like the MoNE. For example, I am not a person who gets extremely uncomfortable in schools. I can work, I mean, I would like to go to the MoNE, but the headscarf was my most important option anyway. That's why the only institution where I could work while wearing a headscarf was the PRA.

[Sebebi tamamen başörtüsüydü. Şöyle söyleyeyim sadece kısa bir not olarak, üniversite sınavına girdiğim sene puanımız benim 196'ydı, 200 en yüksek puandı ve benim tek tercihim sadece ilahiyat fakültesi olabilirdi. Başka yere gidemiyordum sadece sınıf mevcutları 40 kişiydi. Yani o dönemde sadece 40 kişilik alınıyordu. Yani

puanlar da böyle üniversite puanları da o kadar küsuratla değişen puanlardı. Oraya girebilmek bile büyük bir, hani ilahiyata girebilmek bile çok büyük bir başarıydı yani. Öyle yani başka bir yer düşünmedim, düşünememe sebepim de başörtüsüydü. Olsaydı, hani başörtüsü olmasaydı MEB’i isterdim. Mesela okullarda çok aşırı rahatsız olan bir insan değilim. Çalışabilirim, yani isterdim MEB’i ama başörtüsü tamamen önümdeki en önemli seçeneğimdi zaten. O yüzden başörtüsüyle tek çalışabileceğim kurum da Diyanet’ti.] (Elif, I)

Some of them also mention the comfort of working in a place where only women work as a woman with a hijab. In the Quran courses, all instructors and other staff are female. Buse indicates that it has no effect on education. Although other instructors' opinions differ regarding its impact, Ceren, Deniz and Elif state comfortable environment:

I have never thought about this, but I can compare it like this: There may be a school in the MoNE where only female teachers are kindergarten teachers. Generally, preschool teachers are women, men are not preferred. I didn't think of any positive or negative consequences of this, but I don't think it will bring either a positive or negative result.

[Hiç bunu düşünmedim ama şöyle kıyaslayabilirim MEB’de de sadece bayan hocaların anaokulu öğretmeni olduğu bir okul olabilir ki zaten genelde okul öncesi öğretmenleri kadın oluyorlar, erkekler çok tercih etmiyorlar. Bunun olumlu ya da olumsuz bir sonucunu düşünmedim ama ne olumlu ne de olumsuz bir sonuç getireceğini düşünmüyorum yani.] (Buse, I)

It is more comfortable for us that everyone is a woman, and I think it is positive for the children. In fact, female teachers generally work in other institutions, in the MoNE and in pre-schools. I care about women being the first to raise children in kindergarten, I think women are better in this regard. I think they show more affection and also take care of themselves more easily, such as changing diapers, eating, etc. For this reason, parents surrender more easily, due to both love and care.

[Bizim için daha rahat herkesin kadın olması, çocuklar için de olumlu bence, zaten diğer kurumlarda, MEB de de okul öncesinde de genelde kadın öğretmen görev yapıyor. Ben anasınıfında ilk yetiştirenin kadın olmasını önemsiyorum, kadınların bu konuda daha iyi olduğunu düşünüyorum. Hem daha çok sevgi gösteriyorlar bence hem de öz bakımlarını, alt değiştirme, yemek falan daha rahat karşılıyor. Bu sebeple veliler de daha rahat teslim ediyor hem sevgi hem de bakım olayları nedeniyle.] (Ceren, I)

It affects us very, very positively. It is a very excellent thing, we are much more comfortable, that is nice, don't get me wrong, we are women who wear hijab anyway, I have an outer garment outside, I can take it off here because everyone is a woman. I don't think it poses a problem for children either. So far, nothing has happened, we have never encountered such a thing as why we don't have a male teacher, so I don't think they feel the lack of this. It is very comfortable for us, for myself and for my other friends, even the ladies working here prefer it, but they can come here because they want it because it is a more comfortable, home-like environment for women, for example, so I did not feel any discomfort.

[Bizi çok çok olumlu etkiliyor, çok çok mükemmel bir şey bizce çok daha rahat oluyoruz yani güzel yanlış anlamayın tesettürlü bayanlarız zaten, ben dışarıda bir dış kıyafetim var bunu burada çıkarabiliyorum herkes bayan olduğu için çıkarabiliyorum. Çocuklar için de bir sıkıntı teşkil ettiğini düşünmüyorum. Bu zamana kadar bir şey olmadı bir erkek öğretmenimiz neden yok gibi şeyle hiç karşılaşmadık yani bunun eksikliğini hissettiklerini düşünmüyorum. Bizim için çok rahat oluyor kendi adıma ve

diğer arkadaşlar adına, burada çalışan bayanlar bile tercih ederken hocam burası bayan ortamı ya daha rahat bir ortam, ev gibi bir ortam olduğu için çok istiyorum diye gelebiliyorlar mesela öyle yani bir rahatsızlığımı hissetmedim.] (Deniz, I)

A plus for us, that is, we have a comfortable environment. But frankly speaking for myself, I don't think I would be too uncomfortable working in an environment where there are men. As I said, the reason for not working at the MoNE is entirely the headscarf. I would also like to indicate that as long as I follow certain hijab rules, I will not feel uncomfortable in any way. In terms of children's education, whether it is in national education or in primary and secondary school level, there are generally teachers nowadays, there are a lot of female teachers. That's why I personally don't think there is any harm in having female teachers.

[Bizim açımızdan artı yani rahat bir ortamımız var. Ama açıkçası kendi adıma söyleyeyim erkek olan bir ortamda da çalışmaktan çok fazla rahatsız olmayacağımı kendim düşünüyorum. Dediğim gibi, MEB'de çalışmama sebebini tamamen başörtüsü. Belli tesettür kurallarına uyduğum sürece hiçbir şekilde rahatsızlık duymayacağımı da belirtmek isterim. Çocukların eğitim açısından, milli eğitimde de olsun ya da ilkokul, ortaokul kademesinde de genelde öğretmenler şu ara, yani günümüzde çok kadın öğretmen çok yoğun. O yüzden tamamen bayan, kadın öğretmen görmelerinin bir sakıncası olduğunu açıkçası kendi adıma düşünmüyorum.] (Elif, I)

The convenience of the working place for instructors is also associated with *conservative working environment*. This conservativeness is about sharing similar religious attitudes with both other instructors and parents. Many instructors mention resemblance of parents unlike the other places like state schools, courses have more homogenic distribution of parents. Buse and Azra indicate that these courses with homogenic structures are suitable for their beliefs:

The MoNE is bigger and more complex due to parent profile and mixed sex working environment. Therefore, it is more suitable for me to work here. This place is smaller, there are similar people.

[MEB'in hem veli profili hem de çalışma ortamı karma olduğu için daha karışık, büyük dolayısıyla burada çalışmak benim için daha uygun. Burası daha küçük, benzer insanlar var.] (Azra, I)

So, you are asking why you did not become a vocational high school teacher or a religious culture teacher, you could have been appointed there too. True, its score was probably higher, I don't remember right now, but it's probably true. I didn't consider the MoNE, I don't know, so I guess the PRA's environment was more suitable for my personal preferences, that is, a smaller environment, a more sterile environment, I guess.

Researcher: What do you mean by sterile, the MoNE has larger and more complex environments?

Of course, larger schools, for example, are smaller and easier compared to a school in the MoNE. Of course, it is a little different in MoNE. As I said before, I can say that I preferred the PRA because it suits my conservative nature better.

[Yani siz neden bir meslek lisesi öğretmeni ya da din kültürü öğretmeni olmadığımız diye soruyorsunuz oraya da atanabilirdiniz. Doğru, bir kere muhtemelen onun puanı daha yüksektir hatırlamıyorum şu anda ama muhtemelen öyledir. MEB düşünmedim

bilmiyorum yani Diyanet'in ortamı sanırım benim kişisel tercihlerim için daha uygun geldi yani daha küçük bir ortam, daha steril bir ortam öyle galiba.

Araştırmacı: Sterilden kastınız nedir, daha büyük ve karmaşık ortamlar mı?

Tabi daha büyük okullar mesela burası MEB'deki bir okulla kıyaslandığında daha küçük, kolay işler. MEB'DE tabi biraz daha farklı. Hem de diyorum ya benim muhafazakâr yapıma da daha uyduğu içim Diyanet'i tercih ettiğimi söyleyebilirim.] (Buse, I)

In line with their ideas, instructors state that generally, children in these courses come from conservative and religious families. Thus, children meet religion at their home environments:

We say this actually, we need to explain this to family; in order for the education, we give here to be supported and completed, the family must be aware of this. Yes, conservative families generally send them here, but in the end, we are all human, we can all make mistakes.

[Biz şunu diyoruz aslında aileye şunu anlatabilmek lazım; hani buradaki verdiğimiz eğitimin desteklenebilmesi, tamamlanabilmesi için ailenin de bunun farkında olması lazım. Evet, buraya genelde muhafazakâr aileler gönderiyorlar zaten ama yine de sonuçta insanız hepimizin hatası olabiliyor.] (Deniz, I)

In fact, we do not expect education from parents, just repeating the prayer surahs at home is enough for us. Parents' expectations are gradually changing; previously, they were sending (their children) here to receive Quran education. Now, values education comes first, then children's socialization and social development, and lastly, Quran education. Our parent profile is generally conservative and people who follow religious practices (I would say 60% to 40%), and anyway, children see religion at home, so they generally send them here not to learn, but for values education. I don't know, of course, there are some who send it so that they can learn, but not many, it has to do with the parent profile of this place, generally people with high SES, for example, if you go to rural areas, you will find more parents who say, "I don't know, so my child should learn at school.

[Aslında velilerden eğitim beklentimiz yok sadece dua surelerini evde tekrar etsinler bizim için yeterli. Veli beklentileri giderek değişiyor, önceden buraya Kur'an eğitimi alsın diye gönderiyorlardı. Şimdi birinci sırada değerler eğitimi, sonra çocukların sosyalleşmeleri ve sosyal gelişimleri, son sırada Kur'an eğitimi var. Veli profilimiz genelde muhafazakâr ve dini pratikleri yerine getiren insanlar (%60 a %40 diyebilirim) e zaten çocukları dini evde de görüyor o yüzden buraya öğrensinler diye değil değerler eğitimi için gönderiyorlar genelde. Ben bilmiyorum öğrensin diye gönderen de var tabi ama çok değil, buranın veli profili ile de alakalı genelde yüksek SES e sahip insanlar, mesela kırsala gitseniz ben bilmiyorum o yüzden çocuğum okulda öğrensin diyen veliyi daha çok bulursunuz.] (Ceren, I)

Deniz also relates this education and her occupation with her faith:

It is necessary so early; a person should try to live what she already believes in in life. We believe in this, we try to live accordingly, and we try to teach this to children. Why is it necessary? I think right now, everyone is in search of the idea that the generation is corrupt, I don't classify it as a thing, we can easily hear it from everyone's mouth. So, everyone says that the children are very corrupt, the generation is very corrupt. The improvement of this generation is, as our ancestors said, 'the tree bends when it is old', basically it has always been like this, but sometimes people do not realize it and think that we are missing the end of the rope. We did something without realizing

it, we didn't pay attention, we shouldn't force it, many of them saw it as pressure, they saw it as coercion. We do not think so, and currently I think that educating children at an early age and teaching them religious things will lead to a much better society in the future.

[Bu kadar erken gerekli, insan zaten inandığı şeyi yaşamaya çalışmalı hayatta. Biz buna inanıyoruz ki buna göre yaşamaya çalışıyoruz, çocuklara da bunu öğretmeye çalışıyoruz. Niye gerekli? Bence şu anda herkes neslin bozulduğuna dair bir arayış içerisinde yani şey olarak sınıflandırmıyorum, bütün insanların ağzından çok rahatlıkla duyabiliyoruz. Yani herkes diyor ki işte çocuklar çok bozuldu, nesil çok bozuldu. Bu neslin düzelmesi de hani atalarımız demiş ya ağaç yaşken eğilir diye ben bunu temelde bu hep böyleydi zaten ama insanlar bazı dönemlerde farkına varamayıp ipin ucunu kaçırdığımız gibi şey düşünün. Farkına varamayıp bir şeyler yaptık, dikkat etmedik, zorlamayalım, bunu baskı olarak gördüler birçoğu, zorlama olarak gördü. Biz öyle düşünmüyoruz şu anda da çocukları erken yaşta eğitmenin onlara dini şeyleri öğretmenin ileriye dönük çok daha güzel bir toplum olacağını düşünüyorum.]

(Deniz, I)

Four of the instructors are sending their children to these Quran courses, others do not have children at that age, their children also took RE. These instructors whose children are taking education in these courses are also parents. It means that they approach this education positively. Their family culture, their attitudes toward religion show similar with the culture of Quran courses. Buse and Elif share their thoughts as parents:

I am very pleased. First of all, my son has been attending these courses for two years. For example, we ask parents why do you send your child here, let me answer from there. I am sending my child here because I see that my child can continue our home life here. So, what do I mean, I am a conservative person, we have a conservative life at home, so it reflects on many things at work, including one's language, preferences, and even eating. We are people who live a religious life, so it does not mean that religion does not exist in our life practices, we do not have such an experience, because there are people like that, they believe in a religion but prefer a more secular life. We are not like that, so I am very happy that my child continues his life at home here.

[Ben çok memnunum bir kere benim oğlum da bu kurslara gidiyor iki senedir. Mesela biz velilere soruyoruz çocuğunuzu neden buraya gönderiyorsunuz diye oradan cevap vereyim. Çocuğumu buraya gönderiyorum çünkü ben çocuğumun evdeki yaşantımızı burada devam ettirebildiğini görüyorum. Yani ne demek ben muhafazakâr bir insanım, muhafazakâr bir yaşantımız var evde dolayısıyla işte insanın diline, tercihlerine, atıyorum yemek yemesine birçok şeye yansıyor. Biz dini hayatımızın içinde yaşayan insanlarız yani bir dini yaşıyoruz ama o din bizim hayat pratiklerimiz içinde yok değil, böyle bir yaşantımız yok öyle insanlar da var çünkü, bir dine inanıyorlar ama daha seküler bir yaşantıyı tercih ediyorlar. Biz öyle değiliz dolayısıyla benim çocuğumun evdeki yaşantısını burada devam ettirmesinden çok memnunum.] (Buse, I)

My son is also now in the group and asks questions about God every day when he comes, which is very normal. Because he wants to know, because the mother prays at home, the father prays. You know, he has an ongoing religious life. He inevitably wonders. When he hears these things at school, he tries to find shelter. So praying is actually a way to get to know God and feel close to him.

[Benim oğlum da grup içerisinde şu anda, her gün geldiğin Allah ile ilgili sorular soruyor ki bu çok normal. Çünkü tanımak istiyor, çünkü evde anne namaz kılıyor,

baba namaz kılıyor. Hani dini hayatı süregelen bir hayatı var. İster istemez merak ediyor. Okulda da bunları duyunca işte şey yapıyor ne yapıyor bir sığınacak şey. Yani dua etmek aslında Allah'ı tanımak, yakın hissetmenin bir yoludur zaten.] (Elif, I)

This subtheme revealed that Quran courses and education given here are proper for instructors in terms of their religious faith, personal lives and choices, family culture, and conservative personalities. On one hand, it can be related to profession itself since being teacher is accepted as suitable for woman due to working hours and conditions. The study with hijab women demonstrates that they want to work as a teacher if there is no problem with their hijab since it is suitable and accepted as noble by both traditional Islamic and modern perspectives (Cindoğlu, 2010). On other hand, it is related to the Quran course itself. They indicate their comfort in working for the PRA in Quran courses due to their homogenic and female-only environments since they wear hijab. Some scholars explain women's modest dressing with coercive power on women or false consciousness of them to wear hijab since they follow patriarchal traditional rules while others question this due to underestimating these women's agency (Bilge, 2010). In this study, instructors feel more comfortable in a place where officials are female, and the majority of children come from conservative, religious families like these them. Thus, instructors feel more comfortable with communicating with similar people. Lastly, some of them who are also parents state their happiness for providing educational settings where home culture is continued for their children.

4.2.2. Sub-theme 2: The Culture Of The Service

The second subtheme of this section is about features of this service and the PRA which are highlighted by instructors. These features created positive attitudes toward the PRA and its Quran courses. They are defined in two categories: *transparency and formality of the institution*, and *better education*. *Transparency and formality of the institution* is defined as the diacritical property of the PRA's courses. According to instructors, these courses provide more formality and transparence than other private institutions which give religion-centered early childhood education:

The PRA is more formal and transparent when compared to other institutions. People who work here go through a certain interview. The plan, program and curriculum of these courses are clear. Its curriculum is also more suitable for children's development. Since I am a hafız myself, I am thinking of working in a hafız program for children and young people in the future, after 5-6 years.

[Diyanet diğer kurumlara kıyasla (kurs) daha resmi, şeffaf, burada çalışan insanlar belli bir mülakattan geçiyor. Bu kursların planı, programı, müfredatı belli. Müfredatı da çocukların gelişimi için daha uygun. Kendim de hafız olduğum için ileride, 5-6 yıl sonra, çocuklar ve gençler için hafızlık programında çalışmayı düşünüyorum.] (Ceren, I)

There is something completely different here. Well, national education is also unique and special. We are currently trying to apply the national education curriculum to children. But I don't think this place can be compared to other courses. They are a little more closed. Well, they are just like that within themselves, so what should we say to them? Since I know there are places like this that have strict rules, I can't compare them much. I think that information is given in a very different field.

[Burada tamamen bambaşka bir şey var. Ya milli eğitimin de kendine has, özel. Ki biz zaten milli eğitimin müfredatını da şu anda çocuklara uygulamaya çalışıyoruz. Ama diğer kurslarla buranın kıyaslayacağını düşünmüyorum. Onlar daha biraz kapalı. Daha kendi içlerinde böyle ne diyelim onlara? Böyle kendilerince katı kuralları olan yerler olduğunu bildiğim için çok da kıyaslayamıyorum yani. Çok farklı bir alanda bilgi veriliyor diye düşünüyorum.] (Çağla, I)

Alongside the transparency and formality, being part of this service is important for the instructors since they indicate that these courses are better than other institutions. According to the responses of instructors, better education is related to the course environment which is more home-like and the advantage of giving the Quran education. Instructors state that their courses have more pluses than minuses due to Quran education and values education:

In fact, when you look at the education given in early childhood in the MoNE or private schools other than the PRA, I have not seen much difference from us in terms of complementary gains, in the complementary gains we call 1st grade preparatory courses. In fact, I think we are effective. So, what is in people's minds is that only the Quran says education here, it is not like there are only values education. On the contrary, as I said, when I compare the complementary gains with the children's schools, we can already know that much more is done in this school, I do it myself and I see it from other friends.

[Yani çok böyle ya aslında mesela milli eğitimde olsun ya da özel okullarda diğer, yani Diyanet haricindeki diğer özel okullarda, erken çocukluk döneminde verilen eğitimlere baktığında bizden çok bir fark zaten tamamlayıcı kazanımlar anlamında olsun, 1. sınıf hazırlık dersleri dediğimiz tamamlayıcı kazanımlarda ben hiçbir çok bir fark zaten göremedim. Hatta dolu dolu geçirdiğimizi düşünüyorum. Yani hani insanların zihninde olan şu var, işte sadece burada Kur'an eğitim diyor, sadece değerler eğitimi var gibi değil. Tam tersi de tamamlayıcı kazanımları ben dediğim gibi çocukların okullarıyla kıyasladığımda da biz bu okulda çok onlardan daha fazlasını da yapıldığını bilebilir zaten, kendim de yapıyorum hem de diğer arkadaşlardan da görüyorum.] (Elif, I)

I think the courses of the PRA are better. First, parents ask, "What are you doing here, related to pre-school?" We see what preschool teachers do, we see it on Instagram, we see it here and there, so everything that is done in pre-school is also done here. I liken it to IHSs, just as the courses taught in other schools are taught in IHSs, but vocational courses are also taught in addition to them, there are also other courses in Religious Affairs along with the courses we call complementary gains. I'm very

curious about this, what do pre-school teachers working in the MoNE do? Now imagine that we have Quran lessons, imagine that you are studying in a half-day course, Quran, religious knowledge, values education.

[Ben Diyanet'in kurslarının daha iyi olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bir kere şöyle velilerde şey oluyor soruyorlar siz burada ne yapıyorsunuz okul öncesi ile alakalı diye. Biz de yani okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin yaptığını görüyoruz Instagram'da görüyoruz, şurada burada görüyoruz yani okul öncesinde yapılan her şey burada da yapılıyor. Ben imam hatiplere benzetiyorum nasıl imam hatip liselerinde diğer okullarda okutulan dersler öğretiliyor ama onun yanında meslek dersleri öğretiliyorsa Diyanet'te de aynı şekilde tamamlayıcı kazanım dediğimiz derslerle birlikte diğer dersler de var. Şimdi düşünün bizim hem Kur'an-ı Kerim derslerimiz var, yarım günlük bir kursta çalıştığımızı düşünün Kur'an-ı Kerim, dini bilgiler, değerler eğitimi.] (Buse)

Azra and Ceren also mention course environments which is more affectionate and home-like for children in addition to comprehensive education that include both religious and regular preschool education:

Actually, our curriculum is similar to the curriculum of the MoNE. The complementary gain education in our curriculum is actually the same as the MoNE curriculum, where they additionally learn values education, eating and drinking, and sitting manners. For us, moral development comes first, after children mature morally, Quran education comes, after all, there is no point in knowing religion for someone who is not morally developed. It is important that this education occurs at an early age. Children are already curious about God; it is better to have everything from the basics with RE appropriate to their age. I think the MoNE is more disciplined, therefore more like school, and there is a family atmosphere here, which I think is better for the health of children.

[Aslında bizim programımız MEB'in programıyla benzer. Bizim müfredatımız içindeki tamamlayıcı kazanım eğitimi aslında MEB müfredatının aynı, burada ekstra olarak değerler eğitimi, yeme-içme, oturma adabını öğreniyorlar. Bizim için önce ahlaki gelişim geliyor, çocuklar ahlaki olarak olgunlaştıktan sonra Kur'an eğitimi geliyor, sonuçta ahlaki olarak gelişmemiş birinin dini bilmesinin anlamı yok. Bu eğitimin erken yaşta olması önemli. Çocuklar zaten Allah'ı merak ediyor, yaşlarına uygun din eğitimiyle her şeyin temelden olması daha iyi. Bence MEB daha disiplinli dolayısıyla daha okul gibi, burada ise aile ortamı var, çocukların sağlığı için daha iyi olduğunu düşünüyorum.] (Ceren, I)

Our curriculum is more intense, but kids can handle it. We actually cover the education of other institutions with complementary gains. I think our education is more efficient because we also care and support emotionally. Other institutions focus only on cognitive development and spend time only with games. Here, social and psychological development is also given importance and support, and values education is taught more efficiently. Because the child constantly hears these values and their names. In other institutions, the names of these values such as morality, respect and honesty are not repeated constantly. It is more productive here because it is heard all the time. I also think that more love and attention is given in our courses. [Bizim müfredatımız daha yoğun ama çocuklar kaldırabiliyor. Biz tamamlayıcı kazanımlarla aslında diğer kurumların da eğitimini kapsıyoruz. Bizim eğitimimizin daha verimli olduğunu düşünüyorum ben çünkü duygusal anlamda da önemsiyoruz ve destekliyoruz. Diğer kurumlar sadece bilişsel gelişime odaklanıyor ve sadece oyunla geçiyor oralarda zaman. Burada ise sosyal ve psikolojik gelişime de önem ve destek veriliyor, ayrıca değerler eğitimi de daha verimli öğretiliyor. Çünkü çocuk sürekli bu

değerleri ve onların isimlerini duyuyor. Başka kurumlarda bu değerlerin isimleri böyle ahlak, saygı, dürüstlük gibi sürekli tekrarlanmıyor. Burada sürekli duyduğu için daha verimli oluyor. Ayrıca bizim kurslarımızda daha çok sevgi ve ilgi verildiğini düşünüyorum.] (Azra, I)

According to this subtheme, some characteristics of the PRA's Quran courses influence how instructors approach these courses and are given education. When they compare these courses with other Quran courses, transparency and formality are marked. Drawing attention to the educational activities of religious communities, Dede indicates that negative attitudes toward religious communities are increased among both conservative and modern circles especially after the coup attempt in 2016 due to their insufficient transparency and accountability (Dede, 2019). Instructors also highlight more comprehensive education and loving culture. The previous study with instructors who work for the PRA also showed similar results. Although instructors find pre- and in-service education insufficient for teaching to young children, they indicate that the curriculum, materials, books, and physical features of Quran courses are adequate to support child development (Dinçer, 2019). It is important that all the pleasure is generally about the features of the institution, so there is a necessity for mentioning instructors' parts in this process since they have significant roles on it.

4.2.3. Sub-theme 3: The Role of The Instructor

Instructors are an important part of RE given in these courses. Children spend a long time in courses, especially in full-day education. Instructors are assigned to provide religion and values education alongside the standard preschool education as they say. Thus, children learn religion and other topics from them. Instructors mention their responsibility as a religion teacher, setting an example for children, and improving the curriculum. From this point of view, the role of the instructor, which is the last sub theme categorized around two topics: *teaching religion* and *enrichment of the content*.

The category of *teaching religion* is not only about giving RE but also being a role model for children. Instructors indicate that their students take them as an example. They refer to their bigger responsibility and impact on children in terms of their religious and behavioral development:

(Her responsibility) It is very big, as a teacher and as a teacher who explains religion here, I am already very aware that what I make feel here will remain, not what I say. I was braiding my daughters' hair a while ago, so it is very important for me to establish close relationships with children and be a role model for them. If I am talking about our Lord Allah and our Prophet, it is very important for me that they feel my conversation, or I guide them when they have an argument. Here, use your words, kids, you can express your feelings with your words. It is very important; the role of the teacher is a great responsibility. As a Muslim, I feel a much greater burden here because I teach religion, that is, I feel a great responsibility in this sense.

[(Sorumluluğu) Çok büyük, bir öğretmen olarak da burada dini anlatan bir öğretmen olarak da çok büyük yani ben zaten burada söylediklerimin değil hissettirdiklerimin kalacağının çok farkındayım. Ben biraz önce kızlarımın saçlarını örüyordum yani benim için çok önemli çocuklarla yakın ilişki kurmak, onlara rol model olmak. Eğer rabbimiz Allah'ı, peygamber efendimizi anlatıyorsam o benim muhabbetlerimi hissetmeleri bu benim için çok önemli ya da bir tartışma yaşadıklarında onlara rehberlik etmem. İşte kelimelerini kullanın çocuklar, duygularınızı kelimelerinizle ifade edebilirsiniz. Çok önemli yani öğretmenin rolü, büyük bir sorumluluk. Ben burada bir Müslüman olarak dini öğrettiğim için çok daha büyük yük hissediyorum yani kendi açımdan çok büyük bir sorumluluk hissediyorum bu anlamda.] (Buse, I)

I think like this when it's a full day. A child comes here at eight in the morning and leaves at half past five. As a mother, I also experience this. This is my experience after sending my own child to a course. I think that a child gets all of his/her time and education from school. He/she gets it from an institution he/she comes to or goes to. We start from the age of three and a half in the family. Of course, the family basically gives me something, but the child spends more time with me. That's how I feel. Whatever he learns, he learns mostly from me. Because when the child leaves in the evening, he spends an hour with his mother. But he can spend seven or eight hours a day here or two hours. Then he sleeps. And then the morning comes. I mean, I think that this child cannot learn much from his mother and father in just an hour or two, which is what I experienced with my own child.

[Ben şöyle düşünüyorum tam gün olduğunda. Bir çocuk bizim buraya saat sabahın sekizinde geliyor ve beş buçuğunda çıkıyor. Bir anne olarak da bunu tecrübe ediyorum. Kendi çocuğumu da bir kursa gönderdikten sonraki tecrübem de böyle. Bir çocuk zamanının tamamını ve eğitimini bence okuldan alıyor. Geldiği, gittiği bir kurumdan alıyor. Ailenin zaten ailenin bizim üç buçuk yaşından başlıyoruz yani. Aile tabii ki temelde bir şeyler veriyor ama çocuk daha çok benimle vakit geçiriyor. Ben öyle hissediyorum. Ne öğrenecekse daha çok benden öğreniyor. Çünkü akşam çocuk gidince bir saat annesiyle vakit geçiriyor. Ama günün yedi sekiz saati burada ya da iki saat vakit geçirebiliyor. Sonra uyuyor. Ve sonra sabah kalkıp geliyor. Yani bir iki saatle anneden babadan bu çocuk çok fazla daha bir şey öğrenemiyor diye düşünüyorum ki kendi çocuğumda da bunu yaşadım yani.] (Çağla, I)

Teacher-student relationships are very important for effective education, teachers can be very effective for children. What the teacher says and does is more valid for the children. Children accept what their teacher says as correct, their actions are correct, so they learn better with their teacher. Teachers' behavior is very important for children to learn right from wrong, because they take it as an example.

[Öğretmen öğrenci ilişkisi etkili bir eğitim için çok önemli, öğretmenler çocuklar için çok etkili olabiliyor. Öğretmenin söyledikleri, yaptıkları çocuklar için daha geçerli. Çocuklar öğretmenin dediklerini doğru kabul ediyorlar, onların hareketleri doğru bu yüzden öğretmenleriyle daha iyi öğreniyorlar. Çocukların doğruyu yanlış öğrenmesi için de öğretmenlerinin davranışları çok önemli, örnek alıyorlar çünkü.] (Ceren, I)

Azra and Deniz also indicate that they are more effective than parents in teaching religion:

Teachers are very important in raising children, teachers might be more effective than families in teaching religious subjects. They can instill a love of religion by establishing a bond with children. If the child likes the teacher and they establish a rapport, he/she can learn very difficult subjects. The teacher can make difficult, abstract topics concrete. Here, teachers can make religious information understandable by reducing it to the child's age.

[Çok önemli öğretmen çocukların yetiştirilmesinde, öğretmenler aileden daha etkili olabiliyor dini konuların öğretilmesinde. Çocuklarla bağ kurarak din sevgisi aşılayabilir. Çocuk öğretmeni severse, yakınlık kurarlarsa çok zor konuları öğrenebilir. Öğretmen zor, soyut konuları somutlaştırabilir. Burada öğretmenler dini bilgileri çocuğun yaşına indirgeyerek anlaşılır hale getirebilir.] (Azra, I).

A teacher is a role model in raising a child. Education begins at home with the parents. Our primary school is our family, our education that starts with the parents continues with the teacher. Families also say this, for example, teacher, my child doesn't listen to me on this issue, but he/she listens when you say it. They can call something they can't deal with at home and ask if I can tell us about it. That's why the teacher sets an example for the child in every subject. We also try to set an example, because we are role models, we try to do every move right in front of them, and that is, we do not say or talk about what we will not do. We try to convey the deficits we make by saying that these are mistakes, we are all human children, and adults can do this, but the important thing is to correct the mistakes.

[Bir çocuğun yetiştirilmesinde öğretmen rol model. Anne babada eğitim başlıyor evde. İlk okulumuz bizim aile, anne babayla başlayan eğitimimiz öğretmenle devam ediyor. Bunu aileler de söylüyorlar mesela hocam şu konuda beni dinlemiyor ama siz söyleyince dinler, hani evde baş edemediği bir şeyi bile arayıp bize söyler misiniz orada diyebiliyor. Bu yüzden öğretmen her konuda çocuğa örneklik teşkil ediyor. Bizler de örnek olmaya çalışıyoruz, rol model olduğumuz için onların önünde her hareketimizi doğru yapmaya çalışıyoruz ve yani yapmayacağımız, yapmayacağımız şeyi anlatmıyoruz, söylemiyoruz. Yaptığımız eksiklikleri de hani bunlar hatadır, hepimiz insanız çocuklar büyükler de bu şekilde yapabiliyorlar ama önemli olan hatadan dönmek diyerek aktarmaya çalışıyoruz.] (Deniz, I)

The other important issue in teaching religion for instructors is enrichment of the content which includes arrangement on the program and making abstract concepts more concrete. Instructors indicate that they make some arrangements on the prepared curriculum of the PRA, according to children's ages, levels, preparedness, interests:

Now, the biggest problem with our curriculum is that this is generally the case in the general curriculum, and I think it is also the same in the MoNE. Although it depends on the age group, it is already a flexible program. You know what we are always told; our programs are flexible schedules. What can you do with it? It is said that you can apply it to children by paying attention to the main theme and the outcomes. The biggest thing in our curriculum is, of course, depending on the age group. For example, there is an outcome that is actually the teacher, and this reveals her teaching formation.

[Şimdi bizim müfredatımızın en büyük sıkıntısı, bu genelde olan genel müfredatta da böyledir, MEB’de de bu böyledir diye düşünüyorum. Yaş grubuna göre olmakla beraber zaten esnek bir program. Hani bize hep söylenen şey olur. Programlarımız bizim esnek bir programlardır. Siz onu ne yapabilirsiniz? Ana temaya dikkat ederek, kazanımlara dikkat ederek onu çocuklara uygulayabilirsiniz denir. Müfredatımızdaki en büyük şey tabii ki yaş grubuna göre hani mesela bir kazanım var ortada o da işte aslında öğreticinin, bu da şeyini koyuyor ortaya, öğreticilik formasyonunu ortaya koyuyor.] (Elif, I)

We use the resources of the PRA when teaching lessons, there are books for teachers. I adapt these books according to theme, sometimes lengthening them and sometimes shortening them, depending on the class. Of course, we support the theme with activities and games for permanence. I adapt the stories in the book to our day. For example, there is a story in which our prophet draws water from a well, but since the well does not mean anything to children, I modernize it a little.

[Dersleri işlerken diyanetin kaynaklarını kullanıyoruz, öğretmenler için kitaplar var. Bu kitaplardan temaya göre uyarılma yapıyorum sınıfa göre bazen uzatıyorum bazen kısaltıyorum. Kalıcılık için etkinlik ve oyunla destekliyoruz tabi temayı. Kitapta geçen öyküleri günümüze uyarlıyorum, mesela peygamber efendimizin kuyudan su çektiği bir hikâyeye var ama çocuklar için kuyu bir anlam ifade etmediğinden ben de biraz modernleştiriyorum.] (Azra, I)

If there is a deficiency in terms of activity, if I find the activity related to a subject inadequate, we search for the activity on the internet etc. We make such additions, other than that, if we have a story that is not in our curriculum, for example, we reinforce it with extra stories. Let's say the story was short, I didn't find it very descriptive, so I support it with a different story. Once there is a story that will give a good message to the child, we support it with these. We can shape this ourselves, of course, we have a book given to us by the PRA that we follow, and we can add a lot of things to the work.

Ne gibi etkinlik bakımından eksikliği varsa hani bir konuyla alakalı etkinliği yetersiz buluyorsam eğer etkinlik araştırıyoruz internetten falan. Bu tarz eklemeler yapıyoruz onun dışında mesela müfredatımızda olmayan ne diyeyim mesela hikayemiz varsa ekstra hikayelerle pekiştiriyoruz. Hikâyeye diyelim ki kısa geldi çok açıklayıcı bulmadım farklı bir hikayeye onu destekliyorum. Çocuğa güzel bir mesaj verecek hikâyeye olduktan sonra bunlarla destekliyoruz. Bu biz kendimiz şekillendirebiliyoruz tabi hem Diyanet’in bize verdiği takip ettiğimiz bir kitabımız var hem de bir sürü katabiliyoruz işin içine.] (Deniz, I)

I definitely like to do book activities in every unit, I like to associate it with books. The curriculum provides a framework for the teacher, but it is the teacher who enriches it, and we try to do our best there too.

[Mutlaka her ünite de bir kitap etkinliği yapmayı seviyorum, kitapla bağdaştırmayı seviyorum. Müfredat öğretmene bir çerçeve sunuyor ama kesinlikle onu zenginleştiren kesinlikle öğretmen oluyor, orada da elimizden geleni yapmaya çalışıyoruz.] (Buse, I)

Instructors also mention that they try to embody the faith for children to understand abstract religious issues:

The first unit is about God, our Lord. It is perhaps the most abstract part of the children's imagination of God. Because others are concrete and things that children see in their daily lives. What we call a prophet is a living person; they already see

fasting in their families, they see prayer, they already see religious places, etc. There is nothing in any of these that children will have difficulty understanding. The only abstract concept is the concept of God. Where do we go from there, mostly from nature, for example, we go to this God. We are talking about these things, such as the earth's transformation in winter and its leaves falling, the flowers blooming again in spring, the sun warming us, water being a vital thing for us, and the fact that God creates all of these.

[İlk ünite rabbimiz Allah'la ilgili orada çocukların Allah tasavvurlarıyla belki en soyut yer orası diğerleri çünkü somut ve çocukların gündelik yaşantısında gördüğü şeyler zaten. Peygamber dediğimiz kanlı canlı bir insan, orucu görüyorlar zaten ailelerinde, namazı görüyorlar, dini mekân zaten görüyorlar vs. bunların hiçbirinde çocukların anlamakta zorlanacağı falan bir şey yok yani. Tek soyut kavram tanrı tasavvuru orada da nereden gidiyoruz daha çok tabiattan mesela bu tanrıya gidiyoruz. Yeryüzünün kışın şey olup yapraklarının dökülmesi, baharda tekrar çiçek açması işte güneşin bizi ısıtması işte suyun bizim için hayatı bir şey olması, tüm bunları yaratanın Allah olduğu gibi bunlardan bahsediyoruz.] (Buse, I)

These are abstract concepts, of course, children are curious about them and ask questions, but we do not go into very abstract concepts anyway. This group of 4–6-year-olds is a group that should not teach abstract concepts in terms of abstract cognitive skills. We focus more on concrete things. There you have it, God. You know, this, that, God sees us, God sees us... More than that, what a beautiful flower God has created. We are actually trying to explain God's existence and knowledge through these.

[Soyut kavramlardır tabi ki çocuklar bunları hem merak ediyorlar hem de soru soruyorlar ama biz zaten çok soyut kavramlara girmiyoruz zaten. 4-6 yaş grubun bu grubu soyut bilişsel olarak da zaten soyut kavramları daha öğretmememiz gereken bir grup. Biz daha çok somut şeylerin üzerinden. İşte Allah, bu var zaten. Hani bu, bunu, hani Allah bizi görüyor, Allah bizi... Bundan daha ziyade Allah ne güzel çiçek yaratmış. Biz bunların üzerinden aslında Allah'ın varlığını ve bildiğini anlatmaya çalışıyoruz.] (Elif, I)

Ceren and Azra also indicate that they are try to correct some wrong information children learned from their previous experiences:

Some concepts here can be difficult for children, we are trying to concrete very abstract concepts. For example, making sense of the concept of God is too abstract for children, but we explain it with experiments (sugar water) and activities. Sometimes, children may acquire wrong religious information from their families, and children may be confused, so we are trying to show the truth here.

[Burada bazı kavramlar çocuklar için zor olabiliyor, çok soyut kavramları somutlaştırmaya çalışıyoruz. Mesela Allah kavramını anlamlandırmak çocuklar için fazla soyut kalıyor ama deneylerle (şekerli su), etkinliklerle anlatıyoruz. Bazen de çocuklar aileden yanlış dini bilgiler edinmiş olabiliyorlar, çocukların akli karışık olabiliyor biz de burada doğrusunu göstermeye çalışıyoruz.] (Ceren, I)

Children who received RE from some foundations or congregations come, they learned very difficult information for their age, or somehow, they learned concepts such as God forgives and sin, we pay attention to this here. We do not bring up topics such as God, heaven and hell without the children asking, and if they ask, we try to make them concrete. For example, if they ask why we cannot see God, we try to make them understandable with the sugar water experiment. We do not provide strict RE for children, but rather an education for them to learn their responsibilities. For

example, when memorizing a surah, we do not confuse them by giving the exact translation of the sura, or we try to introduce the letters to the Quran, as it is not necessary for them to learn the Quran very well. Our aim is for children to learn religious values without contradicting religion.

[Bizden önce bazı vakıflar ya da cemaatlerden dini eğitim almış çocuklar geliyor, yaşlarına göre çok ağır bilgiler öğrenmişler, ya da bir şekilde Allah yakar, günah gibi kavramları öğrenmişler, biz burada buna dikkat ediyoruz. Çocuklar sormadan Allah, cennet-cehennem gibi konuları açmıyoruz, sorarsa da somutlaştırmaya çalışıyoruz. Mesela, Allah'ı neden göremediğimizi sorarlarsa şekerli su deneyiyle onların anlayabileceği düzeye getirmeye çalışıyoruz. Biz çocuklar için katı bir dini eğitim değil de sorumluluklarını öğrenmeleri için eğitim veriyoruz. Mesela sure ezberlerken, surenin tam çevirisini verip zihinlerini bulandırmıyoruz ya da Kur'an'ı illa çok iyi öğrenmesine gerek yok, harfleri tanıtmaya çalışıyoruz. Amacımız dine ters düşmeden çocukların dini değerleri öğrenmeleri.] (Azra, I)

This subtheme demonstrates that instructors try to enrich the curriculum of Quran courses by adapting it to children according to their levels and interests. In this process, they avoid abstract concepts and try to embody them through children's stories, drama, and plays if they are necessary to mention. Study of Koç (2023) demonstrate that preschool age children are mainly curious about concepts like Allah and the prophet, and teachers try to satisfy children's curiosity by showing the traces of creation for explaining the existence of Allah through flowers, different living creatures and the universe.

To sum up, both parents and instructors explain their perspectives and refer to their actions and thoughts in terms of religion and RE. It was indicated that religion is important for both parents and instructors. Parents state that their lives are organized by religious principles while instructors also define their occupations with religion. Both groups want to provide appropriate religious activities for children. For example, instructors emphasize the plays and books that are prepared by the PRA with religious content to transfer religious values to children. These books show the greatness of God who is the creator of everything. Children might hear similar things in their homes since their parents associate their lives including parenting perspectives with religion. Both parents and instructors specify their points separately and they are explained via separate themes. Since there are some communalities in the expression of parents and instructors there is need to analyze these communalities via joint themes. Therefore, apart from the independent themes, there are also two joint themes of these two participants groups: *the religion-centered child-rearing* and *shaping the character*.

4.3.Theme 3: The Religion-Centered Child-Rearing

Religion-centered child-rearing is a process that concerns both parents and instructors. It is an ongoing process that generally starts within the family and later Quran courses become part of it. Children are learning or coming across religion in both Quran courses and their family. This theme includes religion related experiences of children, and religious early childhood education provided by the PRA. Thus, subthemes are *appropriate RE, religion in the daily lives of children, and importance of early years.*

4.3.1. Sub-theme 1: Appropriate Religious Education

Appropriateness of education is about appropriate *curriculum of Quran courses, trustworthiness and availability of Quran courses, and creating awareness and positive attitudes on religion.* Both instructors and parents mention providing religion-centered education and experiences that are proper for children's age, nature, and interest within families and Quran courses. Although some instructors mention that there is a need for some change or improvement in the curriculum, in general parents and instructors indicate that the curriculum of Quran courses target all development areas with standard preschool education alongside the RE. Azra and Buse mention the need for change or improvement in the curriculum or the content of textbooks, but they indicate that the curriculum of Quran courses is proper to teach religion to children:

I think the curriculum needs to be updated, it should be simplified a bit, some concepts are too difficult and abstract for children. For example, it is difficult for children to understand the relationship between God and the prophet because God is not something they can see, it is very abstract and the prophet is a human being, so they have difficulty understanding the relationship between a person and God. Additionally, the curriculum can become very repetitive, and some values can be imposed too much. For example, the child constantly says Alhamdulillah, of course he/she can, but the important thing is that he/she knows what being thankful really means, rather than saying it all the time, so more concrete examples are needed. Also, full time can be very boring for children, especially after the pandemic, children already get bored very quickly, they are very impatient, they do not want to wait. We do something, but it may not be enough, branch teachers may come for sports, gymnastics etc. Children can learn, but the curriculum could be more child friendly. [Müfredatın güncellenmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum, biraz sadeleşmeli, bazı kavramlar çocuklar için çok zor ve soyut kaçıyor. Mesela Allah ve peygamber ilişkisini anlamak zor oluyor çocuklar için çünkü Allah görebildikleri bir şey değil çok soyut peygamber de insan, bir insanla Allah'ın ilişkisini anlamakta zorlanıyorlar o

yüzden. Bir de müfredat çok tekrara düşebiliyor, bazı değerler de çok fazla empoze edilebiliyor. Örneğin çocuk sürekli Elhamdülillah diyor, tabi desin ama sürekli söylemesinden önemli olan şükretmenin gerçekten ne demek olduğunu bilmesi, daha somut örnekler lazım o yüzden. Bir de tam gün çocuklar için çok sıkıcı olabiliyor özellikle pandemiden sonra çocuklar zaten çok çabuk sıkılıyorlar, çok sabırsızlar, beklemek istemiyorlar. Biz bir şeyler yapıyoruz ama yetmeyebilir, spor, jimnastik falan için branş hocaları gelebilir. Çocuklar öğrenebiliyorlar ama müfredat daha çocuğa uygun olabilir.] (Azra, I)

I don't think the curriculum is too much, but I think it could be better. So, let's say there is a topic written there, there is a story there, we do not have to do it as written there, we can change it, I think it can be enriched and made better. If you are asking whether it is suitable for preschoolers and their development levels, I personally do not think there is any unsuitability.

The researcher: By enrichment do you mean something like adding more material? Yes, or as I just said, there is a story here and I care that this story has literary value. I care very much about children's literature and there are many beautiful works in this field and in Turkish literature. I think that better texts with literary value can be included in the book. But of course, this is a process, the current texts are not texts with literary value, you know, works that aim to give a message, their suitability for children is debatable.

[Müfredatın ağır olduğunu düşünmüyorum ama daha iyi olabileceğini düşünüyorum. Yani şöyle orada bir konu yazıyor diyelim ki orada bir hikâye var illa orada yazdığı gibi yapmak zorunda değiliz değiştirebiliyoruz, daha zenginleştirilebileceğini ve daha iyi hale getirilebileceğini düşünüyorum. Siz okul öncesi için, onların gelişim seviyeleri için uygun mu diye soruyorsanız eğer ben şahsen bir uygunsuzluk olduğunu düşünmüyorum.

Araştırmacı: Zenginleştirmeden kastınız daha fazla materyal eklemek gibi bir şey mi? Evet ya da biraz önce dediğim daha şimdi bir hikâye var ortada ve bu hikâyenin edebi değeri olmasını önemsiyorum, çocuk edebiyatını çok önemsiyorum ve bu alanda da Türk edebiyatında da çok güzel eserler veriliyor kitaba da edebi değeri de olan daha güzel metinlerin konulabileceğini düşünüyorum. Ama tabi bu bir süreç şu an ki metinler edebi değeri olan metinler değil hani mesaj vermeye yönelik eserler çocuklara uygunluğu tartışılır.] (Buse, I)

According to Çağla who works for the PRA for 15 years indicate that sometimes contents can be hard to understand for children but she mentions some developments:

The stories in our curriculum books and the instructional books we have could have been a little more like this, in a way that would attract the attention of children. For example, this is what I do the most. Some children have difficulty understanding. Maybe not according to their level. I don't know about that. I can't quite understand it, but it doesn't attract much attention from children. You know, the stories in the curriculum are sometimes very simple. Sometimes it seems very much, but I say that since PRA has just started this thing, it will only reach such things at a certain time, because it gets better every year. The curriculum is very good, I think it is good. As I said, I think the proficiency level can be improved a little more, since experts have already prepared for it according to the age of children. I love our curriculum, and I already apply it.

[Müfredat kitaplarımızdaki, o elimizdeki öğretici kitaplarındaki o hikayeler biraz daha böyle çocukların dikkatini çekecek tarzda olabilirdi. Mesela ben en çok buna şey yapıyorum. Biraz çocuklar anlamakta zorlanıyorlar. Belki onların seviyesine göre değil. Bilemiyorum onu. Tam anlayamıyorum ama çocukların çok fazla dikkatini

çekmiyor. Hani müfredatın içindeki hikayeler çok bazen çok basit kalıyor. Bazen de çok seviyesine yüksek geliyor ama ben şöyle diyorum diyanete bu şey yeni başladığı için ancak belirli bir zamanda böyle bir şeylere ulaşacağını her yıl biraz daha güzel oluyor çünkü. Müfredatı gayet güzel, iyi olduğunu düşünüyorum. Dediğim gibi belki biraz daha yeterlilik konusunda ilerletilebilir diye düşünüyorum, çocukların yaşlarına uygun zaten uzmanlar hazırladığı için. Ben müfredatımızı seviyorum ve uyguluyorum zaten.] (Çağla, I).

As can be seen, although they think the curriculum is proper, they criticize some of its features. The analysis of Tosun and Çapcıoğlu (2015) also demonstrates that the PRA aimed to develop a curriculum by drawing attention to child development, and play, stories, and activities are offered within this education. But sometimes religious development of children, their levels are not considered sufficiently. Stories and expectations from children can be above their levels. On the other hand, some participants mention the appropriateness of the curriculum. According to them, the appropriate curriculum of Quran courses means that it is intense but not strict, comprehensive, flexible, values oriented, age appropriate, and focusing on children. Some participants state that the curriculum is not as strict as other institutions since they are not forcing children to learn the Quran and provide flexible program:

So, this is not a place that is busier or has stricter rules. So, instead of talking about sin, for example, about good deeds, instead of emphasizing hell, which I know is generally talked about in communities, we focus more on moral values. Since we focus on love of people, love of animals, love of nature and love of the homeland, I personally believe that by educating children on this subject, we educate them so that they will be respectful to their homeland, nation and elderly when they grow up, making them love these without showing them things as a sin or punishment or reward. I think that's what I do anyway.

[Şöyle yani daha yoğun, daha katı kuralları olan bir yer değil burası. Yani işte biz günahtan mesela sevaptan bahsetmek yerine işte cehennemden çok vurgu yapmak yerine ki ben biliyorum cemaatlerde genelde bunlardan bahsediliyor biz daha çok ahlaki değerler üzerinde. İnsan sevgisi, hayvan sevgisi, doğa sevgisi, vatan sevgisi üzerine durduğumuz için ya bunları sevdirek günah ya da ceza ya da ödül gibi göstermeden ben kendi adıma çocukları bu konuda eğiterek yani büyüdüklerinde vatanına, milletine, büyüklerine saygılı insanlar olsun yönünde kendi adımıza eğitim verdiğimizizi düşünüyorum ki ben de öyle yapıyorum zaten ya.] (Çağla, I)

We do these things around here, and we do not force any child in any way if he/she cannot pass the course. We never put pressure on the Quran, each child's transition process is related to him/herself, we guide entirely according to the child. For example, last year we had children who did not study the Quran at all. It was not a problem for us, but this year all of our children learned the Quran, it is something that depends entirely on the relationship between the child, the parent and the teacher.

[Buralarda biz bunları yapıyoruz, hiçbir çocuğu geçemiyorsa dersini hiçbir şekilde zorlamıyoruz. Kur'an konusunda asla baskılamıyoruz, her çocuğun geçiş süreci kendisiyle alakalı biz onu tamamen çocuğa göre yönlendiriyoruz. Mesela geçen sene hiç Kur'an'a geçmeyen çocuklarımız vardı, bizim için sıkıntı değildi, bu sene

çocuklarımız hepsi Kur'an'a geçti tamamen çocuk, veli, hoca arasındaki ilişkiyle giden bir şey.] (Deniz, I)

Moreover, it (the course) provides this education without being boring, so I wouldn't want a place that gives my child a strict RE anyway. In places where intense education is provided at a young age, children become alienated and have a negative consciousness. For example, we had a friend who sent her child to places like this, she still tells me she did these things when she was young, read the entire Quran, etc. I think she sent her there to be satisfied as a mother, but now her daughter is not at all as religious as she wanted, so that education did not have much meaning. People send people here to create a religious infrastructure along with values education, and as a result, this is the way of life in our home.

[Bir de bu eğitimi sıkmadan veriyor yani ben zaten çocuğumu çok sıkı dini eğitim veren yeri ben istemem. Küçük yaşta çok yoğun eğitim veren yerde çocuk soğur, olumsuz bilinç olur. Mesela bir tanıdığımız çocuğunu küçükken öyle bir yere göndermiş hala anlatır kızım küçükken şunları yaptı, hatim indirdi falan diye bence anne olarak kendi tatmin olsun diye göndermiş ama şimdi kızı hiç de onun istediği gibi bir dindar değil yani o eğitimin çok bir anlamı olmamış. Burada hem değerler eğitimiyle birlikte bir dini altyapı oluşsun diye gönderiyor insanlar hem de sonuçta bizim evimizde de bu şekilde bir yaşayış var.] (Nazlı, P)

(Abstract concepts) They don't give them here, they don't exist. The PRA's things are very good, its program is good. You know, the other one, for example, the one affiliated with that community I mentioned, is heavy. I mean, not every child can handle that. Many children, for example, and then I heard that this is what is always heard, that nothing good is heard anyway, when something is done about Islam, children become alienated. These things happen. Alhamdulillah, it didn't happen to my oldest son either.

[(Soyut kavramları) Burada vermiyorlar, yok. Diyanet'in şeyleri çok güzel, programı güzel. Hani diğer, mesela bahsettiğim o cemaate bağlı olanınki ağır. Onu her çocuk kaldıramaz yani. Çoğu çocuk mesela sonra da ben duydum, işte hep böyle duyulur ya zaten hiç iyi bir şey duyulmaz İslam'la ilgili bir şey yapıldığı zaman, işte çocuklar soğuyormuş falan. Oluyormuş böyle şeyler. Elhamdulillah, hani büyük oğlumda olmadı.] (Filiz, P)

Tosun and Çapcıoğlu (2015) indicate that not mentioning too abstract concept until children ask about is proper attitude for these courses. In addition to a non-rigid RE, one of the most important features of this curriculum for participants is that it covers both RE and standard preschool education. Both parents and instructors mention comprehensiveness of education in terms of providing RE with the standard education:

Indeed, because it provides good pre-school education. If it had only provided RE without providing pre-school education, I would not have preferred it either. The two must be together. You can't make a child this age sit down and do it in half an hour. How do you make him sit down for half an hour? With the activity. You can open a hymn while playing the game. You can open the Quran while playing the game. They memorize or learn very quickly anyway. Or you can say Bismillah and recite the meal prayer while sitting to eat. But you cannot teach a child the Quran for an hour.

[Gerçekten de okul öncesi eğitimini de güzel verdiği için. Eğer okul öncesi eğitimini vermeden sadece dini eğitim verseydim, ona da tercih etmezdim. İkisi birlikte olması

lazım. Bu yaştaki bir çocuğa oturtup, yarım saatte tutturamazsın, böyle bir şey yok. Onu yarım saatten önce nasıl oturursunuz? Etkinlik ile. Oyun oynarken bir ilahi açabilirsiniz. Oyun oynarken Kur'an-ı Kerim açabilirsiniz. Çok hızlı bir şekilde ezberliyorlar ya da öğreniyorlar zaten. Ya da yemeğe otururken bir besmele çekip yemek duası okuyabilirsiniz. Ama çocuğa 1 saat Kur'an-ı Kerim talimi yapamazsın.] (İrem, P)

I think the curriculum shown here in an integrated and practical manner is very enjoyable. It is a full program, the child enjoys it and feels like he/she is doing something fun, not like he/she is doing homework. Both fine motor skills and religious knowledge are developing.

[Burada entegre biçimde uygulamalı olarak gösterilen müfredat çok keyifli bence. Dolu dolu bir program, çocuk keyif alıyor böyle etkinlik yaparken ödev yapıyormuş gibi değil de eğlenceli bir şeyler yapıyor gibi hissediyor. İnce motor becerileri de gelişiyor dini bilgiler de.] (Jale, P)

The class, yes, consists of four major classes. Values education, religious knowledge, the holy Quran, and complementary gains. I am thinking about this there. For example, I love the thing, by the way, I also love the curriculum of the MoNE, what we call complementary gains. A number for example, we take the number one, what do we describe? This can be done in the form of counting, counting our fingers. For example, we do this in our lessons, of course, we explain the number one, and from there we emphasize the unity of Allah, for example. For example, we explain the number five, and from there I say that the pillars of Islam are five. As you know, in our lessons, they are actually intertwined with each other. For example, Elifba education is carried out, education for fascicle of Quran is provided. I don't know if you have ever examined our fascicle of Quran books. So it all depends on the age of the children. Our presidency is already working with experts on this issue. So, when we put it in front of him/her, it is not something boring, it is not like a partial education. While teaching the Holy Quran, we actually reinforce it with complementary gains. For example, we teach colors and organize color festivals in the complementary learning lessons. But when we are teaching parts of the Holy Quran, we say, for example, we will cut and paste a letter, let's say we will do a collage, we will do it with this color. For example, he does it with that color. In fact, I think that all of our courses are complementary to each other.

[Ders, evet dört ana dersten oluşuyor. Değerler eğitimi, dini bilgiler, Kur'an-ı Kerim ve tamamlayıcı kazanımlar. Ben orada şunu düşünüyorum. Mesela şeyi de çok seviyorum bu arada Milli Eğitim müfredatına da bayılıyorum, yani o tamamlayıcı kazanımlar dediğimiz. Bir sayıyı mesela tutup da bir sayısını hani ne anlatıyoruz. Bunu sayma şeklinde, parmaklarımızı sayma şeklinde olabileceği gibi. Mesela biz derslerimizde şunu yapıyoruz tabii ki, bir sayısını anlatıyoruz, oradan Allah'ın birliğini de vurguluyoruz mesela. Mesela beş sayısını anlatıyoruz, oradan da İslam'ın şartlarının beş olduğunu zaten hani bizim derslerde aslında birbirleriyle iç içe girmiş vaziyetler diyorum ya. Mesela Elifba eğitimi yapılıyor, cüz eğitimi. Bilmiyorum bizim cüz kitaplarımızı hiç incelediniz mi? Yani hepsi çocukların yaşına göre. Başkanlığımız bu konuda zaten uzmanlarla çalışıyor. Yani biz onun önüne koyduğumuzda böyle sıkıcı bir şey olarak değil, bir cüz eğitimi gibi değil. Kur'an-ı Kerim eğitimi yaparken de aslında tamamlayıcı kazanımlarla biz onu pekiştiriyoruz. Yani mesela renkleri öğretiyoruz, renk şenlikleri yapıyoruz tamamlayıcı kazanımlar dersinde. Ama Kur'an-ı Kerim işte cüz eğitimi yaparken de o mesela bir harfi kesme yapıştırma yapacağız, kolaj çalışması yapacağız diyelim, şu renkle yapıyoruz diyoruz. Mesela o renkle yapıyor. Böyle hepsi aslında derslerimizin birbirini tamamlayıcı niteliğe sahip olduğunu düşünüyorum.] (Elif, I)

We teach the Quran to children here, we do not aim to ensure that the child learns the Quran, reads the whole of it or that the child progresses here. This is already the case in the legislation of the PRA; at the end of one year, the child could only read the Quran, and at the end of one semester, he/she could only finish the letters. We are moving forward slowly. Other institutions - I don't have information about all of them - but we also hear about places where it is done at a very severe level. I respect all of them, but I don't think we teach the Quran in an oppressive way. Here, we are trying to provide a more flexible education that includes pre-school education. Art activities, complementary achievements, we touch on all of these, and I think we have a serious advantage such as the Holy Quran. You know, we make children memorize as many surahs and prayers as they can memorize. We do not pressure them, we do not bore them, I think this is our difference from other congregation structures.

[Bizim burada Kur'an-ı Kerim öğretiyoruz çocuklara illa çocuk Kur'an öğretilsin, bir hatim yapsın, muhakkak çocuk burada ilerlesin gibi bir derdimiz gayemiz yok. Zaten Diyanet'in mevzuatında da böyle, bir yılın sonunda çocuk Kur'an-ı Kerim'e ancak geçmiştir, bir dönemin sonunda harfleri ancak bitirebilmiştir. Biz ağır ağır ilerliyoruz. Diğer kurumlar -hepsinin hakkında bilgi sahibi değilim ama- çok ağır seviyede yapıldığı yerleri de duyuyoruz, saygı duyuyorum hepsine ama bizim Kur'an'ı baskıcı bir şekilde öğretmediğimizi düşünüyorum. Burada daha esnek ve okul öncesi eğitimleri de içine alarak bir eğitim vermeye çalışıyoruz. Sanat etkinlikleri, tamamlayıcı kazanımlar bunların hepsine de değiniyoruz bunun yanı sıra Kur'an-ı Kerim gibi ciddi bir artımız var diye düşünüyorum. Hani çocukların ezberleyebilecekleri kadar sure, dua ezberletiyoruz. Onları baskılamıyoruz, sıkıyoruz diğer cemaat yapılarından farkımızın bu olduğunu düşünüyorum.]
(Deniz, I)

These expressions are also coherent with Erpay's study which indicates that parents emphasize entertaining, non-rigid, developmentally appropriate RE for young children which is based on play (Erpay, 2020). Values education is another significant feature of the curriculum of Quran courses:

Values education is a very important part of the curriculum, it is also very important for us. Values education is shaped around concepts such as respect, love, justice and compassion. Our goal is for children to learn these values, but to use them not only here but also in their daily lives. He/she should be respectful to everyone, for example, he/she should be able to empathize with others in his/her life outside of here.

[Değerler eğitimi müfredatın çok önemli bir bölümü, bizim için de çok önemli. Değerler eğitimi saygı, sevgi, adalet, merhamet gibi kavramlar etrafında şekilleniyor. Amacımız çocukların bu değerleri öğretilsin ama sadece burada değil gündelik hayatında da kullansın. Herkese saygılı olsun mesela buranın dışındaki hayatında da empati yapabilsin başkalarıyla.] (Azra, I)

I personally attach much more importance to values education. I think it should be taken together with our culture, customs and traditions. I think values education is more important. Respect for the homeland, respect for the flag, protecting the homeland, keeping the environment clean. This is what we call values education. Respecting the elderly, loving people, loving the universe. Our values education program is already based on this.

[Ben çok daha önemsiyorum değerler eğitimini kendi adıma. Kültürümüzle birlikte, örfümüzle, adetimizle birlikte bir götürülmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum, daha önemli bence değerler eğitimi. Vatana saygı, bayrağa saygı, vatani korumak, çevreyi temiz

tutmak. Değerler eğitimi dediğimiz şey bu. Yaşlılara saygı duymak, insanları sevmek, kâinatı sevmek. Değerler eğitimi programımız zaten bunun üzerine kuruldu.] (Çağla, I)

Mine, who is a parent and Quran instructor in the PRA, also indicates the importance of values education:

Abstract concepts are not given anyway. So, as far as I know, RE is given entirely through values education at the age of 4-6. I mean, I see that because I follow their training myself. Since the meaning part already goes through concrete values, there is no such thing as not making sense.

[Zaten soyut kavramlar verilmiyor. Yani din eğitimi benim bildiğim kadarıyla tamamen değerler eğitim üzerinden veriliyor 4-6 yaşta. Yani kendim de eğitimlerini takip ettiğimden onu görüyorum. Anlamlandırma kısmı zaten somut değerler üzerinden gittiği için anlamlandıramama gibi bir durum söz konusu değil.] (Mine, P)

It is important that if it is possible, these universal values are associated with Islamic doctrine. Universal humanitarian values are defined as features of a Muslim person:

Of course, an important part of values education consists of values such as respect, love, responsibility, morality, manners, cleanliness and patriotism. Children who learn these values and receive them here are morally better, more moral. If the family supports it, the child grows up knowing this way. Of course, we usually explain these values by associating them with religion, but when I first start, I say all people. First, people must be moral, this is valid for all people. While explaining, I start with "all people", then I move on to the sub-identity and explain that Muslims should have these values. In this way, I think children are not confused, they understand that everyone should have these values.

[Değerler eğitimi tabi ki önemli bir kısım, saygı, sevgi, sorumluluk, ahlak, adap, temizlik ve vatan sevgisi gibi değerlerden oluşuyor. Bu değerleri öğrenen, burada alana çocuklar ahlaken daha iyi oluyor, daha ahlaklı. Eğer aile de desteklerse çocuk bu şekilde bilerek yetişiyor. Genellikle bu değerleri dinle bağdaştırarak anlatıyoruz tabi ki ama ilk başlarken bütün insanlar diyorum. Öncelikle insan ahlaklı olmalı bu bütün insanlar için geçerli. Anlatırken bütün insanlar diye başlıyorum, insanlar dürüst olmalı, saygılı olmalı gibi daha sonra alt kimliğe geçiyorum, Müslümanların bu değerlere sahip olmaları gerektiğini anlatıyorum. Böyle olunca çocukların kafaları karışmıyor bence, bu değerlere herkesin sahip olması gerektiğin anlıyorlar.] (Ceren, I)

Of course, these are the teachings of the Holy Quran. We already learn them from there, not by hearing from left or right, but from the Holy Quran. A book that was revealed to Allah SWT(Subhanahu wa-ta'ala) many centuries ago. If the previous books had not been destroyed, these teachings would still exist, but we are transferring the values we learned from the Quran. The Holy Quran clearly explains to us in its verses that it means kindness, respect, love, and that one should not even say "off" to his/her parents. These, of course, guide us, we know these through the things our prophet conveyed to us. Of course, a person may say that he/she does not believe in God and that he/she does good deeds, but now we evaluate that person differently, we have to see, but we learn these things from religion. Personally, I learn from religion, and I pass on what I learn from religion to children.

[Tabi ki de bunlar Kur'an-ı Kerim'in öğretileri zaten biz bunları oradan öğreniyoruz, sağdan soldan duyarak değil Kur'an-ı Kerim'den öğreniyoruz. Kaç asır önce indirilmiş bir kitap Allah-u Teâlâ'ya daha önceki kitaplarında zaten tahrip edilmeseydi

eğer bu öğretiler yine vardı ama Kur'an'dan öğrendiğimiz değerleri biz aktarıyoruz yani. Kur'an-ı Kerim iyiliktir, saygıdır, sevgidir, anne babaya öf bile dememesi gerektiğini açık açık ayetleriyle bize açıklıyor. Bunlar tabi ki de bizlere yol gösterici, peygamber efendimizin bizlere ulaştırdığı şeylerle biz bunları biliyoruz. He insan olabilir tabi ki Allah'a inanmıyorum da iyilik de yapıyorum da diyebilir oradaki artık o insanı farklı değerlendiririz yani görmemiz lazım yani ama biz bunları dinden öğreniyoruz şahsen ben dinden öğreniyorum dinden öğrendiğimi de çocuklara aktarıyorum.] (Deniz, I)

Islam is universal. Everything that Allah SWT has given us is universal. If everything universal about Islam were accepted, humanity would find incredible peace. Because when we look at it, there is a verse in the scales: Be equal in weight. For example, after that there is a verse about orphan rights. There is a verse about parents' rights. After that there is a verse on lying. There is a verse on charity and zakat. And as you say, these are actually universal. And I think that if these were implemented, if they were implemented only as Islam, but if Muslims could internalize this universality of Islam, it would be a much more peaceful environment.

[İslamiyet evrenseldir. Allah-u Teala'nın bize verdiği bütün her şey evrenseldir. Eğer İslamiyet'in evrensel her şeyi kabul edilse inanılmaz insanlık huzur bulacak. Çünkü baktığımız zaman tartıda ayet vardır ya tartıda ölçüde eşit olun. Mesela ondan sonra yetim hakları ile ilgili ayet vardır. Anne baba hakları ile ilgili ayet vardır. Ondan sonra yalan üzerine ayet vardır. Sadaka, zekât üzerine ayet vardır. Ve bunlar dediğiniz gibi aslında evrenseldir. Ve bunlar uygulansa hani sadece İslamiyet olarak uygulansa ama İslamiyet'in bu evrenselden Müslümanlar bir içselleştirebilse inanılmaz şu an çok daha barışık bir ortam olacak diye düşünüyorum.] (İrem, P)

These Quran courses stand out not only with their appropriate curriculum but also with their reliability and accessibility. Both parents and instructors mention that they trust the institution. What is meant by the trustworthiness and availability of Quran courses is the RE provided by the state, the prevalence of courses and their affordable prices. Participants remark both their trust in the PRA and doubts towards other institutions:

The PRA is an institution attached to the state and supervised by the state. Their teachers are theology graduates, well-educated people who are theology graduates, have a certain education, and are appointed by meeting the criteria. I like the physical environment of the school. I really liked the attitude of the people and the environment. Those who are affiliated with religious communities or sects have no control, they are not supervised, the PRA is supervised by the state. It was also met in terms of expectations. My expectations were to raise religious awareness and to learn the Quran and Surah. They also provided these.

[Diyanet devlete bağlı, devlet tarafından denetlenebilen bir kurum. Hocaları ilahiyat mezunu, eğitimi belli, kriterleri karşılayarak atanmış insanlar, öğretmenler. Okulun fiziki ortamını da çok beğendim. İnsanların tavrını, ortamı da çok beğendim. Cemaat-tarikat gibi yerlere bağlı olanların kontrolü yok, denetlenmiyor, Diyanet devlet tarafından denetleniyor. Beklenti anlamında da karşılandı, beklentilerim dini anlamda bilinçlenmesiydi, Kur'an-sure öğrenmesiydi bunları da sağladılar.] (Helin, P)

First of all, I wanted him to receive RE at this age. I really think that a tree bends when it is old. But frankly, I didn't think much about places that were stricter, such as madrasas and courses. Because frankly I don't trust it. There are good places, but we also hear very bad things. I didn't want my child to hate it.

[Öncelikle din eğitimi almasını istiyordum bu yaşlarda. Hakikaten ağaç yaşken eğilir diye düşünüyorum. Ama açıkçası daha ağır mesela medrese, kurs gibi yerleri pek düşünmedim. Çünkü güvenmiyorum açıkçası. İyi yerler de vardır ama çok kötü şeyler duyduğumuz da oluyor. Çocuğumun nefret etmesini istemedim.] (Olca, P)

In other words, private schools spring up like mushrooms, that is, the building we knew from yesterday suddenly turning into a private school, or the opening of a nursery under that building, and the education of a specific school or a community there, is a problem in my opinion. So here the state factor should be included. The state should provide important education, especially RE, through a single channel, with its own resources and resources. Since it is not given, the country is going crazy intellectually.

[Yani mantar gibi türeyen özel okullar, yani daha dününü bildiğimiz binanın bir anda özel okula dönüşmesi veya o binanın altında işte kreşin açılması, orada belirli bir okulun veya bir cemaatin eğitiminin bilinmesi, bence sıkıntı. Yani burada devlet faktörü için içerisine girmeli. Devlet tek kanalda, özellikle din eğitimi gibi önemli bir eğitimi, kendi şeyleriyle vermeli, kaynaklarıyla vermeli. Verilmediği için de zaten ülke düşüncesel olarak aldı başını gidiyor.] (Mine, P)

Elif and Çağla emphasize parents' concerns about the institution courses affiliated with and their positive thoughts about the PRA's Quran courses:

You know, as an institution that one can trust and receive good information from, as well as receive values education, as an institution that one can trust. And let me tell you, we hear this a lot from our parents. For example, they say that we saw that the sense of compassion has become more developed. You know, we leave our children here with peace of mind, because we see that you love children and take care of them as God's trust, and we have received a lot of feedback from parents like this. You know, especially after a group where religion was abused, what did the PRA do to this younger age group? Because at that time, this group had undertaken a lot of this work. What a shame. But this time it went to abuse. At least it should be done by the state. Nowadays, most people ask this when they come to registration or something. Isn't this place under the PRA? Because now people, and I myself, for example, had to send my child to a private school full-time. What I have always researched is that it should not be affiliated with any community or any place, but should be taken by the state, through official policies.

[Hani hem güveneceği hem de iyi bilgileri alacağı hem de değerler eğitim alacağı bir kurum olarak, güveneceği bir kurum olarak. Ve biz velilerimizden de şunu çok fazla duyuyoruz, onu da söyleyeyim. Hani merhamet duygusunun daha fazla gelişmiş olduğunu gördük diyorlar mesela. Hani içimiz rahat bir şekilde buradan içeriye çocuğumuzu çok rahat bir şekilde bırakıyoruz çünkü çocukları sevdiğinizi ve onlara Allah'ın bir emanet olarak baktığınızı görüyoruz diye ve veliden bu şekilde mesela çok fazla dönüş aldık. Biliyorsunuz, özellikle din istismarı yapılan bir gruptan sonra özellikle Diyanet bu küçük yaş grubuna biraz daha ne yaptı yöneldi. Çünkü o zaman hani bu grup çok fazla bu iş üstlenmişti işi. Ne yazık. Ama bu sefer istismara gitti. En azından devlet eliyle yapılması. Şu an çoğu insan zaten geldiğinde şunu soruyor, kayda falan geldiğinde. Burası Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'na bağlı değil mi? Çünkü artık insanlar, ben de kendim de mesela çocuğumu özel okula tam gün bir yere vermem gerekiyordu. Hep araştırdığım şey şu oldu, herhangi bir cemaate, herhangi bir yerine olmasın, bağlı olmasın devlet eliyle, resmi politikalarla götürülsün.] (Elif, I)

There may be distrust in teaching false things of any kind, even religiously. This is also trust, isn't it? Here's the feeling that their children are physically safe. Well, I

don't know, but we are seen here as clergy, representing the religion, so we are trusted. She says that we will be merciful and protect her trust. And we teach these too. That's why there is trust. There are also those who trust and feel that they will not be taught anything wrong and send them away.

[Her türlü, dini olarak da yalan yanlış bir şeylerin öğretilmesinde yana da bir güvensizlik olabilir. Bu da bir güvendir değil mi? İşte çocuklarının fiziksel olarak da güvende olduğunu hissetmek. İşte bilmiyorum ama insanlar biz burada din adamı olarak dini temsil ederek görünüyoruz ya, güveniliyor da yani. Diyor ki işte merhametli olur, emanete sahip çıkar. E biz de bunları öğretiyoruz. Bu yüzden de güven oluyor. Yanlış bir şeylerin öğretilmeyeceğini düşünüp de güvenip de hissedip gönderenler de oluyor.] (Çağla, I)

Durkheim emphasizes the state's duty to provide education for all children without letting any special institution take part in to maintain its functioning (Ballantine, et al., 2017). Çakı also emphasizes the role of the state and the PRA for providing religious and moral education for children rather than letting religious communities do this especially after the coup attempt. Providing that kind of education helps to develop the connection between religious people and the state, so there will not be reason for different religious communities (Çakı, 2018). The notion of trust is not only about RE by the state but also protection from dangers of outside. Participants state protecting children from dangerous environment and social degradation via RE in courses:

First, humanity is not going to a good place, it is a very dangerous and bad environment, we hear a lot of things. In such a troubled environment, humanity is searching for meaning and parents are wondering how to protect their children, which is why I think such institutions are in demand. Not because of the price but probably to show the kids good things.

[Öncelikle insanlık iyi bir yere gitmiyor çok tehlikeli ve kötü ortam, bir sürü şey duyuyoruz. Böyle sıkıntılı bir ortamda insanlık bir anlam arayışında, veliler çocuğumu nasıl koruyabilirim derdine düşmüş durumda bu tarz kurumlar da bu yüzden talep ediliyor bence. Fiyattan dolayı değil muhtemelen çocuklara iyi şeyler göstermek için.] (Jale, P)

But I think the child cannot be released, there is no such thing. As soon as you want to release it, you receive a blow from the other side. I released my child. I do not teach the book of Allah, the Quran. Ok. But does the other side stand? Look, it didn't stop. Look at the situation in Turkey. If you could see the state of our children in secondary school. God, the book, the Quran, none of these exist. There is none. The researcher: So, do you think this affects their character in a bad way?

Of course. Of course it won't affect it, right? I mean, his lack of compassion... I mean, why wouldn't a person steal, for example? For example, why wouldn't someone steal where no one will see? Actually he/she can, but there must be something that stops this person. There must be love, there must be belief, there must be value. There is no value judgments left; everyone is selfish.

[Ama bence çocuk serbest bırakılmaz, böyle bir şey yok. Siz serbest bırakayım dediğiniz anda öbür taraftan yersiniz. Ben çocuğumu serbest bıraktım. Allah'ın kitabı, Kur'an'ı öğretmiyorum. Tamam. Ama öbür taraf duruyor mu? Durmadı bakın. Şu Türkiye'nin haline bakın. Çocuklarımızın halini bir görseniz ortaokuldaki. Allah, kitap, Kur'an bunların hiçbirisi yok. Hiçbirisi yok.]

Araştırmacı: Peki bu onların karakterini de kötü yönden mi etkiliyor?

Tabii ki. Tabii ki etkilemez olur mu? Yani merhametsizliği... Yani bir insan niye hırsızlık yapmaz mesela? Biri kimsenin görmeyeceği yerde niye hırsızlık yapmaz mesela? Yapabilir aslında ama bu insanı durduran bir şey olmalı. Bir sevgi olmalı, bir inanç olmalı, bir değer olmalı. Değer yargıları falan hiçbir şey kalmadı, herkes bencillik içerisinde.] (Filiz, P)

I think everyone has this problem, now there is Generation Z, I don't believe in it, but the environment is very corrupt and dangerous, the parents' problem is how to protect their children, we want a clean, moral generation to grow up with such an education. I received such an education secretly. We could not receive RE when we were little because of the ban, we had to hide it, I like how visible we are now.

[Herkesin de derdi biraz bu bence, şimdi Z kuşağı var, ben ona inanmıyorum ama, ortam çok bozuk, tehlikeli, anne babaların derdi de çocuğumu nasıl korurum, böyle bir eğitimle de temiz, ahlaklı bir nesil yetişsin istiyoruz. Ben gizli gizli aldım böyle bir eğitimi, yasak yüzünden küçükken dini eğitim alamıyorduk, saklamak zorundaydık, şimdi bu kadar görünür olmamız benim çok hoşuma gidiyor.] (Leyla, P)

We hear these things and see them around us, alhamdulillah, as our family, I am happy, but these are the things we hear now that children are deteriorating, rebelling against their families, disobeying, not listening to their parents. So how will this happen? I personally think that this deterioration arises from our religious deficiencies. I think it helps complete these in some way. What harm could it do to anyone here? What are we doing and who is afraid of what around here? We are wondering the answer to this question, for example, what harm could it do to anyone if love is taught for weeks, a subject of kindness is taught for weeks, and reinforced with stories and activities appropriate to their level? Why shouldn't the child know and respect the being that created him/her and the prophet who leads him/her?

[Biz de bunları duyarak etraftan, görerek elhamdulillah hani biz ailem olarak ben memnunum ama duyduğumuz şeyler artık çocukların bozulduğu, ailelerine isyan ettiği, itaat etmediği, anne babayı dinlemediği bunlar. Peki bunların da nasıl olacak, bu bozulmanın dini eksikliklerimizden kaynaklandığını düşünüyorum ben şahsen. Bunların da bir şekilde tamamlanmasına yardımcı olduğunu düşünüyorum. Burada kime ne zararı olabilir? Ne yapıyoruz da buralarda kim neden korkuyor? Biz de bunun cevabını merak ediyoruz mesela ne zararı olacak ki sevginin haftalarca işlenmesinde, bir iyilik konusunun haftalarca işlenmesinde, seviyesine uygun hikayelerle, etkinliklerle pekiştirilmesinde kime ne zararı olabilir ki. Çocuk onu yaratan varlığı, ona önder olan peygamberi niye bilmesin ki, niye saymasın ki.] (Deniz, I)

For example, I think that some people do not respect women right now, and that people my age and generation are more disrespectful and selfish because they cannot receive this training.

[Mesela şu anda bazı işte insanların kadınlara saygı duymamasını benim yaşımdaki, benim neslimdeki insanların bu eğitimleri alamadığı için daha saygısız işte daha bencil olduklarını düşünüyorum.] (Çağla, I)

These findings support the results of different studies. The study of McCreery et al. focuses on reasons for parents to request Muslim schools for their children and it demonstrate that most common reasons for parents are security and safety of children. They believe that other schools are not able to ensure protect children from exposure to dangers of the world (McCreery et al., 2007). In Türkiye, there are many options

for RE in early years, so parents' preference for the PRA is not only about safety. Some participants, especially parents, also mention the affordability and prevalence of Quran courses when compared to other institutions which provide RE to children:

Here, in line with our sensitivities, the child also memorizes and reads the Quran. He also plays great games with his friends. That's why we prefer this place a little more. As I said, he went to another school before, not for the ages of 4-6, but it was still in the same scope. The price difference is a bit small for us right now. Private schools are very expensive, this is because they are more affordable.

[Burada bizim hassasiyetlerimiz doğrultusunda çocuk hani ezberi de yapıyor, Kur'an'ını da okuyor. Arkadaşlarıyla çok güzel oyunlar da oynuyor. Yani o yüzden burayı biraz daha tercih ediyoruz. Dediğim gibi daha önce başka bir okula da gitti, 4-6 yaşlar değil ama yine aynı kapsamdaydı. Fiyat farkı biraz bize şu an buraya. Özel okullar çok pahalı, burası daha uygun olduğu için.] (Gamze, P)

It is more convenient financially, other institutions are very expensive, this place is advantageous, and it is good in terms of RE.

[Hem maddi açıdan daha uygun, diğer kurumlar çok pahalı burası avantajlı oluyor hem de dini eğitim açısından iyi.] (Nazlı, P)

The first reason was the cost, I sent my first child to nursery and there was spiritual education there too. But when I started looking for where to send the child this year, I realized that it would not be possible to send him there. I learned that such an institution existed through a friend. My first reason was the cost, otherwise it is too far from my home, it affects my quality of life because we are constantly traveling, bringing up the child, picking up the child. My first reason was the cost rather than sending it closer.

[İlk sebebi maliyet, ilk çocuğum kreşe yollamıştım, orada da manevi eğitim vardı. Ama bu sene çocuğu nereye göndersem diye bir arayışa girdiğimde oraya göndermemin mümkün olmayacağını fark ettim. Bir arkadaş vasıtasıyla da böyle bir kurumun olduğunu öğrendim. İlk sebebim maliyet oldu yoksa evime uzak, aşırı uzak hayat kalitemi çok etkiliyor çünkü sürekli yolculuk halindeyiz, çocuğu getir, çocuğu al. İlk sebebim maliyet oldu daha yakına göndermektense.] (Leyla, P)

Private schools are very expensive. So now the PRA has passed full time to 4-6 years old. And this is new. In other words, in the past periods, it has been half a day for 4-6-year-olds. There are currently 4-6-year-olds working full time as pilots. There are 4-6-year-olds who will switch to full time, and over time, maybe they will all turn to 4-6 years old. Of course, a working mother will definitely want to send her child to a place in terms of selfcare and being able to trust, or most of the mothers at home will send her child to receive RE at a young age, saying that she does not have it anyway. So, the common denominator for both of them is that one of them will see the PRA as more logical considering the current nursery fees outside, the other will say that the child should receive an education and grow up that way with my own values and perception of religion. And they will meet in the middle. I think these underline the reason for preference. Indeed, looking at normal nurseries, the number of full-day nurseries we are currently in is very absurd.

[Özel okullar çok pahalı. Yani şu an diyanet tam gün 4-6 yaşa geçti. Ve bu yeni. Yani geçtiğimiz dönemlerde yarım gündür 4-6 yaşlar. Şu anda pilot olarak tam zamanla çalışan 4-6 yaşlar var. Tam zamanlıya geçecek olan 4-6 yaşlar var ve zamanla hepsi belki 4-6 yaşa dönecek. Çalışan bir anne çocuğunu hem öz bakım noktasında hem gözü arkada kalmayacak bir yere tabii ki teslim etmek isteyecek veya evdeki anne birçoğu zaten bende yok diyerek din eğitimini çocuk yaşta alsın diyerek gönderecek.

Yani her ikisi de ortak payda da biri dışarıdaki şu an kreş ücretlerini düşünerek diyaneti daha mantıklı görecektir, diğeri benim kendi değerlerimle din algısıyla çocuk bir eğitim alsın ve o şekilde yetişsin diyecek. Ve ortada buluşacaklar. Bence tercih sebebinin altında bunlar yatıyor. Hakikaten normal kreşlere bakarak şu an içinde bulunduğumuz tam günlük bir kreşin rakamı çok komik.] (Mine, P)

Elif as an instructor also mentions the prevalence of these Quran courses in terms of being in every neighborhood:

By choice, in terms of transportation and accessibility, PRA's courses are now in every neighborhood. For example, sometimes we see that, since mosques are very busy, Quran courses are generally offered in mosques, depending on the possibilities. To open courses, especially for 4–6-year-olds, the courses must have certain characteristics and qualifications. Now we see that accessibility is also a great opportunity for people. I mean, it's very close to his/her home, in the same neighborhood, in nearby and what does it cause? Frankly, it increases the general demand.

[Seçerek, ulaşım açısından, ulaşılabilirlik açısından da Diyanetin kursları şu anda her mahallede olması, mesela bazen bakıyoruz böyle, camiler çok yoğun olduğu için camilerde de genelde imkanlar nispetinde kuran kursları çıkıyor. Özellikle 4-6 yaş kuran kurslarının açılması için belli özelliklerin olması lazım, niteliklerin olması lazım kursların. Şimdi bakıyoruz ulaşılabilirlik de insanlar için büyük bir imkân. Yani evine çok yakın, aynı mahallede, yakınında o da ne yapıyor? Genel talepleri artırıyor açıkçası.] (Elif, I)

As can be seen above from the details of participants' expressions, religion-centered child-rearing process is not only about teaching children religious knowledge. For young children, parents and instructors also aim to make children love religion. With the second category, creating awareness and positive attitudes towards religion, participants' wish for children to know and love the God, Prophet and religion. Participants want children to be familiar with religion through this education. Parents indicate that they do not have too many expectations for RE since children are young like reading the entire Quran:

Frankly, we don't have anything like this, an excessive expectation for a preschool child, reading the whole of the Quran for a child of this age. It is important for us that he is in this environment, breathes this air, is in touch with the Quran and has a happy time here. Alhamdulillah, there is such an environment.

[Çok açıkçası okul öncesi, yani bu yaş çocuğu için çok aşırı bir beklenti, böyle ay hatim indirsin falan öyle bir şeyimiz yok. Sadece bu ortamda bulunması, bu havayı teneffüs etmesi, Kur'an la hemhal olması ve burada mutlu vakit geçiriyor olması bizim için önemli. Elhamdulillah öyle de bir ortam var.] (Gamze, P)

When I look here, it really is a nursery environment. With games, by making people love it, without getting bored. For example, while we were talking to our teacher, of course I was aware that they were sensitive, because some parents want it and ask it, but I emphasized that he should definitely be started to read all of the Quran. I have

no such problem. Because he's only four years old. Let her be happy. Because children cannot forget these places. It remains in their memories. Let him remember the good things about this place. I wanted him to remember good things about our religion. The environment here was also very nice to me. So, it's fun and colorful like that.

[Buraya baktığımda tam bir kreş ortamı gerçekten. Oyunlarla, sevdirerek, sıkmadan. Mesela biz hocamızla konuşurken tabii ki farkındaydım onların duyarlı olduğuna ama ben üstüne basa basa kesinlikle Kur'an'a geçsin diye çünkü bazı veliler bunu istiyor ne zaman geçer ne zaman geçer diye soruyorlar. Hiç böyle bir derdim yok. Çünkü daha dört yaşında. Sevsin istiyorum sadece. Mutlu olsun. Buraları çünkü çocuklar unutamıyor. Hafızalarında kalıyor. İşte burayla ilgili güzel şeyler hatırlasın. Dinimizle ilgili güzel şeyler hatırlasın diye istemiştim. Buranın ortamı da çok güzel geldi bana. Yani böyle eğlenceli, renkli.] (Olca, P)

Since he had no nursery experience before, I wanted him to get used to it without overloading it. I did not expect him to learn the Quran, learn religion this way, learn this way, just get used to it and have a religious background.

[Daha önce kreş deneyimi olmadığı için aşırı bir şey yüklemekten alışmasını istedim. Kur'an öğretilsin, şöyle din öğretilsin, böyle öğretilsin diye bir beklentim olmadı sadece alışsın, dini alt yapısı oluşsun.] (Nazlı, P)

My next expectation is that he either starts by praying while sitting or reciting the Bismillah. Let him see people praying around him. I want him to see that religion is our identity, we live this way, a Muslim person should live this way. But a Muslim person should not lie, a Muslim person should not violate rights. He should not hit his friend or hurt anyone unjustly. Because I wanted him to experience these, I chose the age of 4-6. Indeed, because it provides good pre-school education. If I had only given RE without giving pre-school education, I would not have preferred it over that either.

[Bundan sonraki beklentim ya bir otururken dua ederek başlasın, besmele çekerek başlasın. Etrafında namaz kılan insanları görsün. Ya şunu görmesini istiyorum din bizim kimliğimiz, biz bu şekilde, Müslüman bir insan bu şekilde yaşamalı. Ama Müslüman bir insan yalan söylememeli, Müslüman bir insan hak yememeli. Arkadaşına vurmamalı, haksız yere kimseyi incitmemeli. Bunları yaşamalarını istediğim için ve 4-6 yaşını tercih ettim. Gerçekten de okul öncesi eğitimini de güzel verdiği için. Eğer okul öncesi eğitimini vermeden sadece dini eğitim verseydim, ona da tercih etmezdim.] (İrem, P)

Instructors also clarify their aim as creating awareness and positive emotions for religion, its rules and practices on children when they are young and fostering their religious development:

What is important here is that he/she knows his creator, how God sends messages to people, and his prophet. I wish for them to be conscious about worship and perform it knowingly in the future. But of course, moral values first. If children do not have moral values, their worship will not matter.

[Yaratıcısını tanıması, onun insanlar nasıl mesaj gönderdiğini, peygamberini bilmesi burada önemli olan. İbadet konusunda bilinçli olsunlar ileride bilerek yerine getirsinler. Ama tabii ki önce ahlaki değerler, ahlaki değerleri olmazsa çocukların ibadetlerinin de bir önemi olmaz.] (Ceren, I)

Our concern here is not knowledge-based, but to create positive religious feelings for the child. That is, positive religious emotions, matching religious feelings with that religious experience. So, we were praying, I was praying two rakats in the classroom,

I stopped, and they came to me, we prayed together, I chased them, caught them and kissed them.

[Bilgi temelli değil burada bizim derdimiz çocuğun olumlu dini duygularını oluşturması. Bu yani olumlu dini duygular, o dini yaşantıyla dini duyguları eşleştirmesi. Yani namaz kılıyoruz, ben iki rekât namaz kılıyorum sınıfta, durdum yanıma geldiler birlikte namaz kıldık arkasından onları kovaladım, yakaladım, öptüm.] (Buse, I)

The aim is only to increase the child's awareness of religion, to know his religion and to learn it more easily in the future. I say they should love religion because I want to say let's get over the issues I just mentioned, the fears of God burning, let's make people love God, and break the wrong stereotypes about religion. So, let's develop a positive attitude towards religion in children.

[Amaç sadece çocuğun dine dair farkındalıkları gelişsin, dinini bilsin ileriki zamanlarda da daha kolay öğrensin. Dini sevsinler diyorum çünkü biraz önce de bahsettiğim o konuları, Allah yakar gibi korkuları atlatıp Allah'ı sevdirelim, dine dair yanlış kalıpları yıkalım demek istiyorum. Yani dine dair pozitif tutum geliştirelim çocuklarda.] (Azra, I)

With this religion-centered education, religious rules, and practices are part of children's daily lives in appropriate ways according to participants. They indicate that Quran courses provide both RE and standard curriculum of the MoNE that targets cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, physical and psychological development of children by focusing on different areas including Turkish, mathematic, art, social, science and nature. Thus, it targets holistic development of children. However, the previous study about Quran courses of the PRA emphasizes the curriculum focusing on cognitive development. The study indicates that the curriculum did not adequately support different developmental areas of children and provided religious knowledge above the development level of children. It also mentions the insufficiency of materials so that instructors need to use additional ones (Yağcı, 2018). On the other hand, in this study, people say the developmentally appropriate and holistic curriculum of the institution. Instructors also state that they only use written materials provided by the PRA and find them sufficient. It can be assumed that the curriculum that changed in 2022 is accepted as better than the previous version in terms of being more effective, and children-oriented, developmentally appropriate. After this sub-theme that revealed the appropriateness of the education for participants, the next subtheme will reveal how religion takes part in children's daily lives since children mingle with these Islamic concepts both at home and courses through religious individuals and religion-oriented activities like the Ramadan feast.

4.3.2. Sub-theme 2: Religion in Daily Lives of Children

Religion is an important part of children's lives since they come from families who follow religious rules and take education in the Quran course. For example, Gamze as a parent state that religion is in every part of their lives:

So, I don't like pre-school RE at all. Because there is no such thing in our lives. There is no such thing as pre-school RE. This is a constant thing anyway. Because it is in every field, we do not have anything like Christianity, we went to church, we went out on Sunday, we are done. Children, there are no such things like pre-school and post-school education. Here, in line with our sensitivity, the child also memorizes and recites the Quran. He also plays great games with his friends.

[Yani okul öncesi din eğitiminden hiç hoşlanmıyorum. Çünkü bizim hayatımızda öyle bir şey söz konusu değil. Okul öncesi din eğitimi diye bir şey yok. Sürekli bir şey bu zaten. Hani her alanda olduğu için böyle hani Hristiyanlık gibi işte kilise gittik, pazar günü çıktık, bitti gibi bir şeyimiz yok bizim. Çocuk o yüzden okul öncesi, sonrası eğitimi gibi bir şeydir söz konusu değildir. Burada bizim hassasiyetlerimiz doğrultusunda çocuk hani ezberi de yapıyor, Kur'an'ını da okuyor. Arkadaşlarıyla çok güzel oyunlar da oynuyor.] (Gamze, P)

Children are both surrounded by religious adults and participating in religious practices at one level. This sub theme, religion in daily lives of children is divided into two categories: religion as a *normality of life* and *religious practice of children*. According to participants, children do not know of the concept of religion completely, but it is their normality. Religious rules and practices, the concept of God and the prophet, modest dressing, etc., anything related to religion are parts of the natural flow of their lives. Religion as a normality of life indicates the ordinariness of religious life for children. This inference can be drawn from religious adults around children and religion-related activities. Firstly, children see adults who pray, follow religious rules in both their home environments and Quran courses Parents indicate that it is their normal lives:

He is very young right now, so he does not know what he is going through as a religion. For my son, prayer and the Quran are normal situations of life. Sometimes he recites prayer for food, something he learned from school. For example, she once asked me why I wear a headscarf outside but not at home, and I told her that I only want your father and you to see my hair.

[O şu an çok küçük o yüzden yaşadıklarını din olarak bilmiyor oğlum için hayatın normali, namaz, Kur'an onun için hayatın olağan durumları. Yemek duası falan okuyor bazen okuldan öğrendiği. Mesela bir kere bana neden dışarıda başörtüsü taktığımı ama evde takmadığımı sormuştu ben de ona saçlarımı sadece babanın ve senin görmeni istiyorum demiştim.] (Nazlı, P)

Let's talk about my son, a four-year-old boy. What he sees is a hijab-wearing mother, a hijab-wearing sister. You know, the one who pays attention to her hijab when going

out and organizing her clothing accordingly. He and his father occasionally go to the mosque on the weekends. Because prayer is already performed five times a day. He also has a small prayer rug. If he wants. Of course, the little four-year-old does not pray, he climbs on our shoulders, jumps and jumps. He would ruin our prayer. Apart from that, he plays next to me while I read the holy Quran. He sees them. But for him, this is not religion, this is not something you should do. That's our family life anyway. He sees these because we have a normal life. If he wants, he can say the prayers he learned here. There is no such thing as forcing a four-year-old child. He says whatever he wants. We applaud too, we like it. We are excited about Ramadan now. We are preparing our home for Ramadan. That's it.

[Oğlumdan bahsedelim, dört yaşındaki bir çocuk. Onun gördüğü tesettürlü bir anne, tesettürlü bir abla. Hani dışarı giderken tesettürüne dikkat eden, ona göre giyimini düzenleyen. Hafta sonu babasıyla arada bir camiye gidiyorlar. Günde zaten devamlı beş vakit namaz kılındığı için. Kendisinin de küçük bir seccadesi var. Canı isterse. Tabii ki dört yaşındaki küçücük namaz kılmaz, omuzumuza çıkar, atlar, zıplar. Namazımızı perişan ederdi. Onun dışında beni Kur'an-ı Kerim okurken o yanımda oynuyor. Onları görüyor. Ama onun için hani bu din, bu yapman gereken bir şey değil. O bizim zaten aile yaşantımız. Normal bir yaşantımız olduğu için bunları görüyor. İşte ufak tefek burada öğrendiği duaları canı isterse söylüyor. Dört yaşındaki çocuğu zorlamak diye bir şey olamaz. Canı isterse söylüyor. Biz de alkışlıyoruz, hoşumuza gidiyor. Biz de şimdi Ramazan heyecanımız var. Evimizi Ramazan'a hazırlıyoruz. O yani.] (İrem, P)

Since my family and my close circle are like this, it doesn't seem absurd to us, you know, these things are in the flow, his normality too. It doesn't seem absurd because he would come and pray when he saw me praying when he was 2 years old. This child doesn't know what prayer is, he still can't think about why my mother is doing these strange movements. He does not know why we pray or to whom we pray. But over time, the pieces will fall into place.

[Ailem ve yakın çevrem de bu tarz olduğumuz için bize absürt gelmiyor, hani bunlar akışında, onun da normali. Absürt gelmiyor çünkü 2 yaşındayken de beni namaz kılarken gördüğünde gelip namaz kılıyordu. Bu çocuk bilmiyor namaz nedir, annem niye bu garip hareketleri yapıyor diye düşünemiyor hala düşünemiyor. Namaz neden kılıyoruz, kime kılıyoruz bilmiyor. Ama zamanla taşlar yerine oturacaktır.] (Leyla, P)

Some of the instructors also indicate that they pray in class so that they do not leave class, and children can see them while praying:

Since I am already here in the afternoon, I pray twice here. At least when I pray, I pray with them. Because I don't want to be separated from them. Let them see me too. When I leave them, the classroom order is already disrupted. At least I do it so that they can see it when I pray. Let the children feel it, let them see it. Now, it is something that most of them already see at home.

[Ben burada zaten öğlenci olduğum için iki kere namaz kılıyorum burada. En azından ben namaz kılarken yanlarında da kılıyorum mesela. Çünkü yanlarının ayrılmayı istemiyorum. Hem beni de görsünler. Yanlarından ayrıldığı zaman zaten sınıf düzeni bozuluyor. En azından namaz kılarken de böyle bir görsünler diye yapıyorum. Çocuklar hissetsinler, görsünler. Şimdi evde de gördükleri bir şey zaten çoğunluğunun.] (Elif, I)

I am here with the children, for example, since I am here in the afternoon, I perform the noon prayer and my afternoon prayer. They witness this, and even if I do not call them, they come and line up next to me and perform their prayers. They say, "Teacher,

let's pray with you too." I believe that both this example and transferring it to them will be useful. It may not work, but we are not the authority that can guarantee this, that is the Lord's job. Our job is to explain, teach, set an example, the rest is the act of God.

[Ben burada çocukların yanında mesela ben öğlenci olduğum için öğlen namazını kılıyorum, ikinci namazımı kılıyorum onlar buna şahitlik ediyorlar hatta ben çağırmasam bile gelip yanıma ip gibi dizilip namazlarını kılıyorlar, öğretmenim biz de seninle namaz kılalım diyorlar. Ben hem bu örneğin hem de onlara aktarmanın işe yarayacağına inanıyorum. Yaramaya da bilir ama biz bunun garantisini verecek merci değiliz, orası rabbimin işi. Bizim işimiz anlatmak, öğretmek, örnek olmak gerisi takdir-i ilahi.] (Deniz, I)

Secondly, besides religious adults around them children are also participating in religion-related activities like religious feasts or holy nights and mosque visits or watching religious TV shows or habits. Parents have different approaches towards some religious concepts like holy nights. Some of them give importance to these nights, doing something special to these nights with their children while others indicate that they are only about tradition rather than religion. Parents mention their religious rituals with their children:

For example, I'm very tired. I say, who wants to earn good deeds and make their mother happy by taking these shoes from outside to inside? For example, they grab shoes. They say, mother, I have earned good deeds.

[Mesela şöyle, çok yorgunum. Bu ayakkabıları dışarıdan içeriye alıp kim sevap kazanmak ister annesini mutlu etmek ister diyorum. Ayakkabıları kapıyorlar mesela. Diyorlar ki, anne sevap kazandım.] (Filiz, P)

Yes, I would like us to sit together on holy nights, read something, and pray. As a family, you know, these types of things. Or if we are bringing help to someone, I try to take my children with me so they can see it. I also try to do this socially. But other than that, as a family, you know, if our father is at home, we can pray in the congregation. We can sit at the iftar table together.

[Evet, isterim ki hani kandillerde hep birlikte oturalım, bir şeyler okuyalım, namaz kılalım. Ailecek hani bu tip şeyler. Ya da birine yardım götürüyorsak hani çocuklarımı da götürmeye çalışırım görsünler diye. Hem bunu toplumsal olarak da yapmaya çalışıyorum. Ama onun haricinde hani ailecek, eğer babamız evdeyse cemaatle namaz kılabiliriz. Birlikte iftar sofrasında oturabiliyoruz.] (Karsu, P)

Ramadan, holiday visits, home decoration during Ramadan. Frankly, we do not do much with the holy nights since they came out later, they are traditions rather than religion.

[Ramazan, bayram ziyaretleri, Ramazan da ev süsleme. Açıkçası kandiller sonradan çıktığı için yani dinden ziyade gelenek onlarda çok bir şey yapmıyoruz.] (Helin, P)

I'm trying to explain a little bit about the meaning of the holy nights. Well, most recently we talked about too much at the thing. We talked a lot on the night of Miraj. You know, we are very impressed by the current situation in Jerusalem. I tried to explain a little bit about Miraç, Jerusalem, those places etc. We're trying to chat. We are trying to listen to Islamic ceremony. We try to go to the mosque if we can, if our father can come early.

[Kandillerin anlamına biraz anlatmaya çalışıyorum. İşte en son şeyde çok fazla konuşmuştuk. Miraç gecesinde çok konuşmuştuk. Hani şu anki Kudüs durumlarından dolayı da çok etkileniyoruz. Biraz Miraç, Miraç'ı, Kudüs'ü, oraları falan anlatmaya çalışmışım. Sohbet etmeye çalışıyoruz. Mevlit dinlemeye çalışıyoruz. Gidebiliyorsak babamız erken gelebiliyorsa camiye gitmeye çalışıyoruz.] (Olca, P)

These activities are not limited with families, children are part of them in Quran courses. Some special implementations like course ornamentation, gift exchange, or iftar for children (at noon) are done for special days like Ramadan, holy days, or religious festivals:

We attach great importance to these days, we organize holy days celebrations and, as I said, Ramadan events. The children are going to tarawih prayer with their families, we had iftar here. I don't like decorations much, but in other courses there are teachers who decorate during Ramadan, holy days. We celebrate holy days, explain their features and contents, say Salavat, for example. We made ashura on the day of Ashura, the kids don't like the taste very much, but we did a Noah's Ark activity and explained to the children why we put them in the ashura. There are people who give gifts during the holy days.

[Çok önemsiyoruz bu günleri, kandil kutlamaları, dediğim gibi ramazan etkinlikleri yapıyoruz. Çocuklar aileleri ile teravih namazına gidiyorlar, burada iftar yaptık. Ben çok süsleme sevmiyorum ama başka kurslarda Ramazan'da, kandillerde süsleyen öğretmenler oluyor. Kandil kutluyoruz, özelliklerini, içeriklerini anlatıyoruz, salavat getiriyoruz mesela. Aşure gününde aşure yaptık çocuklar pek sevmiyor tadını ama Nuh'un gemisi etkinliği yaptık, çocuklara anlattık neden onları aşurenin içine koyduğumuzu. Kandillerde hediyeler oluyor.] (Azra, I)

In other words, we dress our children nicely, prepare a billboard, and take photos in front of them. We have a holy day of bagel culture. For example, we either make it ourselves or send it to children. We try to make them feel that that day is special. We either go to the mosque or do something in the mosque. We tell you that today is special. That's how they spend it.

[Yani çocuklarımızı güzel giydiriyoruz, pano hazırlıyoruz, önüne fotoğraf çekiniyoruz. Kandil simidi kültürümüz var. Mesela ondan ya kendimiz yapıyoruz ya çocuklara gönderiyoruz. O günün özel olduğunu hissettirmeye çalışıyoruz onlara. Ya camiye gidiyoruz, camide bir şeyler yapıyoruz işte. Bugünün özel olduğunu anlatıyoruz. Öyle geçiriyorlar.] (Çağla, I)

We do children's iftars, children love it very much, there are Ashura days, we celebrate the holy days, and sometimes we exchange gifts during these days. During Ramadan, we decorate the classroom and hang Ramadan boards. There is a meal prayer, actually it is like the prayers in other preschools, but we have a part in Arabic, when the children memorize it, they want to recite the prayer.

[Çocuk iftarları yapıyoruz çocuklar çok seviyor bunu, aşure günleri oluyor, kandilleşiyoruz, bazen kandillerde hediyeleşiyoruz. Ramazan'da sınıfı süslüyoruz, ramazan panoları asıyoruz. Yemek duası var, aslında diğer anaokullarında edilen dualar gibi ama bizde Arapça olan bir kısım var, çocuklar ezberleyince duayı okumak isteyen çocuklar oluyor.] (Ceren, I)

Alongside the religious individuals and activities, TV channels that children are allowed to watch or books read to them are also related to religion. It cannot be said

that children only mingle with religious TV shows or books, but they are part of their lives. For example, both TRT Kid and TRT Religious Kid were uttered by parents as suitable choices against some inconvenient content:

TRT Kid a little more... There is also Religious Kid, they have very good cartoons. If you look at the cartoons there, you will see that the cartoons are not entirely religious. You know, the child says the Bismillah and goes about everything, but he/she does it very entertainingly. For example, there was a cartoon about a theater, I liked it very much. It actually talks about the importance of theater in our lives. Here they go to a village and give theater to the village people. But while giving theater, there is also religious content in it. Here he/she says the Bismillah, says God, says this, says that. This is a blending. That's why we prefer those contents.

[TRT Çocuk'u biraz daha... Diyanet Çocuk da var, çok güzel çizgi filmleri var. Orada da çizgi filmlerine bakarsanız aslında çizgi filmlerin tamamen dini olarak yürümediğini görürsünüz. Hani çocuk besmele çekiyor, şeye gidiyor ama onu çok eğlenceli yapıyor. Mesela bir tiyatro ile ilgili bir çizgi filmi vardı, çok hoşuma gitti. Tiyatronun aslında hayatımızdaki öneminden bahsediyor. İşte bir köye gidiyorlar, köy halkına tiyatro veriyorlar. Ama tiyatro verirken orada dini içerikler de var içerisinde. İşte besmele çekiyor, ya Hak diyor, şunu diyor, bunu diyor. Ya bu bir harmanlamadır. Onun için o içerikleri tercih ediyoruz.] (İrem, P)

It also happens in the content of cartoons, unfortunately, our channels are limited anyway, there are TRT Kid, TRT Religious Kid, Cartoon Network, Minika Kid. For example, they are not suitable for me compared to TRT Kid.

Researcher: What makes TRT suitable for you?

Why is it appropriate? For example, they give examples of good morals, they give examples of morality, they help each other. For example, while they are playing a game together, someone falls down and they feel sorry for them. I think they convey such emotional transitions well. Regarding TRT Religious Kid, for example, they make my prophet stories look more cartoonish and simplify them to make them more suitable for children. It's beautiful in that sense, but she doesn't watch it much, mostly TRT Kids.

[Çizgi filmlerin içeriğinde de oluyor maalesef zaten kanallarımız sınırlı, işte TRT Çocuk, TRT Diyanet Çocuk, Cartoon Network, Minika Çocuk var. Mesela onlar TRT Çocuk'a kıyasla bana uygun değil.

Araştırmacı: TRT'yi sizin için uygun yapan nedir?

Neden uygun, mesela güzel ahlaktan örnek veriyorlar, ahlaktan örnek veriyorlar, birbirlerine yardımcı oluyorlar. İşte beraber oyun oynarken biri düşüyor ona üzülüyorlar mesela hani bu tarz duygu geçişlerini güzel verdiklerini düşünüyorum. TRT Diyanet Çocuk ile ilgili de mesela peygamber kıssalarını daha karikatürize gösteriyorlar, daha böyle çocuklara uygun hale sadeleşerek getiriyorlar. O anlamda güzel ama onu çok izlemiyor daha çok TRT Çocuk.] (Leyla, P)

Of course, because TRT Kid is bingo for every parent. In other words, you can watch it without paying much attention to the content, there is little chance of encountering anything inappropriate, and you do not have to worry about the next content. For example, you have to be careful while watching Disney because sometimes they have good content, but the next time there may be inappropriate things, LGBT or sexuality may come across, I have also seen people kissing in children's content.

[Tabi ki çünkü TRT Çocuk her ebeveyn için bingo. Yani içerik olarak çok dikkat etmeden izletebiliyorsun, uygunsuz bir şeyle karşılaşma ihtimali pek yok, bir sonraki içerik için endişelenmen gerekmiyor. Mesela bir Disney izlerken dikkatli olmak zorundansın çünkü bazen güzel içerikleri oluyor ama bir sonrakinde uygunsuz şeyler

olabilir, LGBT ya da cinsellikle karşılaşabilir ben de görmüştüm öpüşen kişiler bir çocuk içeriğinde.] (Jale, P)

As can be seen, some TV channels like TRT Kid and KRT Religious Kid are accepted as proper by parents in terms of having contents related to religion, values, and culture. The study of about TRT Kid demonstrates that especially local productions of TRT Kids emphasize some values like love, helping each other, and solidarity. But programs that focus more on these contents are not effective enough, while programs that children watch more often do not include these issues enough (Yener et al., 2021). On the other hand, a study about these contents indicates that cartoon characters can be important role models for young children and these kinds of programs can affect children's behaviors and TRT Kids offers contents that can be beneficial for children's social and cognitive development (Demiral et al., 2016). Çinemre (2021) also state that TRT Religious Kid provide contents that might be beneficial for children's religious development in different aspects and developing positive perception for Allah. In short, children are mingling with religion and values not only in their home and course environment but also through the content they watch and read. Whether seeing praying adults or participating in religious activities, religion is part of children's lives and affects their actions. Even if they do not completely understand the concept, they know religious concepts. They follow religious rules in their own way. Religious practices of children can be understood by two topics: awareness of children and worship of children. According to both parents and instructors, children are aware of God, and other religious concepts, they are imagining some abstract religious concepts like angels and God at some point. Participants give some examples that demonstrate children's awareness:

Let me give an example. The other day, I was sitting with my legs crossed. There was no one in the hall, only me. "Mother," he said, "you can't cross your legs in front of God." He said, "Put your legs down." In other words, actually, the children are aware that God sees us everywhere. We have some things that the child doesn't understand, but I never said anything like that to him. God sees us in front of God, you cannot sit like this. For example, he interpreted this himself. Actually, it's not like the child can't make sense of it.

[Şöyle bir örnek vereyim. Geçen ben bacak bacak üstüne attım oturuyorum. Kimse yok salonda, sadece ben varım. Anne dedi Allah'ın karşısında bacak bacak üstüne atılmaz dedi indir bacağı. Yani farkında çocuk aslında her yerde bizi görüyor gibi. Çocuk anlamaz şeyimiz var biraz ama hani ben ona hiçbir zaman öyle bir şey söylemedim. Allah'ın karşısında Allah bizi görüyor, böyle oturamıyorsun. Öyle bunu kendisi yorumladı bunu mesela. Hani anlamlandıramıyor değil çocuk aslında.] (Gamze, P)

He knows that the language of the Quran is Arabic, and since my field is also exegesis, I can intervene when he does not understand. For example, it seemed very interesting to me, I was also dreaming like this when I was little, and one day my son said to me that "I compare God to something, I liken him to a penguin." He asks about angels, my son was dreaming of things with wings, they had notebooks in their hands, it actually makes sense.

[Kur'an dilinin Arapça dilinin Arapça olduğunu biliyor, alanımda tefsir olduğu için de anlamadığımda devreye girebiliyorum. Mesela bana çok ilginç geldi yani ben de küçükken böyle hayal kuruyordum, bir gün oğlum bana Allah'ı bir şeye benzetiyorum, penguene benzetiyorum diyor. Melekleri soruyor, oğlum kanatları olan şeyler hayal ediyormuş, ellerinde not defterleri varmış, aslında mantıklı.] (Helin, P)

They can make sense of it like this, for example, I am explaining the Bismillah. Bismillah opens every door and is the key to every good thing. We explain it just in case we say it, it makes things easier for us in every task we have difficulty in. We practice it for days; we do the activity. Then let me give you this example, maybe it will help you, while we were playing in a garden, teachers were coming from the other side were using our garden to pass, there she put her key in the door and tried to open it, it did not open, we were there with the students, our students witnessed this and came immediately, for example, they said to the teacher there "If you say Bismillah, it will open, they laughed too." It really opened with Bismillah. They were so surprised that, of course, we always see the help of our Lord, and they responded very well with a reaction like "Wow, that's right, my teacher."

[Şöyle anlamlandırabiliyorlar, mesela besmeleyi anlatıyorum. Besmele her kapıyı açar her hayrın anahtarıdır, zorlandığımız her işte bir kolaylık sağlar bize söylersek diye anlatıyoruz, günlerce işliyoruz, etkinliği yapıyoruz. Sonra bu örneği vereyim size belki yardımcı olur bir bahçede oynuyoruz orada karşı taraftan gelen öğretmenler bahçemizi kullanıyor geçmek için, orada anahtarını soktu kapıya açmaya çalışıyor, açılmadı biz öğrencilerle oradayız, öğrencilerimiz şahit oldu buna hemen geldi mesela besmele çekersen açılır dedi oradaki öğretmene onlar da güldüler sonra gerçekten de açıldı besmeleyle. O kadar şaşırdılar ki, Rabbim de tabi her zaman Rabbimin yardımını görüyoruz da onlar da vay bak doğruymuş öğretmenim falan gibi bir tepkiyle çok güzel karşıladılar.] (Deniz, I)

Of course, children can say absurd things, they are children after all. They will make God abstract anyway. Every one of us, every believer, has embodied God in his/her mind at some point, because he/she passes through there, there is nothing wrong with it. Sometimes children, for example, can confuse God and the prophet, this is very natural. What's important to me there? The most important point is for the child to know that this entire universe and this order have a creator, that is where everything comes from.

[Tabi ki çocuklar absürt şeyler söyleyebilirler, çocuklar neticede. Bunu soyutlaştıracaklardır da zaten Allah'ı. Hangimiz, inanan herkes bir dönem zihninde tanrıyı somutlaştırmıştır çünkü oradan geçiyor bunda bir şey yok, beis yok. Bazen Allah'la peygamberi karıştırabiliyorlar mesela çocuklar bu çok doğal yani. Benim için orada önemli olan ne? Tüm bu kâinatın, bu düzenin bir yaratıcısı olduğunu çocuğun bilmesi en önemli nokta orası, her şeyin çıkışı orası.] (Buse, I)

Alongside the awareness of religion, children are worshiping. It is not the same with adults but whether consciously or playfully they are praying, fasting, memorizing surahs etc. Participants mention children's worship according to their level. Some parents indicate that children participate in parents' praying:

He knows that we pray five times a day. In the past, I would say, "When you perform a complete prayer, he would say, "Oh, I forgot." For example, he only lies down once and stands up right now. But it is important for me that he spreads out his prayer rug, goes to it at least once a day, and prays, he says "I prayed once." Maybe next year it will be two rakats, two times. He's imitating us now. At the same time, he knows that it is our duty. But since he is a child, he is aware that it is a more flexible task.

[Günde işte bizim beş vakit namaz kıldığımızı biliyor. Eskiden şey derdim ben tam bir namazını kıldım mı a unuttum derdi. Yani bir kere yatıp kalkıyor mesela şu anda. Ama o seccadesini serip günde en azından bir kere de olsa bir seccadeye gitmesi, bir namaz, bir namazımı kıldım demesi benim için önemli. Seneye belki bu iki rekât olacaktır, iki vakit olacaktır. Şu an bizi taklit ediyor. Aynı zamanda da görevimiz olduğunu da biliyor. Ama çocuk olduğu için daha esnek bir görev olduğunun farkında.] (Olcay, P)

Well, as I said at the beginning, my goal here is to make people like it anyway. For example, if she comes when I'm praying and I say, "Come on, girl, let's pray." Or she doesn't have to do the same things. Sometimes she lies down, does not get up for prostration for a while, and puts her feet up. Well, these are enough for me. Or she doesn't want to come, she doesn't want to spoil the game, that's why she plays. I have no such compulsion. Just let her see. Let her see us, her brother or sister. Because I think she will take an example. It's like this right now. It goes like this. Or my little daughter, for example, is 4-6 years old. Well, my oldest daughter, for example, was memorizing. Come on, we are memorizing the current question or something. For example, she was memorizing in a handstand position with her feet up. Or running around. Now if anyone else sees this. Is this how the verse is done and read? But it's a child. For me it is.

[Şöyle, en başında da dediğim gibi hani ben buradaki amacım da zaten sevsin. Mesela ben namaz kılarken, hadi kızım gel kılalım dediğimde geliyorsa ne ala. Ya da işte aynı şeyleri yapıp yapmak zorunda değil. Bazen yatıyor, secdeye bayağı bir kalkmıyor, ayaklarını diyor. Hani bunlar benim için yeter. Ya da gelmek istemiyor, oyunu bozmak istemiyor, o yüzden oynuyor. Böyle bir zorlamam yok. Sadece görsün. Bizleri görsün, abisini, ablasını ya da. Çünkü örnek alacağını düşünüyorum. Şu an böyle. Böyle gidiyor. Ya da benim küçük kızım mesela 4-6 yaşta. Şey, büyük kızım mesela ezber yapıyordu. Hadi mevcut soruyla falan ezber yapıyoruz ya. Mesela ayaklar tepede, işte amuda kalkar biçimde ezber yapıyordu. Ya da koşturarak. Şimdi başka biri görse bunu. Ya ayet işte böyle yapılır mı, okunur mu? Ama çocuk yani. Benim için öyle.] (Karsu, P)

Alongside the awareness of religion, children are worshiping. It is not the same with adults but whether consciously or playfully they are praying, fasting, memorizing surahs etc. Participants mention children's worship according to their level:

For example, while I am reading the Quran, my daughter says, "Oh, these are the letters I know." She comes to me and tries to read with me. I really like this. Or she comes to me while I am praying and tries to do the same. When I pray or mention the name of Allah, they have very serious questions about Allah.

[Şöyle, ben Kur'an okurken mesela kızım, aa bunlar benim bildiğim harfler diyor. Yanıma geliyor, o da benimle okumaya çalışıyor. Bu benim çok hoşuma gidiyor. Ya da ben namaz kılarken yanıma geliyor ve aynı şekilde yapmaya gayret ediyor. Ben dua ettiğimde veya işte yani Allah'ın adını zikrettiğimde veya Allah'a dair çok ciddi soruları var.] (Mine, P)

There is prayer, for example, we will decorate for Ramadan now, inshallah, apart from that, we fast during the holy days with my husband and the children also fast in their own way, or my oldest son wants to fast all day. In this way, we include them, but in a way that makes them like them at a minimum level and does not tire them out. For example, if I tell the beads at a certain time, they come and tell the beads, too, by imitating certain things.

[Namaz var, Ramazan için mesela şu an süsleme yapıcaz inşallah, onun da dışında kandillerde oruç tutuyoruz eşimle çocuklar da kendilerince tekne orucu tutuyorlar ya da tam gün tutmak istiyor büyük oğlum. Bu şekilde onları da dahil ediyoruz ama minimum düzeyde sevdirecek, yormayacak şekilde. Ha tesbih çekme mesela, belli bir zaman diliminde ben tesbih çekiyorsam geliyorlar onlar da tesbih çekiyorlar taklit yoluyla bazı şeyleri.] (Leyla, P)

Although it is very rare, he comes to me while I am praying and tries to pray. For example, he says he wants to fast, he gets up for sahur, but when he wakes up in the morning, he eats, then he says he is fasting again, he eats at noon. We pray for food, he recites Bismillah before eating, etc.

[Çok nadir olmakla beraber namaz kılariken yanıma gelir, kılmaya çalışır. Mesela oruç tutayım diyor, sahura kalkıyor ama sabah kalkınca yemek yiyor sonra bir daha oruçluyum diyor öğlen yiyor bir daha. Yemek duası yaparız, besmele çeker yemekten önce falan.] (Jale, P)

Some instructors state that children are learning some religious concepts and implementing them. The curriculum of Quran courses includes religious duties, five pillars of Islam, and important religious places, so children are thoughts religious practices and participating them:

For example, the models you saw today were related to the subject of our qibla. We have a topic in the curriculum called 'Where is our Qibla?', children are learning about the Kaaba, and for this they made a model of the Kaaba. When it comes to praying in the curriculum, we pray one rakat with the children, for example, but other than that, we do not have a routine prayer. Children sometimes tell us that they go to Friday prayer or tarawih prayer with their parents. They go to Tarawih once or so, of course, because it is long, the children cannot go there often.

[Mesela bugün gördüğünüz maketler kiblemizi konusuyla alakalıydı. Müfredatta 'Kiblemiz neresi?' diye bir konumuz var, çocuklar Kâbe'yi öğreniyor, bunun için de Kâbe maketi yaptılar. Müfredatta namaz konusuna gelince de bir rekât namaz kılıyoruz mesela çocuklarla ama onun dışında rutin bir namaz kılma durumumuz yok, çocuklar bazen ebeveynleriyle Cuma namazına ya da teravihe gittiklerini anlatıyorlar. Teravihe bir kere falan gidiyorlar tabi uzun olduğu için çocuklar sık sık gidemezler.] (Ceren, I)

We do iftars for children during Ramadan and they love having something special for them. There is a topic about prayer in the curriculum, so we perform ablution with a song in the classroom and then pray with their own prayer rug. They made a prayer rug for themselves with their parents, and they really enjoyed praying with it. When I say prayer, we pray one rakat on Fridays, reciting short prayers with the children and having fun and playing with them as I mentioned above. After the prayer, we have a Friday surprise, a child brings something from his/her home and the children have fun. The aim here, of course, is to increase children's awareness of prayer and fasting [Ramazan'da çocuk iftarları yapıyoruz çok seviyorlar kendilerine özel bir şey olmasını. Müfredatta namaz konusu var, biz de sınıfta şarkıyla abdest alıp sonra da

kendilerine ait seccadeyle namaz kılıyoruz. Ebeveynleriyle birlikte kendilerine seccade yaptılar çok hoşlarına gidiyor onunla namaz kılmak. Namaz dediğim de cuma günleri bir rekât namaz kılıyoruz çocuklarla kısa dua okuyarak bu bahsettiğim şekilde oyunla, eğlenerek. Namaz sonrasında da Cuma sürprizimiz var bir çocuk evinden bir şey getiriyor çocuklar eğleniyor. Burada amaç çocukların namaza oruca dair farkındalıklarını geliştirmesini tabii ki.] (Azra, I)

This subtheme revealed that in both home and course settings, religion takes place in children's lives as a normality of life and children participate in religious practices at some point even if they are not very conscious. Individuals around them are religious in their homes and Quran courses. Thus, in children's immediate environments, their microsystems in Bronfenbrenner's words include mostly religious and conservative components. That is also highlighted by Hurst in his study about requests of parents and community members for Catholic and Muslim schools in England. He emphasizes that religion-centered education (faith-based education in his term) provides a seamless transition from home to education settings. Children who are provided with a religious environment in their homes become part of a similar environment in their educational settings. Religious belief, morality, practice, and education are transferred to children through the unity between home and schools. This desire of parents and religious people is one of the reasons for the request for religion-centered education for children (Hurst, 2000). Religion is not a separate thing in their lives, since they are familiar with it in terms of seeing, experiencing, and implementing it since they are very young. They are learning religious values according to their age level, and they are seeing religious individuals who are practicing regularly and sometimes participating in these practices. There are religion-related traditions that many children are involved in. Children have experienced religious principles and practices since they are young. Almost all participants mentioned the importance of the early years to teach religion to children. The next subtheme will demonstrate their notions about this.

4.3.3. Sub-theme 3: The Importance of Early Years

As mentioned since the beginning, this religion-centered education is provided at a very early age. Both parents and instructors mention the importance of early years for later years. This sub theme is explained in two categories: *early years for future personality* and *early years for better learning*.

It is revealed above that parents and instructors want to develop a love for religion and a habit of developing its rules and early years are important for this purpose. *Early years for future personality* are about shaping children and ingraining religion in children's brain to understand later. Participants indicate the necessity of RE in early years to lay foundation for children's character so that religion became part of their identity:

It definitely happens. Because very important names in the field of RE, that is, education under today's conditions, can say the exact opposite, I speak all this knowingly. But for example, Imam Ghazali emphasizes the importance of 4-6 years of age, especially 6 years of age, and says that 90% of the personality stage is completed, and therefore he also says the exact month. In other words, it says that the month in which the child's education should begin is 72 months. He says it should start in 72 months. Therefore, as a theologian, I attach great importance to the fact that the child receives this education in an environment where she can socialize and have the right examples in front of her, at a time when the child is just starting to speak at the age of 3, leaving the infancy stage and passing into the childhood stage. As someone who took it after primary school, I myself. So, should it have started earlier? It should have definitely started.

[Kesinlikle olur. Çünkü şöyle, din eğitimi sahasında ismi geçen çok önemli isimler, yani bugün koşullarındaki eğitim bunun tam aksini söyleyebilir, bütün bunları bilerek konuşuyorum. Ama mesela İmam Gazali, 4-6 yaşta, özellikle 6 yaşında önemini de vurgulayarak, kişiliğin %90 evresinin tamamlandığını söylüyor ve dolayısıyla tam ayını da söylüyor. Yani çocukta eğitimin başlaması gereken ay 72 aydır diyor. 72 ayda başlaması gerekiyor diyor. Dolayısıyla yani çocuğun yeni yeni konuşmayı 3 yaştan çıkıp, bebeklik evresinden çıkıp, çocukluk evresine geçtiği bir zaman diliminde önünde doğru örneklerin olduğu hem de sosyalleştiği bir ortamda bu eğitimi almasını ben bir ilahiyatçı olarak çok önemsiyorum. Kendim ilkokuldan sonrasında alan biri olarak. Yani daha erken başlamalı mıydı? Kesinlikle başlamalıydı.] (Mine, P)

I read it in a book by an expert. He already said that primary RE and personality education were completed by the age of 6. So is RE. I think so because I think that people's RE and personality education is up to the age of 6, after which they direct themselves. So, I think it's appropriate.

[Ben bir kitapta okumuştum bir uzmanın kitabında. Zaten ilk dini eğitimin, kişilik eğitiminin de 6 yaşına kadar tamamlandığını söylüyordu. Dini eğitim de öyle. İnsanların dini eğitimi, kişilik eğitiminde 6 yaşına kadar olduğunu ondan sonra artık kendisini yönlendirdiği düşündüğüm için öyle düşünüyorum. Yani uygun olduğunu düşünüyorum.] (Çağla, I)

As you know, early childhood education is very important for an individual's development. During this period, solid foundations can be laid by providing education appropriate to the child and his/her age, values education and religious information. The child knows his/her religion and the Quran, learns it more easily in the future, and uses these values not only in his/her language but also in his/her daily life.

[Erken çocukluk eğitimi bir bireyin gelişimi için çok önemli bildiğiniz üzere. Bu dönemde çocuğa ve yaşına uygun bir şekilde eğitim verilerek değerler eğitimi ve dini bilgiler verilerek sağlam temeller atılabilir. Çocuk dinini ve Kur'an'ı tanır hem ilerde daha kolay öğrenir hem de bu değerler sadece dilinde olmaz, günlük yaşamında da kullanır.] (Azra, I)

We think it keeps their minds clean, that is, instead of filling their minds with different things, for example, children are very open to memorization. In other words, we believe that instead of children memorizing different things, it keeps their minds clean, after all, the Holy Quran.

[Zihinlerini temiz tuttuğunu düşünüyoruz, yani zihinleri farklı şeylerle dolacağına mesela çocuklar ezberlemeye çok açıklar. Yani çocuklar farklı farklı şeyler ezberleyeceklerine bunların zihinlerini temiz tuttuğunu, Kur'an-ı Kerim sonuçta, inanıyoruz.] (Deniz, I)

Participants also highlight their early religious experiences they never forget, and they provide similar, unforgettable experiences for children:

So, I honestly think they're soaked. Because, for example, when we were little, my grandfather used to lead us in prayer. Related to prayers, for example, I never forget them when I was little. I remember something about my grandfather. And when I grew up and I was about to make a mistake, I would remember those days. So, I think it's something for kids out right now. So, I think these days form their base. Being at a young age. That it truly fills their bones. I think that when the day comes, maybe she can find your way with a memory from here.

[Yani ben açıkçası iliklerinin dolduğunu olduğunu düşünüyorum. Çünkü ben örneğin, biz küçükken dedem bize yanında namaz kıldırırdı. Namazla ilgili mesela ben onları hiç unutmuyorum küçüktüm. Dedemle ilgili bir şeyleri hatırlıyorum. Ve büyüdüğünde bir yanlış yapmaya kalktığımda o günler mesela aklıma gelirdi, hatırlardım. O yüzden şu anda çocuklar için bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorum. Yani bu günlerin onların tabanlarını oluşturduğunu düşünüyorum. Küçük yaşta olmasının. Onların hakikaten iliklerini doldurduğunu. Gün geldiğinde buradan bir anıyla belki yolunu bulabileceğini düşünüyorum.] (Olca, P)

I think the age of full maturity is the age of understanding. I think it will be much more difficult to give these in the next primary school period, after the age of 6-7. Because the child learns to read and write, has other activities, has homework, then the mind is fuller. But I think that at this age, a much faster and longer-term education is provided by mixing the love of play and faith. Because I don't know if you are like that either, but I cannot forget any of the education I received between these ages. I think I acquired the love of God that I gained through memorizing prayers at this age.

[Tam olgunluk yaşı bence, tam böyle kavrama yaşları. Bundan sonraki, 6-7 yaştan sonraki ilkokul sürecinde bunları vermek çok daha sıkıntı olacağını düşünüyorum. Çünkü çocuk okuma yazma öğreniyor, başka aktiviteleri oluyor, ödevleri oluyor o zaman zihin daha dolu. Ama bu yaşlarda tamamen oyun ve iman sevgisini karıştırarak çok daha hızlı ve uzun soluklu bir eğitim verildiğini düşünüyorum. Çünkü siz de öyle misiniz bilmiyorum ama ben de bu yaşlar arasında aldığım hiçbir eğitimi unutamıyorum. Duaların ezberi işte kazandığım Allah sevgisini bu yaşta aldığımı düşünüyorum.] (Leyla, P)

According to some participants, they mention ingraining religion in children's brain to make them embrace it in the future:

I believe they will be able to adopt it more easily in the future. For example, very few people fast at the university now. Of course, it doesn't concern me, but a girl who fasted at school said, "Sister, I have been fasting since I was little, my family taught me such a habit when I was little." the PRA provides such training here for hours and months. What is important to me is that people in pre-school are compassionate, before the education they give, people here are very compassionate.

[İleride daha kolay benimseyebileceklerine inanıyorum. Mesela şimdi üniversitede çok az insan oruç tutuyor beni ilgilendirmez tabi ki ama bir kız okulda oruç tutan, abla ben küçüklükten beri tutuyorum, ailem bana küçüklükten kazandırdı böyle bir alışkanlığı dedi. Diyanet burada saatlerce, aylarca böyle bir eğitim veriyor. Beni için önemli olan okul öncesinde insanların merhametli olması verdikleri eğitimden önce, burada insanlar çok merhametli.] (Helin, P)

The aim of these courses is for children to love their religion. RE at an early age exists all over the world, both in the east and in the west. Children can receive church education at an early age. If RE is given early, children will learn and believe in religion more easily when they become adults. If they do not learn at an early age, they may have problems in terms of faith in the future and may even become non-believers (irreligious). People have their own preferences, of course, but if they learn early and have a solid foundation, they will live their lives within these limits. As our proverb says, a tree bends when it is young, the information learned later is not very useful. The sooner he learns, the better.

[Bu kursların amacı çocukların dinlerini sevmeleri. Erken yaşta din eğitimi dünyanın her yerinde var doğuda da var batıda da çocuklar erken yaşta kilise eğitimi alabiliyorlar. Din eğitimi erken olursa ileride çocuklar yetişkin olduklarında dini daha rahat öğrenirler, inanırlar. Eğer erken yaşta öğrenmezlerse ileride inanç noktasında sıkıntı yaşayabilirler, inançsız (dinsiz) bile olabilirler. İnsanların kendi tercihleri tabi ki ama erkenden öğrenirler ve sağlam temelleri olursa hayatlarını bu hudutta yaşarlar. Atasözümüzün dediği gibi ağaç yaşken eğilir, sonradan öğrenilen bilgiler çok faydalı değil. Ne kadar erken öğrenirse o kadar iyi.] (Ceren, I)

Irem and Leyla indicate that even if they cannot understand completely in that early age, religion related experiences can create awareness on religion for the future:

We go to the mosque, we pray, but while he is going to the mosque, he makes him run around in the mosque and his hodja gives him chocolate. He thinks that those mosques are a place for him to run around. It has to be this way. He will run there and then come to pray. Our expectation is not that he will question Allah too much right now or that he will be able to fully perceive the existence of Allah Almighty. He can't fully perceive it anyway, 4 yet. But what do I expect? People around you live this way. This is how normal life flows. Because that's how I live. My husband lives that way. This is our purpose in life. Since this is our purpose in life, I want it to be reinforced with this.

[Biz camiye gidiyoruz, namazımızı kılıyoruz ama o camiye giderken o camide onu koşturuyor, hocası ona çikolata veriyor. O zannediyor ki o camiler onun için koşturma alanı. Bu şekilde olması lazım zaten. Orada koşacak, daha sonra namaz kılmaya gelecek. Bizim beklentimiz şu anda Allah'ın çok fazla sorgulaması ya da Allah-u Teala'nın varlığını tam olarak algılayabilmesi değil. Zaten onu tam olarak algılayamaz, 4 henüz. Ama benim beklentim nedir? Etrafındaki insanlar bu şekilde yaşıyor. Normal yaşam bu şekilde akıyor. Çünkü ben öyle yaşıyorum. Eşim o şekilde yaşıyor. Bizim hayat gayemiz bu. Hayat gayemiz bu olduğu için bununla perçinleşmesi istiyorum.] (İrem, P)

I want these to be encoded in his brain right now, and hopefully in the future, he will notice them, be curious and investigate them. As people say, everything is what you get when you are young, and your brain is empty. I want it to be memorized at this age range, so that it does not have to be bothered with memorizing it in the future, and that it can learn its meaning and meaning later. He is learning Rabbiyesir, food prayer, Surah Ikhlas.

[Şu an beynine bunlar kodlansın, ileride inşallah kendisi bunları fark etsin, merak edip araştırsın istiyorum. Diyor ya insanlar her şey gençlikte, beyin boşken ne alıyorsan o. Şu yaş aralığında ezberinde olsun, ileride ezberlemekle uğraşmasın, daha sonra anlamını, manasını öğrenebilsin istiyorum. Rabbiyesir, yemek duası, İhlas suresi öğreniyor.] (Leyla, P)

Another important thing for participants to start RE at an early age is learning easier in the future. Early years for better learning are about young children's ability to learn easily and remember in future. For example, Gamze emphasizes the positive effect of religious training at an early age on the ability of reading Quran appropriately and future learning:

Since it is easier for the tongue to break down at an early age, it is good for those letters and verses to appear. Reading the Quran is also something for us, for example. It is also important to read the Quran beautifully, to have those letters appear correctly, etc. Since the language is more easily broken at a young age, when I grow up, I cannot pronounce the same letters, even if I want to now, but I can learn them more easily at that age. Well, the equivalent of that is reading the Quran, you know, many extra children ask about this, why am I reading this, etc. I have never seen such a question from my children. Because I also study at home. The child always sees the Quran in my hand. My mother reads the Quran, so I should too. You know, this is the normal of our lives, they grow up in this, maybe they would have a problem if they saw something at home and at another school. I also want to say this. A child who learns to read the Quran learns to read and write very easily. My children both learned to read and write on their own, without any intervention.

[Erken yaşta dilin kırılması daha rahat olduğu için o harflerin, mahreçlerin çıkması güzel Kur'an okumak bizim için o da bir şeydir mesela. Kur'an'ın güzel okuması, o harflerin tam çıkması falan o da önemlidir. Küçük yaşta dil daha rahat kırıldığı için hani büyüdüğümde ben aynı harfleri çıkaramıyorum mesela şimdi istesem de ama o yaşta daha rahat öğrenirim. E ondaki karşılığı da yani Kur'an okuyor hani çok ekstra çocuk bunun üstüne diyor ben bunu niye okuyorum falan hiç öyle bir sorgulamaya girdiğimde görmedim çocuklarımdan. Çünkü ben de evde okuyorum. Elimde Kur'an görüyor sürekli çocuk. O da annem Kur'an okuyor, ben de okuyayım. Hani bu bizim hayatımızın normali bunun içinde büyüyorlar, evde başka okulda bir şey görselerdi bir sıkıntı yaşayabilirlerdi belki. Ayrıca şunu da söylemek istiyorum. Kur'an okumayı öğrenen çocuk çok rahat okuma yazma öğreniyor. Benim çocuğum hiç müdahale etmeden ikisi de okuma yazmayı kendileri öğrendiler.] (Gamze, P)

Some participants also highlight that when children learn surahs. Even if children can forget surahs which they learn when they are young, they can easily remember them when they are trying to learn later:

There was a difference like this, for example, my eldest daughter is memorizing now, she is in the 30th fascicle. She had memorized it at this age (4-6 years old) and when she left, she started memorizing it very easily because the foundation of that had been laid. Maybe something like that could happen here too.

[Şöyle bir fark oldu mesela benim büyük kızım hafızlık yapıyor şu an 30. Cüzü bu yaşta (4-6 yaş) ezberlemişti ve gittiğinde çok kolay bir şekilde başladı hafızlığına çünkü o temeli atılmıştı. Belki burada da o tip bir şey olabilir.] (Karsu, P)

I also know from my own child. What they learn at this age, they learn more easily when they grow up. My child also learned these prayers at this age. Now in the seventh grade. He says, "Do I know this prayer, mom?" The teacher says he wanted us to memorize this prayer at school, so I read the prayer. He says, "Oh, I know that." I mean, there are parts that he forgets, but he definitely memorizes them more easily. It stays in your mind.

[Ben kendi çocuğumdan da biliyorum. Bu yaşta öğrendikleri de büyüdükleri zaman daha kolay öğreniyorlar. Benim çocuğum da bu yaşta öğrendi bu duaları. Şimdi yedinci sınıfta... Diyor ki şu duayı ben biliyor muyum anne? Öğretmen bu duayı işte okulda ezberlememizi istedi diyor, okuyorum duayı. A ben onu biliyorum diyor. Yani unutmuş kısımlar oluyor ama ucundan kıyısından mutlaka daha kolay ezberliyor. Aklında kalmış oluyor.] (Çağla, I)

To sum up, religion-centered child-raising includes appropriate RE, religion in the daily lives of children and importance of early years. This theme revealed that religion takes a very large part of children's lives through their families and Quran courses which are found suitable for children by participants due to appropriate curriculum and credibility of the PRA. They also want to create awareness and love for religion and emphasize the significance of early years for this aim. Participants want to influence children's character through religion-centered child-raising process in terms of their morality, national identity and religiosity. In the following part, the desire and purposes of participants for children with this process will be revealed.

4.4. Theme 4: Shaping the Character

All these religion-centered education, experiences, attitudes are provided for a purpose which is about shaping children's characters. Both parents and instructors state what kind of individuals they wanted the children to be at the end of this process. They are aware of that it is not only up to them but they believe it can be effective:

The children here are so young, it is difficult to be sure what kind of people they will be as they will have a long education period after us and will encounter a lot of people. Actually, I also wonder about the impact of these schools, but I want to have laid the foundations of individuals who are responsible, fair, and respectful of everything, living and non-living.

[Buradaki çocuklar çok küçük, bizden sonra da uzun bir eğitim dönemleri olacağı, bir sürü insanla karşılaşacakları için nasıl insanlar olacaklarından emin olmak zor. Aslında ben de merak ediyorum bu okulların etkisini ama sorumluluk sahibi, adaletli, canlı cansız her şeye saygılı bireylerin temellerini atmış olmayı istiyorum.] (Azra, I)

Childhood memories are very precious, but I think they are like seeds. We plant a seed for them to become Muslims with good morals. Of course, family is also very important, although the people who send their children here are conservative anyway, but the rest is also very important, but this place may not be enough.

[Çocukluk anıları çok kıymetli ama tohum gibi olduğunu düşünüyorum, güzel ahlaklı Müslümanlar olmaları için bir tohum atıyoruz. Tabi aile de çok önemli gerçi buraya çocuklarını gönderen insanlar zaten muhafazakârlar ama sonrası da çok önemli sadece burası çok yeterli olmayabilir.] (Helin, P)

Participants define some personality traits they want children to have; being a religious person, a good citizen of the country, and being beneficial to society, some universal values like morality, justice, respect for elders, and rightful share were frequently repeated. Therefore, this theme will explain religiosity, patriotism, and moral character expected from children by focusing on them in two categories: *religious and national identity*, and *moral development*.

4.4.1. Subtheme 1: Religious and National Identity

As mentioned above, religion is a significant part of the people who participated in this study, and they want the same thing for children. With this process, participants want their children to love their religion and country. Religious and national identity will be explained in two categories: *conscious Muslim* and *good citizen*.

The aim of the Quran courses is to raise consciously devout people, as mentioned above, providing proper RE to avoid incorrect beliefs, superstitions, etc. Participants want children to be conscious Muslim which means living according to the Quran, following daily religious duties, having love and also fear of God, being aware of haram and halal. In terms of being religious, some of parents indicate that they want their children to be better than themselves, more religious, more conscious, more informed:

I hope it will be much better, much better than us. I pray that he will teach us, that is, that he will come across truly knowledgeable teachers. I realized that no matter how much we teach, what teachers teach is much more permanent. For example, when I taught him something, he insisted and said my teacher taught him that. I observed that it is very permanent, as if the teacher can teach everything. That's why I hope God will always give him good teachers and take him to a much better place than us.

[İnşallah çok daha iyi olur, bizden çok daha iyi olur. Bize öğretir, yani gerçekten alim öğretmenler karşısına çıksın diye dua ediyorum. Biz ne kadar öğretsek de öğretmenlerin öğrettiği çok daha kalıcı oluyor onu fark ettim. Mesela bir şey öğretilmişim, o ısrar ediyor, bunu öğretmenim öğretti diyor. Yani sanki her şeyi öğretmeni öğretebilir gibi çok kalıcı olduğunu gözlemledim. O yüzden inşallah Rabbim karşısına hep iyi öğretmenler çıkarsın ve bizden çok çok iyi noktada olsun, çok daha iyi bir yere taşısın.] (Olca, P)

I hope his interest in religion increases exponentially and become more conscious. He will become a religious person. For example, knowingly or unknowingly, our family did not teach us a very conscious religion, we were brought up in a more traditional way, I want my son to be more conscious. When I first wore the headscarf, I didn't cover it up by consciously thinking about it. I think it was more traditional. That's why we uncovered our headscarves in the first 3 grades of high school because of the headscarf ban. In fact, they did not uncover their headscarves in other IHSs. In fact, we did. Then I became conscious. My 3 friends and I, 4 girls, refused to uncover our heads in the last year of school. That's why I changed school. I also took a break from university due to the headscarf ban. I want my son to be a more conscious Muslim, stay away from haram but not restrict himself. In other words, he will benefit from everything that is halal, benefit from all halal blessings, and not get involved in haram things.

[Dinle olan ilgisi katlanarak, bilinçlenerek artsın, dindar bir insan olsun. Mesela bilerek ya da bilmeyerek bize ailemiz çok bilinçli bir din öğretmedi daha geleneksel şekilde yetiştik, oğlum daha bilinçli olsun istiyorum. Ben de ilk başörtüsü taktığımda çok bilinçli bir şekilde düşünerek kapanmamıştım daha çok gelenekseldi sanırım o yüzden lisede ilk 3 sınıfta başörtüsü yasağı nedeniyle başımızı açıyorduk aslında başka imam hatiplerde açmıyorlardı aslında bizde açmıştık sonra bilinçlendim herhalde 3 arkadaşım ve ben 4 kız başımızı açmayı reddettik son sınıfta okul değiştirdim o yüzden. Üniversiteye de başörtüsü yasağı sebebiyle ara vermiştim. Oğlumun daha bilinçli bir Müslüman olmasını istiyorum haramdan uzak dursun ama kendini de kısıtlamasın. Yani helal olan her şeyden faydalansın, bütün helal nimetlerden yararlansın, harama bulaşmasın.] (Nazlı, P)

It can be seen that they want a life for their children within the boundaries of Islam. Parents want their children to act according to what God allows and forbid them to do in addition to performing their religious duties when they are adults. This is also related to taking the prophet as an example:

I hope he will be in a way that pleases Allah.

Researcher: What does the way that will please Allah mean to you?

If I explain, I want him to be honest and careful with people. I would like him to have a character that pays attention to what is halal and haram, fulfills his religious duties without any problems, has a sense of responsibility, values moral values, and is based entirely on the life of our Prophet. I hope so.

[İnşallah Allah'ın razı olacağı şekilde olmasını isterim.

Araştırmacı: Allah'ın razı olacağı şekil sizin için ne ifade ediyor?

Çok açarsam dürüst olması, insanlara karşı dikkatli olmasını isterim. Helale harama dikkat eden, ibadetlerini sorunsuz yerine getiren, sorumluluk bilinci olan, ahlaki değerlere değer veren, tamamen peygamber efendimizin yaşantısını baz alan karakterde olmasını isterim. İnşallah öyle olur.] (Leyla, P)

That's what I'm saying instead. May our prophet be your leader and priority both in your future and in your current age, will be his sunnah. Take him as an example even when you cut your nails. Why was he drinking his water for three years? Drink your water in three sips. Drink it sitting down. After that, when you take off your clothes, the Messenger of Allah says, take them off from the top and not from the bottom. He knows something. We investigate, something scientific comes out.

[Onun yerine işte ben de bunu söylüyorum. İleriki yaşınızda da şimdiki yaşınızda da öncünüz, önceliğiniz Peygamber Efendimiz olsun. Onun sünneti olsun. Tırnağını keserken bile onu örnek al. Suyunu niye üç yudumda içiyormuş? Suyunu üç yudumda

iç. Oturarak iç. Ondan sonra, işte kıyafetini çıkarırken üstten çıkar, alttan çıkarma diyor Resulullah. Bir bildiği var. Araştırıyoruz, bilimsel bir şey çıkıyor.] (Filiz, P)

Instructors also expect or pray for similar things at the end of this process. Deniz mentions her expectations and belief in the impact of education:

Here's what I expected, like I said. In other words, we want them to be individuals who love and respect Allah and the prophet, who value people, who know how to protect animals, who do not harm the environment, who can embrace everything as such, that is, who can do whatever Islam requires in a good way. This is very important at the age of 4-6, I mean, we are waiting for something to form and settle in the brain, as we are trying to establish it in this process, I mean, we hope that they will be like that. So, things can definitely happen. You know, they may experience ups and downs and difficulties during adolescence, but we hope they will return to their essence.

[İşte beklediklerim dediğim gibi. Yani Allah'ını, peygamberini seven, sayan, insanlara değer veren, hayvanları da korumasını bilen, çevreye de zarar vermeyen, işte her şeyi böyle benimseyebilen yani Müslümanlık ne gerektiriyorsa onları güzel bir şekilde yapabilen bireyler olmalarını istiyoruz. Bu 4-6 yaşında hani çok önemli yani beyinde bir şeylerin artık oluşması için, yerleşmesi için, bu süreçte de bunu yerleştirmeye çalıştığımız için bekliyoruz da yani inşallah öyle olacaklarına da inanıyoruz. Yani muhakkak şeyler olabilir. Hani gelgitler yaşayabilir, sıkıntılar yaşayabilirler ergenlik dönemlerinde ama özlerine döneceklerine inanıyoruz inşallah.] (Deniz, I)

From some point, consciousness can be deduced from participants' wish for children to question rather than accepting everything. They believe that eventually children will have religious faith:

We are just Muslims. We, I live such a life. It's your choice to live however you want, just be respectful to people. Here, loves your country. Because we were raised to respect people's opinions, but I think that the people around me were raised differently and that those of my age now have families that are called bigots and trying to live Islam with strict rules. That's why I think the PRA courses are necessary. Because we are trying to raise good people in this regard. Because I want to see people grow up who are free, who know what they want, who know what they want to be, who are not forced to make a choice by us.

[Sadece Müslümanız. Biz ben böyle bir hayat yaşıyorum. Sizin de tercihiniz nasıl yaşamak isterseniz sadece insanlara saygılı olun. İşte vatanınızı sevin. İnsanların görüşlerine saygı duyun diye büyütüldüğümüz için ama etrafımdaki insanların daha farklı büyütüldüğünü ve onların da şu anda benim yaşında olanların işte bağnaz deniyor ya katı kurallarla İslam'ı yaşamaya çalışan ailelerin var olduğunu düşünüyorum. O yüzden diyanetin kurslarının gerekli olduğunu düşünüyorum. Çünkü bu konuda iyi insanlar yetiştirmeye çalışıyoruz. Özgür ne istediğini bilen, ne olmak istediğini bilen, bizim tarafımızdan zorlanmayan bir seçim yaptırılmak zorunda kalmayan insanların büyüdüğünü görmek istediğim için.]

(Çağla, I)

It is very important for me to question, and I am very happy when children ask questions. I don't want this, we are dictating this to these children, they are not like this by the way, I want these children to be bright children who research, question, ask, care about knowledge, science, and their religious values and cultural values at the same time. They should serve their country and religion. I always say this in my prayers, 'Lord, let these children be children who serve their country, nation and

religion, and do good deeds' and I am sure that there will be people who will do really good deeds.

[Benim için sorgulamak çok önemli, çocuklar soru sorduğunda da çok mutlu oluyorum. Ya şunu istemiyorum biz bu çocuklara burada bunu dikte ediyoruz bunlar böyle falan değil bu çocuklar araştıran, sorgulayan, soran, bilmeye, bilime ayın zamanda dini değerlerine, kültürel değerlerine önem veren parlak çocuklar olsunlar. Ülkelerine, dinlerine hizmet etsinler yani, bunu da hep dualarımda söylüyorum 'Rabbim bu çocuklar vatanına, milletine, dinine hizmet eden çocuklar olsunlar, iyi işler yapsınlar' ve gerçekten çok iyi işler yapacak kişiler çıkacağına da eminim.] (Buse, I)

Mine also shares the same wishes and adds that she will respect to her children's decisions:

So, of course, I want it to be the way I perceive it. Because, as their mothers, there is happiness in their mothers who are freed from her parents' perception of religion, freed from her relatives' perception of religion, and who answers the question not in the why but by researching it herself. Therefore, since I examined this in social position with sociology and blended the two, I want my children to do the same. But when my children have a question about it, I don't decide on it. So, I support them to go through a similar process. Because if she knows, and I think she will, religion answers a healthy question. Every answer that every person who grows up healthy will ask is found in religion. But the questions of individuals who grow up in an unhealthy cultural environment are also unhealthy. It is extremely absurd to look for answers to these questions in religion. Therefore, I respect the area my children choose during their developing phase.

[Yani tabii ki benim algıladığım yönüyle olmasını isterim. Çünkü anneleri olarak ebeveynlerinin din algısından kurtulan, akrabalarının din algısından kurtulan, neden niçinlerde değil, kendi araştırarak cevabını verdiği bir mutluluk söz konusu annelerinde. Dolayısıyla bunu sosyal pozisyonda da sosyoloji ile irdeleyip ikisini harmanlayarak ortaya koyduğum için çocuklarımda da aynısı olmasını isterim. Ama çocuklarımda buna karşı bir soruları olduğunda ben yani buna kararlar bağlamam. Yani onların da benzer bir süreci yaşamalarına destek veririm. Çünkü bilirse ki, ki bileceğini düşünüyorum, sağlıklı bir soruya din cevap verir. Sağlıklı yetişen her insanın soracağı her cevap dinde vardır. Ama sağlıksız bir kültür ortamında yetişen bireylerin soruları da sağlıksız. Bu soruların cevabını dinde aramak son derece saçmalık. Dolayısıyla yani ben çocuklarımda saygı duyarım gelişen evrede tercih ettikleri alana.] (Mine, P)

Participants' expectations for the future are more than religious, national values are also important for them. Being useful to the nation, patriotism, and love for the nation are uttered by almost every participant. The personality traits of good citizens can be listed as loving the country and working for it on behalf of being good Muslim. In this approach, Muslim identity is carried with national identity, good citizenship includes being good servant to the God and ummah to the prophet. Participants add to the religious identity in their statements:

I pray that he will be a faithful child and good for his country. I want him to be a conscious young man. So, when he takes a step, he is a Muslim, he is a child of this

country. I want him to act thinking that he should act accordingly. Of course, this is my wish, but there will be many mistakes in youth; there will be a lot of them. There will be ups and downs. But I can only hope, and the rest is up to God.

[Ya ben imanlı ve vatanına hayırlı bir evlat olması için dua ediyorum. Bilinçli bir genç olmasını istiyorum. Yani adım atarken Müslümanım, ben bu vatanın evladım. Ona göre hareket etmesi gerektiğini düşünerek hareket etmesini istiyorum. Tabii bu benim temennim ama gençlikte illaki hatalar olacak, bir sürü olacak. İnişleri, çıkışları olacak. Ama ben temenni edeyim gerisi de Allah'a kalmış bir şey.] (İrem, P)

In fact, as I said, he should be a good person for his country, his nation, and protect his land and religion. He should raise his voice against oppression, not remain silent, that is, if he cannot do anything, he should pray.

[Aslında dediğim gibi vatanına, milletine hayırlı bir insan olsun, toprağına, dinine sahip çıksın. Zulme sesini çıkarsın, sessiz kalmasın yani bir şey yapamıyorsa dua etsin.] (Nazlı, P)

In other words, they should be individuals who are respectful, loving, corresponding to the Muslim meaning mentioned in the Quran, moral, useful to society, useful to themselves, and beneficial to the ummah.

[Yani saygılı, sevgili, Kur'an'da bahsedilen Müslüman tanımıyla örtüşen, ahlaklı, topluma faydalı, kendisine faydalı, ümmete faydalı bireyler olması.] (Merve, P)

We hope that in the future children who graduated from here will not lie, will do their job well, will become doctors, hopefully engineers in the future, or individuals who will do their job well, as we always say, to be beneficial to the country and the nation. Our aim is to raise generations that respect, love and know Allah, of course fear Allah, and always protect national and spiritual values when they make mistakes. I hope to raise children who will be useful to the country and the nation.

[İleride yalan söylemeyen, işini güzel yapan, doktor olur, ileride inşallah mühendis olur buradan çıkan çocuklar ya da vatana, millete faydalı olması noktasında hep dediğimiz işini güzel yapan, bireyler olmasını temenni ediyoruz. Allah'ını sayan, seven, bilen, Allah'tan tabii ki korkan, yanlış yaptığında bizim maksadımız her zaman milli ve manevi değerlere sahip çıkan nesiller yetiştirilmektir. Vatana, milletine faydalı çocuklar yetiştirmektir inşallah.] (Elif, I)

These interviews demonstrate that religiosity and nationalism are inseparable for participants. Both are an important part of their identity, and they expect children to develop religious and national identity and be beneficial to others. This approach can be associated with Turkish-Islam synthesis that connect national and religious identity. This synthesis emphasizes Muslim identity, national unity and being loyal to the state. From this perspective, Islam accepted as inseparable part of national identity and being beneficial for the nation is associated with religion (Kanat, 2021). Similarly, in this study participants highlight Muslim and Turkish identity and importance of their children serving for the religion and the nation. Alongside being a good servant and citizen, being a moral person is also overly referred by participants as important and desired personality traits.

4.4.2. Subtheme 2: Moral Development

Morality of children is highlighted by many participants, especially by parents. According to them, whatever they want to do, they should be honest, fair, and nice, etc. They indicate the priority of moral development over other areas such as academic achievement, professional choice or success. Irem, whose daughter is preparing for high school entrance exam expresses her priorities:

There is no such thing as perfect. My touchstone is morality and humanity. I mean, I am an LGS mother to my children, we have LGS mocks more and more. But I never think to say to my child, God is my witness, "Do this job." You know, all I want is for them to be a good person, a moral person for their country and ummah.

[Ya mükemmel diye bir şey yok. Ya benim mihengim ahlak ve insanîyet. Yani ben çocuklarıma hani LGS annesiyim, LGS'ye artık denemelerimiz çoğaldı, şey yaptı. Ama ben hiçbir zaman çocuğuma kafamda Allah'ta şahit şu mesleği yap diye bir şey yok yani. Hani ben sadece istediğim vatanına ümmetine iyi bir insan olsunlar, ahlaklı bir insan olsunlar.] (İrem, P)

Like being a good citizen, morality is also associated with religion by participants. For example, they mention paying attention to rightful share, morality of the prophet, etc. Filiz indicates that she wants her children to be moral because what the God wants, Karsu mentions the prophet as an example, and Filiz want her children to be religious and moral:

But what I demand is that they behave, what I hope for, what I want them to be, what I always pray for, is that they will also be moral people. This moral framework is not based on universality and is based on Islam. Islam is a universal thing anyway. So, being moral is a universal thing. Stealing is bad everywhere. Isn't it so? Yes, stealing is bad everywhere, but for this child it is not because stealing is bad everywhere. In particular, stealing is something that God forbids.

[Ama davranmalarını talep ettiğim şey, umduğum şey, olmasını istediğim, hep de dua ettiğim şey, ahlaklı insanlar da olmaları. Bu ahlak çerçevesini de evrensel deyip bir yerlerden tutmak değil de İslam'a göre yani. Zaten İslam evrensel bir şey ama. Yani böyle işte ahlaklı olmak evrensel bir şeydir. Hırsızlık yapmak her yerde kötüdür. Öyle değil mi? Evet hırsızlık yapmak her yerde kötü ama bu çocuk için hırsızlık yapmak her yerde kötü olduğu için değil. Özelinde hırsızlık yapmak Rabbimin yasakladığı bir şey.] (Filiz, P)

Values are really important; I think they bring order. Especially in terms of inner peace. I would love for them to be honest. I would very much like them to have moral values like our Prophet's moral values. Because I think it's completely over. All problems disappear. I think everything is different in honesty. I want them to not lie. And I want them to do the best they can.

[Değerler gerçekten çok önemli, düzene soktuğunu düşünüyorum. Özellikle içsel huzur anlamında da. Dürüst olmalarını çok isterim. Efendimizin ahlakı gibi ahlaklanmalarını çok isterim. Çünkü tamamen bitiyor yani bence. Bütün sorunlar

ortadan kalkıyor. Dürüstlükte her şeyin başa olduğunu düşünüyorum. Yalan söylemesinler. Ve yaptıkları işin en iyisini yapsınlar isterim.] (Karsu, I)

I want them to be religious, have good morals, live with love for religion, and embrace it willingly. Honesty, being able to stand up against injustice, speaking out. I wish they will become individuals with good morals, love their country, and are not fans of the West.

[Dindar, güzel ahlaklı, dini severek yaşayan, isteyerek benimsemiş insanlar olmalarını isterim. Dürüstlük, haksızlıklara karşı gelebilme, ses çıkarma. Güzel ahlaklı, vatanını seven, batı hayranı olmayan bireyler olsunlar.] (Helin)

Instructors also give importance to raising moral, honest, respectful individuals, focusing on this with values education. Participants believe that this education will be effective when they ask if they think it will make a change:

My aim here is to raise moral children. I believe they will grow up this way. A moral person means a good Muslim; when RE is given, they become more conscious and moral.

[Burada benim amacım ahlaklı çocuk yetiştirmek ben bu şekilde yetişeceklerine inanıyorum. Ahlaklı insan iyi Müslüman demek zaten, dini eğitimi de verince hem daha bilinçli dindarlar olurlar hem de ahlaklı olurlar.] (Ceren, I)

Yes, as I said, the one who is respectful, compassionate and fair to those around him should care about the extent of justice when he is a member of parliament. When he becomes a teacher, he should treat those around him fairly and compassionately. This is my only aim; this is also for myself. In my opinion, this is what our community wants. So, this is the purpose of these 4-6 years old.

[Evet, dediğim gibi işte etrafına saygılı, merhametli, adaletli davranan, yani bir milletvekili olduğunda adaletin ne kadar olduğunu önemsesin. Öğretmen olduğunda da etrafındakilere çok adaletli, merhametli davransın. Tek amacım bu yani, kendi adıma da bu. Bizim bence de yani camiasının da isteği bu. Yani bu 4-6 yaşların amacı da bu zaten.] (Çağla, I)

I believe so, yes. Of course I believe so. Because I believe in it, be sure, we work as much as we can, regardless of overtime. For example, the concept of working hours is more than just let's go after a lesson is over. I think our institution should be better along with the desire to earn halal income and our affiliation to our presidency. We are now working to make our children truly better individuals. I hope it will be useful.

[Inanıyorum yani, evet. Tabii ki inanıyorum. İnanmışım için de yani elimden geldiği kadar da emin olun mesai kavramı gözetmeden çalışıyoruz. Mesai kavramı mesela bizde bir ders bitti çıkaldıktan daha ziyade yani helal kazanmanın isteğiyle beraber kurumumuzun da başkanlığımıza aidiyetimizle beraber daha iyi olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Artık çocuklarımızın da gerçekten daha iyi bireyler olması yönünde çalışıyoruz. Faydalı olacağına düşünüyorum inşallah.] (Elif, I)

Of course I'm thinking. So hopefully, I think. In other words, I definitely think that courses where RE is given at this age will have an impact in the future, inshallah. So, I believe it will have an impact. So, in my opinion, many such children need to experience very negative things for it to backfire. Alhamdulillah, there were no negative things here either in the places I worked.

[Düşünüyorum tabii. Yani inşallah düşünüyorum. Yani din eğitimi veren, bu yaşta din eğitimi verilen kursların ileride etkisi olacağını muhakkak düşünüyorum inşallah. Yani etkisi olacağına inanıyorum. Yani ters tepmesi için çok böyle çocukların çok

olumsuz şeyler yaşaması gerekiyor bence. Hani elhamdülillah hani çalıştığım yerlerde de hani burada da olumsuz olabilecek şeyler yoktu.] (Deniz, I)

I think it will make a huge difference. Because I think she will realize his heart. Because the most important thing in RE is self-control, that is, self-control of God. She will do what she knows is right for her faith, not for people. Her sense of spirituality will be strong. In other words, she will realize that happiness with matter is unfortunately the biggest problem today. In other words, he will search within herself and answer her own questions. These have a very close connection with RE. In other words, a person must turn inside as well as outside. Here, RE provides internal control. I mean, I think that her internal self-control will make her a healthier person, not for her mother or father. Therefore, I think the education given here is very valuable and I hope you will pass it on.

[Bence çok önemli bir fark yaratacak. Çünkü kalbinin farkına varacak diye düşünüyorum. Çünkü din eğitiminde en önemli şey Allah'ın yani öz denetim öz kontroldür. İnsanlar için değil, inancı için doğru olduğunu bildiği şeyi yapacak. Maneviyat duygusu güçlü olacak. Yani maddeyle mutluluğu maalesef bugünün en büyük problemi olduğunu fark edecek. Yani arayışlarını yine kendi içinde arayacak ve kendi cevap verecek. Bunların din eğitimiyle çok yakından bağlantısı var. Yani insanın dışına yönlendiği kadar içine de yönlenmesi gerektiğine. İşte iç denetimini din eğitimi veriyor. Yani annesi, babası için değil o iç denetimindeki o otokontrol onu daha sağlıklı bir insan yapacak diye düşünüyorum. Dolayısıyla burada verilen eğitim çok kıymetli olduğunu düşünüyorum umarım sizde aktarırınız bunu.]

(Mine, P)

There are very nice touches here, I believe that these touches will make a difference by giving humane and moral values and of course with our help. People need this education.

[Burada çok güzel dokunuşlar var bence insani ve ahlaki değerler verilerek tabi bizim de yardımımızla bu dokunuşların bir fark yaratacağına inanıyorum. İnsanın ihtiyacı var bu eğitime.] (Jale, P)

4.5. Summary of Results

In conclusion, findings demonstrate that religious values and practices are transferred to children both by parents and instructors in home and course settings through providing them with religious experiences, materials, education since it is a significant part of participants' identities and live styles. Religion takes place in children's lives, minds as a normality of life. Beside happiness of children, parents and instructors aim to foster religious development of children. Thus, they want to raise religious, nationalist, and moral individuals.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings from interviews with parents and instructors will be discussed considering some theories and previous studies. The discussion will develop on the production and reproduction of conservatism according to the main question of this research. In addition to this discussion, some recommendations for further studies will be made.

5.1. Discussion of Findings

This study aims to understand how religion-centered child-rearing through families and Quran courses affect the process of producing and reproducing conservatism. To this end, interviews were conducted with parents and instructors of PRA's Quran courses. According to the literature and findings, three topics have emerged: *religious parents*, *religious instructors*, and *raising religious individuals* with this study.

5.1.1. Religious Parents

To understand the role of families in the production and reproduction of conservatism through the religion-centered child-rearing process, parents were interviewed. To analyze the parents' role, the study investigated their perspectives toward religion, their relationship with religious rules and practices, and the effect of religion on their lives including parenting. The study revealed that religion, Islam, is one of the most important and influential factors in parents' lives. The religiosity of parents is not unexpected since they send their children to Quran courses, and also according to some studies, the number of people who define themselves as religious Muslims in Turkiye is high. The study of Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu on religiosity in Turkiye demonstrates that although their definitions of religiosity are different more than 70% of people

define themselves as somehow religious Muslims and more than 15% of participants in their study define themselves as very religious (Çarkoğlu& Kalaycıoğlu, 2009). Parents in this study indicate that their personalities, lifestyles, daily habits, immediate environment, relationships, and social, cultural, and economic choices are affected or even determined by Islamic principles.

To begin with, being Muslim for parents in this study is an inseparable part of their identities. Rieffer (2003) defines the importance of religion as providing identity, direction to face, and guidance for the actions of believers (p.217). Saroglou (2011) indicates that religion is about people's actions according to what they consider transcendent. Thus, religion provides an ethos, socialization opportunities, and social norms as an important source of identity formation (King, 2003). In this study, participants perceive the world according to religious points of view and design their lives pretty much according to this view. Tarakeshwar et al. (2003) define five dimensions of religion including ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and social. The ideological dimension refers to the religious beliefs of individuals and their visibility in their lives. It defines the nature of the divine, ultimate goal of life like the five pillars of Islam to obedience to God's will for Muslims. The ritualistic dimension is about expected behaviors from believers by their religion like fasting, praying, and going to mosques. The experiential dimension is associated with the effects of religious beliefs and practices on the inner worlds of believers. The intellectual dimension is about what individuals know about their religion like knowledge about the Quran and religious rules, and the lives of prophets, and companions. Lastly, the social dimension refers to religion-related social interactions of individuals like congregation meetings. Similarly, Saroglou (2011) defines four dimensions of religion including believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging. According to these views, religious belief is about having a religious worldview, reality, knowledge, norms, rules defined by religion, and social identity. Parents in this study mention all these dimensions of religion, they constitute their identity according to the Islamic perspective, regulate their lives and social interactions by this perspective, follow rituals and rules of Islam, and search for religious knowledge. They defined the prophet Muhammad as an exemplary person in every aspect of their lives including parenting.

Religion-centered parenting is important since it affects children's experiences. Different studies indicate the influence of parents on children's lives from early years to adulthood. How children start their lives, childhood experiences, educational opportunities and outcomes, and adulthood are all very much related to the families they are born within and their parents (Lareau, 2000; Lareau, 2002). Although studies that will be mentioned mainly focus on how families' social background influences their parenting approach and experiences, they show the significance of parents for children's outcomes. Children's daily lives, parent-child relations, educational opportunities, and leisure time activities are all related to their parents' attitudes which depend on their social background. This has also long-term consequences (Lareau, 2000; Lareau, 2002). Childhood experiences constituted by parents influence adulthood experiences including educational situations, occupation preferences, family lives, and relations. Thus, the differences among children due to their parents' social backgrounds continue through adulthood (Lareau, 2015). Parents define a set of norms, proper characteristic features, moral codes, and expected behaviors for their children to follow while providing them with opportunities and social interactions that affect their later lives (Sherman, 2017). If parents' attitudes have an impact on children's lives, it is possible to assume that parents' relations with religion have an effect directly or indirectly on children's lives and religiousness.

Studies discuss the effects of the religious perspective of parents and parent-child relations on children's conception of religion. On the one hand, some studies demonstrate the effectiveness of parents and home environment on people's religious identity. For example, many people indicate that their religious views are associated with their parents' views and what they experienced at home when they were children (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2009). De Roos et al. (2001) also indicate that children's God concept, and how they perceive God are affected by both their parents' perspectives on God and the relations between children and parents. The more positive and loving God concept of parents or their positive relations with their children leads to the development of a more positive and loving God concept on children. On the other hand, Arnett and Jensen emphasize the individualization of religious beliefs independent from families. The study reveals very little relation between religious

socialization provided by parents in early years and religious beliefs and attendance in adult life. Individuals construct their religious perspectives by becoming free from the influence of their parents as they grow (Arnett & Jensen, 2002). Although there are some different views about the impact of parents on children's religion-related outcomes it is clear that parents' attitudes toward religion influence the experiences of children while they are growing up since expected behaviors, norms, and rules within home environments, these attitudes define parenting approaches (Godina, 2014). The religious beliefs of parents influence how they approach parenting, how they construct home environments and set norms and rules, and how they develop a relationship with their children (Wilcox, 2008). Petro et al. (2017) also highlights the importance of religion in shaping families, and parenting practices by defining the rules and responsibilities of parents. Thus, the religiosity of parents or families is related to parenting attitudes and family relationships which affect the moral and religious development of children and adolescents (Hardy, et al., 2019). These findings make the religiosity of parents and its effect on their parenting styles important for children's experiences may or may not be related to religion. However, the religious immediate environments are not limited to parents. Instructors are also one of the important religious socialization agents for children.

5.1.2. Religious Instructors

As with parents, to understand the role of instructors in the production and reproduction of conservatism through the religion-centered child-rearing process, instructors of Quran courses were interviewed. Their views on religion and RE and how they apply it, their thoughts about the PRA and Quran courses, and the course environment have been analyzed for this purpose.

Firstly, the study demonstrates that the institution's appropriate course environment and features enable the instructors to work there. Appropriateness is about enabling instructors to work with headscarves in a conservative environment where only women work. The headscarf issue is important since studies indicate how wearing a headscarf defines the identity of Muslim women in public spheres. The study of Hopkins and Greenwood on the relationship between identity construction and wearing headscarves

indicates that on the one hand women's decision about the headscarf is related to Quranic orders. On the other hand, it also makes their religious identity visible to others and affects their behaviors in the public sphere and how they are perceived by others. They become salient agents of Islam for others, and it influences their actions, relations, and social lives (Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013). For instructors, working in Quran courses allows them to protect their visible identity as women wearing headscarves and their Muslim identity. The study of Çakır and Bozan about the PRA also shows the influence of headscarf issues and gender identity on women's perspectives toward the state, and social interactions. For example, the views of female officials of the PRA and pious women on the relations between the state and religion are pretty much associated with the headscarf issue. Although many women support the idea of laicism, they criticize how it is applied in Türkiye because of the headscarf ban. They highlight the unjust treatment against them and the tension between the state and religion due to this issue (Çakır& Bozan, 2005). Instructors in this study indicate the significance of being able to work while wearing a headscarf and how it affects their work preferences. Wearing a headscarf sets some boundaries between the private and public spheres. Private spheres refer to environments where only women are present or there are no men other than family members and public spheres refer to mixed, generally male-dominated places where women have to wear headscarf. This distinction influences clothing and behaviors of women including their religious socialization (Furseth, 2011). For example, many of pious women indicate that they prefer to pray in their houses and define mosques a male-dominated places. One of the women even state that she is not comfortable in going mosques because there lots of men sitting around them (Çakır& Bozan, 2005). It can be assumed Quran courses offer comfortable, women-centered environment that is closer to their private spheres.

The discussion on headscarf developed around the oppression and agency, for people who do not wear it, the headscarf is about oppression of religion and patriarchy on women, and they question that whether women wear it willingly or not. Some women are forced by their husbands or families to wear it, while for others it is their choices, and they highlight their positive attitudes(Furseth, 2011). Thus, it is possible to mention both oppression and agency of women in this issue. The study of Hopkins and Greenwood (2013) demonstrates that women chose to wear headscarf to control how

they are viewed by others by making their religiosity salient. Quran course instructors also indicate the importance of their religious beliefs.

The visible identity of Quran course instructors is related to both their clothing and their profession. They represent Islamic doctrine not only by wearing a headscarf but also by being a religious instructor which brings us to another topic, the role of instructors in teaching religion. The interviews reveal the process of teaching religion to young children by making religious content understandable for young children through embodying abstract concepts and play. De Roos et al. (2001) highlight the influence of teachers and schools on children's religious thoughts as significant agencies in children's religious socialization in their early years. God concept of children is associated with their teachers' God concepts, they show similarities. De Roos (2016) also indicate that the relations between teachers and children, teachers' attitudes toward children may define the children's perception of God. Positive and harmonious relationship between children and teachers provide development of more caring and loving God concept. In this study, instructors emphasize their aims to make children develop positive attitudes towards religion, God, the prophet, religious rules and practices. However, it is important to highlight children's agencies in this process. The religious concept of children is also associated with their cognitive development and religious development of children.

Cognitive development is a process involving multiple factors which are biology of human beings and environment. Scholars who follow Piaget's theory emphasized the human's biology and ability adapt while others highlighted cultural dimension of cognitive development. According to this approach, a structured world where individuals grow into effect their cognitive development. However, cognitive development cannot be explained by just one of these dimensions. The current perspective demonstrates that it is associated with both biological and environmental factors (Tomasello, 2000). Childhood is an important period for cognitive development since long-term changes and development in cognitive abilities occur through this period (Moshman, 1998). On the hand, religion can be an important part of this period by providing religious environments and RE. On the other hand, children's cognitive abilities can be determinant of their religious understanding.

Gottlieb mentions the perspective that suggests children's developing understanding religion with development on their cognitive abilities on abstract thinking. He also emphasizes the importance of explaining religion on children's understanding (Gottlieb, 2006). In this study, instructors also indicate that they avoid explaining too abstract concepts or try to make them understandable for children by using concrete examples. They accept children's inability to understand religious concepts completely, but they try to create awareness for them. Creating awareness and positive attitudes seems to be one of the main purposes of this process beside raising religious and moral individuals. Parents and instructors indicate that they provide religious knowledge, and religion-oriented environments by considering children's development to raise religious individuals.

5.1.3. Raising Religious Individuals

This study demonstrates children's relations with religion and their values and principles, as well as expectations of both parents and participants from this process. The analysis reveals that like their parents and instructors, Islam is an important and effective part of children's lives, and participants aim to shape children's characters from an early age by religion-centered child-rearing. Firstly, children are taught Islamic values and principles both in their houses and in Quran courses. Participants attach importance to transferring religious values including the doctrines of Islam, its practices, love for God and the prophet, and positive attitudes toward religion to children. These values are significant parts of the child-rearing process within families and Quran courses. From the parent's perspective, they want their children to live according to Islamic principles by taking the prophet as an example. They expect courses to teach that. Instructors also want to educate children according to religion. Communities who request to provide religion-centered education for their children want to inform them about religious and cultural heritage and nurture their religious identity (McKinney, 2004; Evan Kaplan, 2011). They want children to grow up within the religious framework, and learn and respect their religion (McCreery et al., 2007).Çakır and Bozan (2005) also indicate people's wishes for RE provided by the PRA which is more trustworthy than other religious formations. Religious officials and pious people highlight education duty of the PRA for all people,

they indicate that it is more important than others. Participants (both parents and instructors) indicated that they want children to be consciously religious people who follow Islamic rules in every aspect of their lives, which means that they make religion an agent in their identity (Scholefield, 2004) through this religion-centered process. Developing character with the religious factor is highlighted in the study which is coherent with Hussain's reason for Islamic education. He states that children are provided to understand the worldview that accepts the rules of God in every aspect of life in an Islamic atmosphere that is surrounded by religious knowledge, principles, and ethos. The main aim of RE is to transfer Islam as a way of life (Hussain, 2004). Brown and Taylor's study supports their idea that this process may influence their future character. Their study demonstrates that there is a positive correlation between individuals' participation in religious activity with their past religious activities. They highlight the importance of habit development for religious activity (Brown & Taylor, 2005). From the responses of parents and instructors in this study, it can be inferred that conservative thoughts that value religion might be transferred to children by teaching them religious values, knowledge, and practices.

Secondly, the study revealed that participants highlighted transferring moral values and national values beside religious values. Teaching morality and moral development of children are important for all kinds of RE. Religion-centered pedagogies including Islamic pedagogy aim to foster the holistic development of children including intellectual, physical, and moral development, and to nurture children's personalities to ensure commitment to religious faith (Groome, 2014; Boyle, 2001). Some studies also demonstrate parents' request for religion-centered education due to moral morality. Hurst (2000) indicates that some parents believe that secular schools are not capable of supporting the moral development of children. Some of them even emphasize the immorality of other schools. The study of Erpay about parents' thoughts about religion-centered education in early years demonstrates that parents prefer this mainly for providing conscious RE for their children. However, parents also indicate that this education has positive effects on children's behaviors, and moral development, and lays the foundation for children's future personalities to be beneficial for the nation and society. They request education that includes moral and religious topics (Erpay, 2020). Our findings support this study, according to

participants, both parents and instructors wishes, and the content of the education in this direction. Values education is an important part of the curriculum, and it focuses on morality, honesty, love, respect, compassion, sharing, and helping. These values are generally associated with religion like Muslims are honest, or loving God and the prophet. Participants aim to raise people who are religious, traditional, and beneficial to society and the country through education based on religious and moral values. Being useful to society and country can be interpreted from the approaches that are mentioned in literature. From a functionalist perspective, it might be claimed that children are learning social rules, and moral values which are the foundation of social order (Ballantine, et al, 2017, p.31) becoming coherent and useful parts of society through this process. On the other hand, from a conflict perspective, it can be assumed that two important apparatuses (education and religion) unite and create another control mechanism for individuals. Durheim accepts religion as a social phenomenon that can be very effective in individuals' actions. According to him, religion is a part of social morality, and it helps people to live together and nurtures social cohesion and solidarity among individuals. Through religious beliefs, people ascribe sacred meanings to some things and gather around them. Thus, the existence of society is strengthened, and its continuity is ensured. On the other hand, Marx also emphasizes the role of religion in existing society. He indicates that religion is constituted by society and the state rather than a sacred thing. Religion contributes to the existing unequal social order by hiding realities and fostering false consciousness of people. It also provides a protection mechanism for people against inequalities (Yenen, 2022). The religion-centered child-rearing process might lead children to develop religious identity and way of life by transferring religious and moral values.

The study revealed that for both the home environment and the Quran course Islam is one of the most important factors that determine the relations, actions, and daily lives of people. Parents indicated that their religious beliefs are at the center of their lives. Similarly, Islamic principles are at the center of the curriculum of the Quran courses. Both parents and instructors indicated that they follow daily religious obligations, read the Quran, and prefer modest dressing. Children see religious individuals around them. Participants stated that their shopping preferences, cultural activities, and circle of friends are influenced by the principles of Islam. Therefore, it can be inferred that

children are becoming familiar with religious rules and practices within conservative environments where religion and morality are emphasized a lot. To form the religious identity of children which is accepted as the duty of parents, the family environment where children are provided with a lived faith tradition is significant. To maintain this religious identity, supporting families through religion-centered education is also important (Hurst, 2000; McKinney, 2004). According to Bourdieu, people's habitus, which are the set of dispositions that shape the understanding, expectations, and attitudes of individuals, are defined by their social, economic, academic, and family background (Huang, 2019). In the study, children with conservative and religious family backgrounds are educated within settings where they learn Islamic values, principles, and practices from religious instructors. Thus, they might develop a habitus that is shaped by religious and conservative factors. It is also important that what children read, and watch are also limited to their parents' conservative thoughts that are associated with their tendency to protect their children. Kerry and Murray (2020) indicate that conservative parents are more vigilant to outside stimuli. They have negative attitudes towards sexuality, homosexuality, etc. like parents in our study who ban some TV channels to avoid violence, sexuality, and LGBT. To sum up, children are surrounded by religious and conservative individuals and religious principles.

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that religion-centered child-rearing takes place both in home settings and in Quran courses. Participants aim to adapt Islamic principles into children's lives through this process. These findings support the study about people's reasons for requesting Islamic education. The study demonstrates that people want to provide Islamic education to their children to foster religious identity and their belonging to a religious community, transfer religious values, attitudes, and Islamic knowledge to their children (McCreery et al., 2007). By forming and fostering religious identities of children, providing religious knowledge for them might play a role in the process of production and reproduction of conservatism. Köni and Torun (2013) indicate that religion and morality are emphasized in conservative thought because of their functions. According to conservatives, religious and moral orders make people more stable, peaceful, and helpful and nurture their psychological well-being by protecting them against loneliness and alienation. Conservatism values social ties and cultural values that are formed according to religious and moral principles.

Similarly, within the religion-centered child-rearing process, participants emphasize transferring religious and moral values, principles of Islam to make them useful, nationalist, and religious individuals for society.

5.2. Implications for Theory

This study analyses religion-centered early childhood education in Quran courses that brings two important institutions together: religion and education. It tries to demonstrate how religion takes place in family environments and education settings, and what people expect from religious education (RE) for children. Thus, this study aims to contribute discussions about in the field of educational policies regarding RE.

This study tries to analyze how RE is formed for children in courses and its curriculum and implementations. In the field of educational administration and planning studies generally focus on schools of MoNE, and the study also demonstrates different form of education understanding and setting. These courses provide integration of religious and secular education. Therefore, it aims to contribute to the field of educational administration and planning by demonstrating how religious understanding affects the form of education and pedagogical practices.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Research

This study revealed the aims, expectations, and implementations of parents and instructors in the religion-centered child-rearing process by focusing on the production and reproduction of conservatism. This study was conducted with parents and instructors, so their approaches are reflected. However, this is a process in which children are actively involved. Therefore, there is a need to understand children's situations, and how education takes place in Quran courses within the classroom.

There is a need to analyze the long-term effects of this process. For further research, it is recommended that children's perspectives should be analyzed, daily relations within Quran courses should be analyzed, and individuals who took education from these courses should be concerned to see its academic, social, and personal effects.

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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

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Danışmanlığımı yürüttüğünüz Şehada Keçeci'nin "*Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi ve Din Temelli Çocuk Yetiştirme: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı 4-6 Yaş Kur'an Kursu Örneği*" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek 0090-ODTÜIAEK-2024 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygularımla sunarım.

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B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTORS

A. Kurs-Öğreticilik

1. DİB kurslarında çalışmanızın sebeplerinden bahsedebilir misiniz?
2. Bir çocuğun yetiştirilmesinde öğretmenin önemi ve sorumluluklarından bahseder misiniz?
3. Diyanet kurslarını diğer erken çocukluk eğitim kurumlarıyla karşılaştırabilir misiniz?
4. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'nın erken çocukluk kurslarına dair amaçlarından ve politikalarından bahseder misiniz?

B. Müfredat

1. Kursunuzun müfredatından ve sizin ne gibi düzenlemeler yaptığınızdan bahseder misiniz?
2. Din ve ilişkili kavramlar, pratikler müfredat içinde nasıl yer alıyor?
 - a. Hangi dini pratikleri/ritüelleri ve kavramları önemsiyorsunuz? Neden?
 - b. Bu pratikler/ritüeller ve kavramlar çocuklara hangi yöntemlerle öğretilir?
 - c. Din ile ilişkili kavramları çocukların nasıl anlamlandırmasını hedefliyorsunuz?
3. Özel dini ritüellerden bahseder misiniz? Kursta verilen değerler eğitiminin kapsamından ve içeriğinden bahseder misiniz?
 - a. Eğitim hangi değerler etrafında şekilleniyor?
 - b. Değerler eğitiminin önemi konusunda neler söylersiniz?
4. Çocukların kurs kapsamında edinmelerini hedeflediğiniz kazanımlardan bahseder misiniz?
 - a. Kazanılmasını istediğiniz davranışlar nelerdir?
 - b. Hangi bilgileri edinmelerini hedefliyorsunuz?
5. Haftalık programınız nasıl şekilleniyor?

C. Muhafazakâr Okul Kültürü

1. Okul çalışanları için günlük rutinden bahseder misiniz?
2. Edinilmesini önemseydiğiniz kazanımların aktarılması adına kursta çalışanların arasında edinilmesi önemsenen davranış ve değerlerden bahseder misiniz?
3. Kursta öğreticileri kadın olması çocukların yetiştirilmesine, burada verilen eğitime nasıl yansıyor sizce?
4. Sınıf içi düzende ve iletişimde neleri önemseydiğinizden bahseder misiniz?
5. Kursta tercih ettiğiniz materyaller ve aktivitelerden ve bunları nasıl seçtiğinizden bahsedebilir misiniz?

D. Kurs Aile İlişkileri

1. Bu kursların aileye yönelik hedef ve uygulamalarından bahsedebilir misiniz?
2. Çocukların yetiştirilmesi hususunda kurs ile aile arasında kurulan bağın öneminden bahseder misiniz?
3. Kurs ve ailenin birbirlerinden beklentilerinden bahsedebilir misiniz? Karşılıklı paylaşıyor musunuz? Neler yapıyorsunuz bunlarla ilgili?
4. Kursta eğitim gören çocukların gelecekteki eğitim hayatlarına dair ailelere önerilerde bulunuyor musunuz?
5. Son olarak bu kursta eğitim almış çocukların yetişkin olduklarında ne gibi özellikler kazanmış olmasını istersiniz?

C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

A. Ebeveynlik

1. Ebeveyn olmanın sizin için ne ifade ettiğini açıklayabilir misiniz?
2. Evde çocukların bakımı ve yetiştirilmesiyle en fazla kim ilgileniyor?
3. Çocuk yetiştirmede sizin sorumluluklarınız ve eşinizin üzerine düşen sorumluluklardan bahsedebilir misiniz?
4. Sizce ideal bir çocuk yetiştirme var mıdır? Sizin için bu süreçte nelerin önemli olduğundan bahsedebilir misiniz?

B. Muhafazakâr Aile Kültürü

1. Kendinizi hangi dini inanca mensup olarak tanımlıyorsunuz?
2. Dinin sizin için öneminden bahsedebilir misiniz?
3. Bireysel ve aile hayatınızı dini değerler, kurallar ve uygulamalar doğrultusunda nasıl düzenlediğinizden bahsedebilir misiniz?
4. Din ile olan ilişkinizin çocuk yetiştirirken yaptığınız tercihleri ne şekilde etkilediğini açıklayabilir misiniz?
5. Sizin için önemli olan ve çocuklarınıza aktarmak istediğiniz geleneklerden bahsedebilir misiniz?

C. Değerler ve Dini Pratikler

1. İnançınız gereği yerine getirdiğiniz dini ritüeller ve pratiklerden bahsedebilir misiniz?
2. Çocukların din ile olan ilişkileri hakkında neler söyleyebilirsiniz?

- a. Çocuklarınızın gündelik hayatında dinin nasıl yer aldığından bahsedermisiniz?
- b. Çocuklarınızın din ile olan ilişkisinin nasıl olmasını istersiniz?
3. Aileniz için önemli olan dini ritüellerden bahsedebilir misiniz?
 - a. Çocuklarınızın sahip olmalarını istediğiniz değerlerden bahsedebilir misiniz? Bu değerlere sahip olmaları neden önemli?
 - b. Evde bu değerleri yaşatmak için yaptığınız uygulamalardan bahsedebilir misiniz?

D. Eğitim

1. Diyanet kurslarınızı tercih etmenizdeki sebeplerden ve beklentilerinizden bahsedebilir misiniz? Beklentilerinizi karşılıyor mu?
2. Çocuklarınızın kursta aldığı eğitim evde nasıl devam ettiğinden bahsedermisiniz? Evde destekliyor musunuz?
3. Çocuğunuzun okuyacağı ya da izleyeceği içerikleri seçerken nelere dikkat ettiğinizi açıklayabilir misiniz?
4. Çocuğunuzun eğitimine dair gelecek planlarınızdan bahsedermisiniz?
5. Son olarak din temelli eğitim aracılığıyla çocuklarınızın yetişkin olduklarında ne gibi özellikler kazanmış olmasını istersiniz?

D. THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Eğitim Yönetimi ve Planlaması Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Şüheda Keçeci tarafından Doç. Dr. Duygun Göktürk Ağın danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'na bağlı 4-6 yaş Kur'an kurslarında verilen erken çocukluk eğitimi yoluyla dini temel alan çocuk yetiştirme süreçlerini incelemektir.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden araştırmacı ile birebir görüşme yapmanız beklenmektedir. 45 dk ile 1 saat sürmesi beklenen bu görüşmelerde sizlere bir dizi ucu açık soru yöneltilerek ve cevaplamamız istenecektir. İziniz dahilinde, daha sonra içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmek üzere cevaplarınızın ses kaydı alınacaktır.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Çalışmada sizden kimlik veya kurum belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Görüşmeler genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular veya uygulamalar içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz görüşmeyi yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmayı uygulayan kişiye çalışmadan çıkmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Görüşme sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü öğretim üyelerinden Doç. Dr. Duygun Göktürk Ağın ya da yüksek lisans öğrencisi Şüheda Keçeci ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

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E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

ERKEN ÇOCUKLUK EĞİTİMİ VE DİN TEMELLİ ÇOCUK YETİŞTİRME: DİYANET İŞLERİ BAŞKANLIĞI 4-6 YAŞ KUR'AN KURSU ÖRNEĞİ

GİRİŞ

Bu çalışma din temelli çocuk yetiştirme sürecinin muhafazakâr kültürün üretimi ve yeniden üretimine olan ilişkisini araştırmayı amaçlayan tekli araçsal bir vaka çalışmasıdır.

Özellikle sanayi devrimi sonrasında süregelen endüstriyelleşme ve kitlesel eğitimle birlikte eğitim ve toplum arasında güçlü bir ilişki kurulmuştur. Eğitim toplumun inşasındaki ve sürdürülmesindeki rolü, eğitim yoluyla hangi değer ve düşüncelerin aktarılması gerektiği tartışma konusu olmuştur (Ergün, 1994). Tartışmalar sonucunda eğitimin ve toplumun işlevine dair farklı yaklaşımlar geliştirilmiştir (Hurn, 2002).

Toplumsal düzene ve toplumsal iş bölümüne vurgu yapan işlevselci paradigmaya göre eğitim bireylerin sosyalleşmesini ve liyakate dayalı olarak seçilmesini sağlayarak bu düzenin korunmasını ve devamlılığı için önemli rol oynayan sosyal kurumlardan biridir (Dinçer, 2003). Bu paradigmanın en önemli düşünürü olan Emile Durkheim, *Ahlak Eğitimi, Eğitim ve Toplum* adlı eserlerinde eğitimin toplumsal düzenin ihtiyacı olan nesillerin yetişmesindeki önemli payından bahseder. Bu paradigmanın diğer önemli düşünürleri Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton ve Robert Dreeben bilginin ve kültürün transferi, liyakate dayalı seçme ve yerleştirme gibi hususlara odaklanarak eğitimin işlevlerini vurgular.

Karl Marx ve Max Weber'in toplumdaki ekonomik ve kültürel ilişkilere dair görüşlerinden yola çıkan çatışmacı paradigma ise toplumda sınıflar arası iktidarı ve gücü elinde tutma mücadelesine vurgu yapar (Yıldırım Taştı, 2023; Dinçer, 2023). Bu

paradigmanın etkisiyle yeniden üretim teorileri meydana gelmiştir. Bu teoriler içerisinde; Samuel Bowles ve Herbert Gintis'in mevcut, adil olmayan ekonomik düzenin yeniden üretiminde eğitimin rolünü inceleyen yaklaşımını, Louis Althusser' in eğitimi devletin ideolojik baskı araçlarından biri olarak tanımlayan yaklaşımı ve Pierre Bourdieu ve Jean-Claude Passeron'un eğitimin dominant sınıfın kültürünün meşrulaştırılması ve yeniden üretimi sürecindeki rolünü inceleyen yaklaşımını ele almak mümkündür.

Çalışmanın ana konusu olan din eğitimi çocuklara dini kural ve pratiklere dair bilgi ve deneyim sağlamayı amaçlarken (Gottlieb, 2006) sadece Türkiye için değil dünyada birçok ülkede uzun süredir tartışılan bir konudur. Zorunlu ya da seçmeli, bir dine özel ya da bütün dinleri kapsayan din dersi gibi din eğitime yönelik çeşitli yaklaşımlar geliştirilmiştir. (Schreiner, 2013). Türkiye'de de cumhuriyet tarihi boyunca bu konuda farklı yaklaşımlar denenmiştir ancak din her zaman ulusal eğitimin bir parçası olmuştur (Kaplan, 1999). Din sadece okullarla sınırlı bir alan değildir, aileler de bu sürecin önemli bir parçasıdır. Ebeveynlerin dini inançları onların ebeveynliğe bakışlarını ve aile içi iletişimi etkilemektedir (Godina, 2014). Çalışmanın bir diğer ana temalarından biri olan muhafazakarlık da Türkiye'de zaman içinde değişim göstermiştir ancak milliyetçilik ve din bu düşüncenin bir parçası olmuştur (Genç & Coşkun, 2015) ve bu çalışmada da bu kavramlara odaklanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Amacı ve Önemi

Bu çalışmada Kur'an kursu öğretmenleri ve ebeveynlerin görüşlerinin yardımıyla din temelli çocuk yetiştirme süreci analiz edilmektedir. Bu analizde katılımcıların ve çocukların hayatında dinin nerede olduğunun, çocuklara dinin nasıl ve ne kadar aktarıldığının anlaşılması amaçlanmaktadır. Ayrıca Kur'an kurslarında ve aile içinde çocuklara sağlanan ortamların ve dini eğitiminin son olarak ve bireylerin din ile ilişkili deneyimlerinin anlaşılması amaçlanmaktadır. Araştırma toplumu ve bireylerin hayatını etkileyen iki önemli olguyu din ve eğitimi ele almaktadır. Araştırma din eğitimi sürecinde hem ailenin hem de eğitim kurumlarının rolünü inceleyerek yapılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda eğitim yönetimi ve planlaması alanına katkı sağlaması amaçlanmaktadır.

LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

Bu çalışmanın 4-6 yaş grubundaki çocuklara eğitim veren Kur'an kurslarına odaklanarak din temelli çocuk yetiştirme ve muhafazakârlığın inşası arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamaya çalışması sebebiyle literatür eğitim ve toplum arasındaki ilişkiye, muhafazakârlığa ve din eğitimine odaklanmıştır.

Eğitim ve Toplum

Bu çalışmada muhafazakârlığın üretimi ve yeniden üretimine odaklanmakla beraber eğitime makro perspektiften bakan iki yaklaşımdan söz edilmiştir. İşlevselci yaklaşım eğitimin işlevlerine odaklanır. Buna göre eğitim toplumsal düzenin korunması ve devamlılığı için birlikte ayrı ayrı ve birlikte olarak görevlerini yerine getirmesi gereken sosyal kurumlardan biridir (Ballantine et al., 2018). Eğitimin en önemli işlevi çocuğun sosyalleşmesi, sosyal kuralları benimsemesi ve toplumun işleyen parçalarından biri haline gelmesidir (Durkheim, 1922/2016). Parsons' a göre de eğitimin işlevleri bireyin sosyalleşmesi ve becerilerine göre seçilerek toplumsal düzenin bir parçası olmasıdır (Yıldırım Taştı, 2023). Eğitim ayrıca çocuklara bir sosyal sistem düzeni sağlar. Çocuklar okul içerisinde akademik başarılarının yanında düzene uygun davrandıkları ve sorumluluk sahibi oldukları için takdir edilirler (Parsons, 2018). Böylece toplum içinde bireyler arası uyum sağlanır.

Çatışmacı yaklaşıma göre ise eğitim eşit olmayan toplumsal düzenin ve iktidar sahibi sınıfın ayrıcalıklarının devamının sağlanmasında rol oynar (Ballantine et al., 2018). Bu yaklaşım eğitimin tarafsızlık ve objektiflik illüzyonu yaratarak ekonomik ve politik statükonun devam ettirilmesi sürecindeki işlevini vurgular (Feinberg & Soltis, 2019). Bu yaklaşımın etkisiyle ortaya çıkan yeniden üretim teorileri eğitim ile toplumun ekonomik sistemi, kültürü ve toplumsal bilinç arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanır (Collins, 2009). Bowles ve Gintis tarafından geliştirilen ekonomi odaklı yeniden üretim teorisine göre okullar mevcut toplumsal sınıf düzenini ve işgücünün dağılımı yansıtır (Giroux, 1983). Bireylerin başarısı onların sosyal sınıfından ve ailelerinden bağımsız değildir. Buna göre şekillenen okul içi sosyal ilişkiler mevcut eşitsiz ekonomik düzenin iş gücü dağılıma cevap verir (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Böylelikle bu sistemde

İktidar sahibi olan kesim ayrıcalıklarını elinde tutmaya devam eder. Althusser de benzer şekilde bu kesimin iktidarını nasıl devam ettirdiğiyle ilgilenmiş ve devletin ideolojik aygıtlarını tanımlamıştır (Feinberg & Soltis, 2019). Mevcut üretim düzenin devam edebilmesi için üretim araçlarının ve iş gücünün tekrar üretilmesi gerekir bu için de baskın ideolojinin tekrar üretilmelidir. İdeolojik aygıtlardan olan eğitim de bireyleri küçük yaşta alıp çok uzun süre bünyesinde tutarak bu yeniden üretim sürecinde önemli bir yer tutar (Althusser, 1995/2014). Bu teorilerin yanında Bourdieu ve Passeron'un kültür odaklı yeniden üretim teorisi kültürel aktarım yoluyla toplumdaki güç dağılımı dengesizliğinin nasıl devam ettirildiğiyle ilgilenir (Apple, 1978). Buna göre okuldaki meşru otorite (öğretmen) tarafından aktarılan iktidar sahibi sınıfın kültürü eğitim yoluyla meşrutiyet kazanır ve herkes tarafından meşru kültür olarak kabul edilir (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/2015). Bu sayede iktidar sınıfının kültürü yeniden üretilmiş ve eşitsiz düzen devam ettirilmiş olur.

Kısaca, bütün bu teoriler eğitimin toplumsal yapıya nasıl katkı yaptığıyla ilgilenir ve bunu makro bir perspektiften bakarak yapar, bu sebeple okulun içinde neler olup bittiği ile ilgilenmedikleri için eleştirilmişlerdir (Apple, 1979). Bu yaklaşımlar ayrıca bireyler arası iletişime ve günlük olaylarla ilgilenmeden eğitime genel bir çerçeveden yaklaştığı ve bireylerin farklı özelliklerini ve özerkliklerini göz ardı ederek onları sadece sosyalleşmenin pasif ürünü kabul ettikleri için eleştirilmişler (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985).

Muhafazakârlık

Toplumda yaşanan teknik yenilikler, sosyal, ekonomik ve politik değişimler sonucu ortaya çıkan liberal yaklaşımlara, serbest piyasa ekonomisine, geleneklerin terkedilmesine, artan kültürel ve dini çeşitliliğe karşı çıkan muhafazakârlık düşüncesi kapalı piyasa ekonomisini, stabil insan hayatın ve gelenekleri savunur (Fawcett, 2020). Değişime karşı çıkan bu düşünceye göre geleneksel düzen, değerler ve kurumlar toplumsal yapının koruyucusudur ve bireylere aidiyet ve denge hissi verir (Heywood, 2004). Muhafazakâr düşünce aile ve din gibi toplumsal olguların korunması gerektiğini savunur (Özipek, 2006). Türkiye'de muhafazakârlık algısı dünyadaki genel algıdan farklıdır.

Genellikle muhafazakârlar dinin sosyal düzenin sağlanmasındaki rolünden bahsederler (Genç & Coşkun, 2015). Türkiye’de ise din muhafazakarlığın temel birleşeni olarak kabul edilir. Muhafazakârlık değişime karşı bir direnç dini, geleneği ve aile olgusunu koruma düşüncesi olarak tanımlanabilir (Türköz, 2011).

Din Eğitimi

Cumhuriyet tarihi boyunca Türkiye’de din eğitimi anlamında dinin tamamen eğitim içeriğinden çıkarılması, seçmeli din derslerinin müfredata eklenmesi ve son olarak din derslerinin zorunlu hale getirilmesi gibi farklı yaklaşımlar benimsenmiştir (Kaymakcan, 2006). Cumhuriyetin erken dönemlerinde bir ulus devlet anlayışı inşa etmek amacıyla eğitimde köklü değişiklikler yapılmıştır (Ayhan, 2000). Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu ile eğitim birliği sağlanmış, bütün okullar Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı’na (MEB) bağlanmış, din eğitimi MEB çatısı altında verilmeye başlanmıştır (Şimşek, 2013; Berkes, 1998). Ancak neredeyse 10 yıl boyunca din eğitimi müfredatta yer almamış ve MEB din eğitimi sağlama sorumluluğunu yerine getirmemiştir (Bilgin, 1993).

Çok partili dönemde partiler Müslüman oylarını almak için (Zürcher, 2017/ 2018) dine karşı daha ılımlı bir tutum sergilemişlerdir (Öcal, 1998; Giorgetti & Batır, 2008). Bu süreçte okulların farklı kademelerinde seçmeli din dersi verilmeye başlanmıştır, imam hatip okulları açılmıştır (Akyüz, 2021) ayrıca dini eğitim veren yüksek eğitim kurumları açılmıştır (Kaymakcan, 2006). 1960lı ve 1970li yıllarda dini eğitime dair gelişmeler yaşanmıştır. Hem yüksek öğretim kurumları açılmaya devam edilmiş hem de imam hatip liseleri açılmıştır (Öcal, 2008).

1980 yılı din eğitimi için oldukça önemlidir, askeri darbe sonrası oluşturulan yeni anayasa ile din dersi ilköğretim ve lise için zorunlu hale getirilmiştir (Kaymakcan, 2006) ayrıca yeni imam hatip orta okullarının açılmasına karar verilmiştir (Şahin& Kesik, 2019). Bu gelişmeler, milli kimlik tanımında etkisi giderek artan İslam etkisiyle alakalıdır. Kemalist düşüncenin aksine, Türk-İslam sentezi düşüncesi İslam’ı Türk kimliğinin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak kabul etmiştir (Gençkal Eroler, 2019). Kenan Evren’in de dahil olduğu laik askeri çevreler tarafından da bu görüşün kabul edilmesi

eđitim alanında etkili olmasına neden olmuştur (Zürcher, 2017/ 2018). Eđitimde artan din etkisi 28 Şubat sürecinde kısıtlanmıştır. Bu süreçte 8 yıllık kesintisiz eğitime geçilerek imam hatip orta okulları kapanmış (Genç, 2012) ve Kur'an kurslarına yaş sınırı ile Kur'an kurslarına kaydolabilmek ilköğretim 5. Sınıfı bitirme zorunluluđu getirilmiştir. (Öcal, 2017).

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)'nin iktidara gelmesiyle başlayan süreçte bu tekrar din etkili bir konuma gelmiştir. 4+4+4 Eğitim Sistemi ile imam hatip orta okulları tekrar açılmış ve diđer okullarda da din derslerinin sayıları arttırılmıştır (Genç, 2012). İlahiyat fakültelerinin sayıları artmış (Genç, 2018) ve Kur'an kuşları için yaş sınırlaması kaldırılmıştır (Öcal, 2017). Sınırlamanın kaldırılması erken çocukluk döneminde din eğitimi veren kurumlarının açılmasının önünü açmıştır. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı da (DİB) bu alanda 4-6 Kur'an kursları açmıştır (Sak, 2024) ve bu kurslar oldukça yaygındır.

Din eğitimi sadece Türkiye içinde ele alınan bir mesele değildir bu anlamda dünya da farklı yaklaşımlar mevcuttur. Oruç (2013) din eğitime dört farklı yaklaşım olduğundan bahseder. Seküler yaklaşımda okullarda din eğitimi verilmez (Fransa), herkes için din eğitimi yaklaşımı herhangi bir dini yasal olarak benimsemez (İngiltere), bir diđer model yasal olarak tanınan dinlerin öğretilmesidir (Almanya) son olarak toplu ret yaklaşımı bir din dışında diđer dinler için dini eğitimi yasaklar (İtalya). Devletlerin dine olan bakış açısı din eğitimi konusunda hangi yaklaşımı benimseyeceklerini, din eğitiminin kimlere, hangi şartlar altında ve nasıl bir içerikle sağlanacağını belirler (Oruç, 2013).

Din konusunda bir diđer önemli aktör ailedir. Dini inanç insanların anlayışlarını, davranış biçimlerini ve kurdukları ilişkileri etkiler (Dollaithe et al., 2018) dolayısıyla ebeveynlik süreçlerini de etkiler. Dini inançları insanları çocuklarının kimliklerini şekillendirmeleri ve ahlaki gelişimlerini desteklemeleri konusunda etkiler (Wilcox, 2008). Ebeveynlerin dini tutumları ayrıca onların çocuklarından beklentilerine, takdir ettikleri ya da onaylamadıkları davranış ve tutumlara etki eder ve bunları nasıl karşıladıklarına (Alwin, 1986; Acevedo et al., 2015).

YÖNTEM

Model

Bu arařtırmada DİB' e baęlı 4-6 yař Kur'an kursları vasıtasıyla din temelli çocuk yetiřtirme pratikleri ve muhafazakârlıęın üretimi ve yeniden üretimi arasındaki iliřkinin analiz edilmesi amaçlanmıřtır. Bu analiz için nitel bir desen içinde tekli arařsal durum çalıřması yapılmıřtır.

Örneklem ve Çalıřmanın Ortamı

Çalıřma Ankara'nın Yenimahalle ilçesinde DİB'e baęlı iki 4-6 yař Kur'an kursunda yürütölmüřtür. Her iki kursta da dört öęretici bulunmaktadır. Kurslardan biri tam gün eęitim vermekteyken dięeri hem yarım gün hem tam gün eęitim seçeneęi sunmaktadır. Kurslar çocukların yařlarına göre sınıflara bölünmüřtür ve mevcutları 46 ve 33'tür. Çalıřmanın katılımcıları bu iki kursta çalıřan öęretiler ve çocukları kurslarda eęitim gören verilerdir. Her iki kurstan beřer veliyle toplamda 10 veli ile bir kurstan iki dięer kurstan dört öęreticiyle toplamda altı öęretici arařtırmaya katılmıřtır. Toplam katılımcı sayısı 16'dır.

Veri Toplama Aracı ve Veri Analizi

Bu çalıřmada veriler öęreticiler ve veliler için ayrı olarak hazırlanmıř benzer içerikli görüřme sorularıyla gerçekteřtirilen yarı yapılandırılmıř görüřmeler sonucu elde edilmiřtir. Hem öęretici hem de veli görüřmeleri kurs ortamında geçekteřtirilmiřtir. Görüřme süreci tamamlandıktan sonra tematik analiz süreci için bütün görüřmeler titizlikle yazıya dökölmüřtür. Bu görüřmelerden ortaya çıkan veriler arařtırmacı tarafından kodlanmıř, kodlar gruplandırılarak temalar ve kategoriler belirlenmiřtir. Veri analizi sürecince bir yapı zekâ aracı olan ChatGPT kodlama ve tema oluřturma ařamasında arařtırmacı tarafından karřılařtırma yapmak amacıyla kullanılmıřtır. Tema oluřturma sürecinde tümevarımsal yaklařım tercih edilmiřtir. Kodlar ve temalar tez danıřmanı, bir veli ve bir öęretici ile paylařılmıř ve geri dönüřleri doęrultusunda düzenlemeler yapılarak temalar son halini almıřtır.

SONUÇ

Bu çalışma sonucunda ortaya veliler ve ögreticiler için ayrı ve birleşik temalar ortaya çıkmıştır, bu temalar ve onların altında ortaya çıkan alt temalar aşağıda sunulmaktadır.

Ebeveynlerin Dindar Kimlikleri

Velilerle yapılan görüşmeler sonucu ortaya çıkan bu tema dinin velilerin kimliğindeki önemli etkisini vurgulamaktadır. Bu tema üç alt temaya bölünmüştür: dini inanç, yaşamın dine dayalı organizasyonu ve peygamberin önemi.

Katılımcılar dini inançlarının hayatlarının merkezinde olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Dini inançların hayata bakış açılarındaki temel kaynak, bir güç ve memnuniyet kaynağı olarak katılımcıların hayatının merkezinde yer almaktadır. Ahiret inancı, dini kurallar hayata bakışlarının temelini oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcılar aynı zamanda Müslüman olmaktan duydukları memnuniyeti dile getirmişlerdir. Dini inançlarının ve kuralların her anlamda hayatlarını pozitif yönde etkilediğini, onları daha iyi insanlar olma hususunda cesaretlendirdiğini belirtmişlerdir. Din ayrıca sonsuz gücü olan bir yaratıcıya inanmayı içermesi katılımcılar için düzenleme ve başa çıkma gücü sağlamaktadır. Katılımcılar için Allah inancı stresli ve zor durumlarla başa çıkma gücü vermektedir.

Yaşamın dine dayalı organizasyonu dini pratikler (ibadetler) çevresinde şekillenen günlük hayatı, dini inançların etkisiyle şekillenen sosyal hayatı ve din etkisindeki ebeveynliği ifade etmektedir. Katılımcılar dini yaşam biçimi olarak betimlemişlerdir. Katılımcıların hepsi namaz, oruç, Kur'an okumak gibi ibadetleri yerine getirdiklerinden, bir kısmı ise günlük hayatlarını namaz vakitlerine göre düzenlediklerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Tebessüm etmek, yardımlaşmak gibi davranışlarını da ibadet kavramıyla ilişkilendirmektedirler. Dini inançlar katılımcıların giyim tercihleri, sosyal ilişkileri, arkadaş çevresi, alışveriş tercihlerini etkilemektedir. Çalışmaya katılan bütün katılımcılar tesettürlüdür. Kadın erkek ilişkilerindeki hassasiyetlerini belirtmişlerdir. Arkadaş çevrelerinde kendilerinden farklı insanlar da olduğunu belirtse de yakın çevrelerinin kendileri ile benzer inançları olan insanlardan oluştuğunu ifade etmektedirler. Katılımcılar alkol servis

eden ya da satan yerlere gitmemek ya da böyle yerlerden alışveriş yapmamak konusundaki hassasiyetlerini belirtmişlerdir. Alışveriş tercihleri ayrıca Filistin boykotu ile ilişkilidir. Filistin halkının Müslüman kardeş olarak benimsenmesi, Filistin topraklarının İslamiyet için kutsal kabul edilmesi bu tutumlarını etkilemektedir.

Peygamberin önemi onun katılımcılar için rehber ve örnek ebeveyn olarak kabul edilmesiyle alakalıdır. Peygamber kusursuz bir insan olarak kabul edilirken onun kişiliği, insanlığı, hayat tarzı ve babalığı örnek alınmıştır. Katılımcılar onun merhametini, güvenilirliğini ve sevgi dolu bir insan olmasını vurgulamışlardır. Hayatlarının her alanında peygamberin sünnet olarak adlandırılan davranışlarını uygulamaya çalıştıklarını ve bu davranışları çocuklarına aktarmaya özen gösterdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Çocuk yetiştirme sürecinde de onu örnek aldıklarını ve onun davranışlarının bilimsel çalışmalarla desteklenebileceğini ifade etmişlerdir.

Bir Kimlik Formu Olarak Din Öğreticiliği

Öğreticilerle yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda ortaya çıkan bu temadan üç alt tema ortaya çıkmıştır: uygun çalışma ortamı, hizmetin kültürü ve öğreticinin rolü.

Uygun çalışma ortamı tesettüre uygun giyinebilme ve muhafazakâr ortamı ifade etmektedir. Öğreticilerin bir kısmı başörtüsü takabilmelerine izin verdiği için DİB'i tercih ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. MEB gibi daha büyük kurumların aksine bu kursların benzer inançlara sahip, muhafazakâr insanlardan oluşması da bir tercih sebebidir. Kur'an kurslarında sadece kadınların çalışması rahat bir çalışma ortamı sağlamaktadır. Öğreticiler ayrıca dini eğitim veren diğer kurumların aksine devlete bağlı olan DİB'in daha resmi, şeffaf ve hesap verebilen bir kurum olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Son olarak öğretmenler, çocuklarla çok uzun süre vakit geçiriyor olmaları sebebiyle din eğitimi konusunda öğretmenlerin çok etkili olduklarından bahsetmişlerdir. Öğreticiler çocuklarda dine dair pozitif tutum geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadırlar ve bu süreçte çocuklara rol model olmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Dinin çocuklara olabildiğince soyut konulardan kaçınarak, onların anlayabileceği düzeyde somutlaştırılarak, oyunlar ve hikâyeler yoluyla öğretildiği belirtilmiştir.

Din Temelli Çocuk Yetiştirme

Her iki katılımcı grubundan elde edilen benzer veriler sonucu ortaya çıkan bu temada üç alt tema oluşmuştur: uygun din eğitimi, çocukların günlük hayatlarında din, erken yaşların önemi.

Uygun din eğitimi çocuklara uygun kurs müfredatı, kursların güvenilirliği ve dine dair farkındalık ve pozitif tutum geliştirmek olarak ifade edilmiştir. Kurs müfredatının geliştirilmesi gerektiğini belirtmekle beraber genel anlamda çocuklara uygun olduğu ifade edilmiştir. Katılımcılara göre dini bilgilerin yanında değerler eğitimi, Kur'an eğitimi ve MEB'in tanımladığı standart okul öncesi kazanımlarını belirten tamamlayıcı kazanımları içeren, katı olmayan program çocukların gelişimini bütünsel anlamda desteklemektedir. Özellikle 15 Temmuz süreci sonrası cemaatlere karşı güvensizliğin artmasıyla devlet tarafından sağlanan din eğitiminin gerekliliği vurgulanmaktadır. Bu anlamda DİB kursları güvenilir ve finansal ulaşılabilir bir seçenek sunmaktadır.

Çocukların günlük hayatlarında din hayatın normal akışının bir parçası olarak yer almaktadır. Hem evde hem de kursta din odaklı ortamlarla çevrili olan çocuklar dini kurallar, ibadetler, Allah, peygamber gibi kavramlarla günlük hayatlarında sürekli olarak karşılaşmaktadırlar. Katılımcılar ayrıca çok da bilinçli olmayarak ibadet ettikleri ya da yetişkinlerin ibadetlerine eşlik ettiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Çocuklar günde bir defa namaz kılmak, oynayarak abdest almak, yarım gün oruç tutmak gibi bir takım dini davranışlarda bulunmaktadırlar. Erken yaşta din eğitimi ağaç yaşken eğilir mottosuyla açıklanmaktadır. Çocuklara bu yaşlarda verilen din eğitimin ileriki yaşları için önemli temel olacağına inanılmaktadır. Erken yaşlarda alınan dini eğitimin ileriki yaşlarda hem akademik bilgilerin öğrenilmesinde hem de dinin daha kolay öğrenilmesinde faydalı olabileceği belirtilmiştir.

Karakter Şekillendirme

Her iki katılımcı grubundan elde edilen benzer veriler sonucu ortaya çıkan bu temada iki alt tema oluşmuştur: dini ve milli kimlik, ahlaki gelişim.

Dini ve milli kimlik bilinçli Müslümanlık ve topluma faydalı vatandaşlıkla tanımlanmıştır. Katılımcılar dini eğitim yoluyla dini kuralları içselleştirmiş, hayatını dini bakış açısıyla yaşayan dindar bireyler yetiştirmeyi amaçladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Çocukların ülkesi, ümmeti için hayırlı topluma faydalı bireyler olmalarını istediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Ahlaki gelişim dini eğitimle amaçlanan diğer husustur. Katılımcılar Allah'ın istediği doğrultuda ahlaklı, dürüst, adaletli, kul hakkına dikkat eden, saygılı çocuklar yetiştirmeyi istemektelerdir. Diğer bir deyişle ahlak, dürüst, adalet gibi evrensel kavramlar Allah'ın istediği kul olmakla ilişkilendirilmiştir.

Tartışma

Bu çalışmada DİB'e Kur'an kursları vasıtasıyla din temelli çocuk yetiştirme pratikleri incelenmiştir. Bu pratiklerin muhafazakarlığın inşasındaki etkisi araştırılmıştır. Bu bağlamda üç konu açığa çıkmıştır: dindar veliler, dindar öğretmenler ve dindar bireyler yetiştirmek.

Bu çalışmaya göre İslam velilerin hayatlarındaki en önemli faktörlerden biridir. Kimliklerini dini inançlarıyla tanımlamaktadırlar. Rieffer (2003) dinin önemini insanlara kimlik sağlaması, inanan kişilere yol göstermesi ve davranışları için rehberlik etmesiyle açıklamıştır. Din insanlar için değerler sistemi, kurallar ve inançlar doğrultusunda sosyalleşme olanakları sağlamaktadır (King, 2003). Bu çalışmada veliler hayatlarını din doğrultusunda düzenlediklerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Saroğlu (2011) dinin inanç, bağlılık, davranış ve aidiyet boyutlarıyla ele almıştır. Bu bağlamda velilerin dinin bütün boyutlarından bahsettiğini söylemek mümkündür. Velilerin dinarlığı çocukların deneyimlerini, ebeveynleriyle olan ilişkilerini etkilediği için önemlidir (Godina, 2014).

Öğreticilerin dini inançları meslek tercihlerindeki önemli faktörlerden biridir. DİB başörtüsüyle çalışmaya olanak sağlaması sebebiyle önemlidir. Başörtüsü sadece dini kuralların takip edilmesiyle değil aynı zamanda bireylerin dini inancını ve kimliğini görünür kılmaları sebebiyle önemlidir (Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013). Başörtüsü aynı zamanda kadınların mekân tanımlamalarını etkilemektedir. Sadece kadınların olduğu

ya da yabancı erkeklerin olmadığı alanlar özel alanlar olarak tanımlanırken, kadınların ve erkeklerin bir arada bulunduğu mekânlar kamusal alan olarak tanımlanmadır (Furseth, 2011). Bu bağlamda Kur'an kursları sadece kadınların çalışması sebebiyle çalışanlarına özel alanlarına yakın alanlar sunmaktadır. Öğreticilerin dini inançları çocukların da dinle ilişkili algılarını etkilemektedir (De Roos et al., 2001)

Tıpkı veliler ve öğreticilerde olduğu gibi din çocukların da hayatında etkili faktörlerden biridir. Çocuklara dini bilgiler, pratikler ve değerler hem evde hem de kursta aktarılmaktadır. İnsanların dini eğitimi istemesinin başlıca sebepleri çocuklarının Müslüman kimliklerini ve cemaate olan aidiyetlerinin beslemek, onlara dini değerleri aktarmak ve İslami bilgileri öğretmektir (McCreery et al., 2007). Çocuklar çok küçük yaştan itibaren dini anlayışla şekillendirilmiş olan bakış açısıyla karşılaşmaktadırlar. Brown ve Taylor (2015) erken yaşlardan itibaren dinle haşır neşir olmanın ileriki yaşlardaki dindarlığı etkileyebileceğini belirtmişlerdir. Dine dair alışkanlık geliştirmenin önemini vurgulamışlardır. Kısaca, din temelli çocuk yetiştirme yoluyla çocukların dini ve milliyetçi kimliklerini oluşturulması ve beslenmesi Köni ve Torun'a (2012) göre sosyal bağların, dinin ve ahlaki değerlerin toplumlar için gerekliliğini vurgulayan muhafazakârlığın oluşturulmasında rol oynayabilir.

Öneriler

Bu çalışma velilerin ve öğreticilerle yapıldığı için onları bakış açılarını göstermiştir. Ancak çocuklar bu sürecin önemli ve aktif katılımcıdır. Bu sebeple onların bakış açılarını analiz edilmesi önem arz etmektedir. Ayrıca Kur'an kurslarındaki eğitim sürecinin de yakından incelenmesi gerekmektedir.

Son olarak din temelli çocuk yetiştirme bireylerin ileriki yıllardaki eğitim hayatlarını, yetişkinliklerini de etkileyebilme ihtimali olan uzun sürecek etkileri olabilecek bir süreç olduğu için bu süreci ileriki yaşlardaki kişisel, sosyal ve akademik etkileri araştırılmalıdır.

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