THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF TOURISM: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN TÜRKIYE

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Abstract

Türkiye is a region that bears the traces of many different civilizations from the past to the present. This diversity has endowed the country's culture with a deep and rich dimension. This study examines the role of social studies education in the preservation of cultural heritage in Turkey and its relationship with tourism. The aim of the research is to reveal the potential contributions of social studies education to the sustainability of cultural heritage and the development of tourism by evaluating its impact on students. Conducted within the framework of a qualitative research design, the study involved a comprehensive literature review and an analysis of the 2005 and 2018 social studies curricula for grades 4, 5, 6, and 7. The findings indicate that social studies education provides students with significant awareness regarding the preservation of cultural heritage in Turkey and its integration with tourism. Furthermore, this research emphasizes the educational role of social studies education in the context of preserving cultural heritage and the sustainability of tourism. These findings may contribute to shaping educational policies in Turkey and other countries in this direction.
Keywords: *social studies education, culture and heritage, cultural heritage and tourism, Turkey's cultural heritage, preservation of cultural heritage*

Introduction

Cultural heritage is defined as the aggregate of material and intangible values that a society has constructed from the past to the present and aspires to transmit to future generations. The preservation of this heritage, its sustainable utilization, and its integration into tourism are of significant importance for the conservation and promotion of a nation's cultural richness. Cultural heritage provides an important opportunity to safeguard and value a nation's way of life and the creative talents of its citizens. This heritage holds the key to reaching and understanding ancient civilizations (Ahunbay, 2007).

Furthermore, regions endowed with cultural heritage possess significant potential for economic growth and development in the context of tourism. These areas can attract tourists not only through their historical and cultural assets but also with their natural beauty. Such destinations that capture tourists' interest contribute to local economies while also being crucial for the preservation of cultural heritage and the development of sustainable tourism practices. This interest in cultural heritage sites stems from tourists' desire to explore different cultures and lifestyles, to gain new experiences, and to discover. These regions contain historical and cultural riches and have become a unique center of attraction for tourists. While increasing

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demand provides positive contributions to local economies, it also brings with it the necessity of safeguarding these regions and implementing sustainable tourism practices. This circumstance underscores the significance of cultural and heritage tourism. The integration of cultural heritage into the tourism industry contributes to the development of new tourist destinations. These emerging destinations aim to explore regions with untapped tourism potential and to enhance tourism revenues. Furthermore, by incorporating cultural heritage into tourism, the preservation and sustainable utilization of cultural and historical assets in those regions are ensured (Uslu & Kiper, 2006).

Turkey is a country rich in history and culture and has many important works on the World Heritage list. This wealth stems from the fact that Turkey has hosted many civilizations in different periods. World Heritage sites in Turkey stand out with their historical and cultural values (Halaç et al., 2022). The conservation of this heritage and its effective utilization in tourism can significantly enhance the country's tourism potential, thereby contributing to economic and social development. Therefore, the protection of historical and cultural heritage and its deliberate integration into tourism should be implemented through appropriate strategies. Transmitting and safeguarding this heritage for future generations can be achieved through cultural heritage education, a process that plays a vital role in maintaining the nation's cultural identity and historical continuity. In this regard, emphasizing cultural heritage education within formal education and developing a student profile that is sensitive to Turkey's cultural heritage is not merely an option but a necessity.

Cultural heritage education comprehensively introduces students to the historical and cultural richness of society. This training covers a variety of topics, including historical buildings, museum collections, old cities, cultural landscapes, street views, monumental buildings, local traditions, photography, print media, written documents, judicial records, family archives, memoirs, artifacts, and other objects. The aim is to safeguard, appreciate, and learn about these wide ranges of elements. This aspect of education allows students to make informed decisions about safeguarding cultural elements such as artifacts, arts, traditions, and languages. This awareness is of critical importance not only for the safeguarding of historical and aesthetic values but also for the sustainable management of these heritages and their evaluation by new generations (Dönmez & Yeşilbursa, 2014).

As previously mentioned, delivering quality education within formal educational systems is a crucial means of safeguarding cultural heritage elements and passing them on to future generations. In this context, social studies courses offer a significant platform for integrating cultural heritage education into formal curricula. Through their content and learning objectives, social studies can substantially contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. In Turkey, social studies textbooks include sections on the safeguarding and sustainable use of cultural heritage. In these sections, students are informed about the definition, types, importance, and necessity of safeguarding cultural heritage (Pehlivan, 2015). Furthermore, social studies education can enhance the commitment of future generations to heritage preservation by educating students about the significance of cultural heritage in the tourism sector and the impact of its conservation on tourism. Employing appropriate strategies within the curriculum to highlight these aspects can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation among students, thereby promoting sustainable tourism practices. This education can emphasize the economic and social importance of cultural heritage, enabling students to embrace these values and develop conservation awareness. In this way, social studies courses can both support the sustainability of cultural heritage and increase awareness of this issue in society.

The research studies entitled "Cultural Heritage: A Systematic Literature Review" by Halaç and Bademci (2021), "Bibliometric Analysis of Theses on 'Cultural Heritage' in Turkey" by Çelebi, Çiftsüren, and Dilek (2020), "A Conceptual Study on the Concepts of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Heritage Tourism" by Diker (2019), "Evaluation of Cultural

Heritage in Terms of Tourism: The Case of Taşköprü District" by Sezer (2017), "Protection and Conservation through Cultural Heritage Tourism: A Case Study of Musi Riverside Palembang" by Lussetyowati (2015), "Management of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Context of Tourism: Perspectives of Chinese Authorities" by Su (2020), and "Evaluation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources within the Scope of Tourism Attractiveness: The Case of Ebru Art" by Pelit and Türkoğlu (2020) are prominently featured in the literature.

A significant gap exists in the academic literature regarding the role of social studies education in preserving cultural heritage and its impact on tourism. Current research largely focuses on the direct relationship between cultural heritage and the tourism industry. This gap underscores the need for further scholarly exploration and a more pronounced inclusion of this subject within educational policies. Integrating more extensive content on cultural heritage and tourism into educational curricula could deepen students' knowledge in this field and foster a consciousness geared towards preservation. An increase in academic studies in this area may provide substantial contributions not only to elevating awareness about the safeguarding and sustainable utilization of cultural heritage but also to enhancing tourism potential.

Research Problem

The research problem of this study focuses on the role of social studies education in the preservation of cultural heritage in Turkey and its connection to tourism. Despite the rich cultural heritage of Turkey, which has hosted numerous civilizations throughout history, there is limited research addressing the intersection of cultural heritage education and tourism within the context of social studies. Current studies primarily concentrate on the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism, overlooking the potential of social studies education to contribute to both the preservation of heritage and the sustainable development of tourism.

This gap in the literature suggests a need for further exploration and greater emphasis on integrating cultural heritage and tourism into educational policies. By enhancing the inclusion of cultural heritage and tourism in social studies curricula, students can deepen their understanding of these topics and develop a consciousness toward preservation. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how social studies education can foster awareness of cultural heritage preservation among students and contribute to sustainable tourism practices in Türkiye. The findings of this research could offer valuable insights for shaping future educational policies in Turkey and other countries with similar cultural contexts.

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this research, an extensive literature review was conducted to examine the role of social studies education in Türkiye within the context of cultural heritage preservation and its connection to tourism. As part of this effort, a conceptual framework was developed.

A literature review is a research method that systematically examines the existing body of knowledge on a particular topic or research question. This method allows the researcher to deeply analyze existing studies in the field, gain insight into current theories and findings, and identify gaps or deficiencies in the research area (Webster & Watson, 2002). The literature review forms the theoretical basis of the research and provides a framework for new studies.

In this method, the researcher first selects literature suitable for the study and analyzes it systematically. The scope of the literature review can be broad or narrow, depending on the aim and scope of the study. The results of the literature review provide the researcher with the current body of knowledge on the topic, as well as making recommendations for future research and critiquing existing studies (Okoli & Schabram, 2010).

Data Collection

In this study, an exhaustive literature review was conducted to meticulously evaluate the extant scholarly landscape across the domains of cultural heritage, cultural heritage tourism, and social studies education. The objective of this review was to delineate prevailing trends and identify existing gaps within these interconnected fields. Additionally, curricula developed and implemented for the Social Studies course were reviewed, and the data obtained were analyzed according to historical categories. The study evaluated the objectives, content, principles, suggested learning outcomes, and teaching-learning processes of the 2005 and 2018 social studies programs for grades 4, 5, 6, and 7. The sources used as basic data in the study are as follows.

• Turkey 2005 Primary and Secondary School Social Studies Program
• Turkey 2018 Secondary School Social Studies Program

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data obtained in this study was made on the Social Studies programs of 2005 and 2018. In the analysis process, firstly the aims, content structure, principles, suggested outcomes, and teaching-learning processes of both programs were examined. The data obtained were classified according to historical category and evaluated using a comparative analysis method. In this context, the contributions and limitations of both programs regarding the preservation of cultural heritage and its linkage with tourism were identified. The findings from the analysis were interpreted in light of the insights garnered through the literature review, and a detailed assessment was provided on the role of social studies education in Turkey in safeguarding cultural heritage.

Research Results

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is a widely recognized and universally endorsed concept among historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and other experts in the humanities. It constitutes a significant element that reflects the diversity and richness of human history, necessitating an interdisciplinary approach to its preservation and evaluation (Prott & O'Kefee, 1992). Comprehensive in its definition, cultural heritage encompasses all the creations and values of a community that have emerged through human activities. Furthermore, this concept is often described as a living heritage, transmitted from one generation to the next, thereby bridging the past, present, and future (Can, 2009; Oğuz, 2009).

For an object to be considered cultural heritage, it must meet several specific criteria. These criteria include elements such as the historical meaning of the object, social evaluation processes, its safeguard state, and the level of awareness of society towards this heritage. Cultural heritage includes material and spiritual works created for different reasons in various periods of human history. This definition emphasizes that for a work to be considered a cultural heritage, it must be meaningful to humanity and be passed down from generation to generation. To examine this broad framework in more detail (Heraduc, 2005; cited in Gürel, 2018; Günden, 2021):

• **Social Evaluation:** The acceptance of a work as a cultural heritage indicates that the work has been subjected to a certain evaluation by society. This evaluation may be based on the artistic, aesthetic, scientific, or religious significance of the work. For example, the architecture of a church or the melody of a folk song may be viewed as culturally valuable by society.

- **Historical Significance:** This significance may arise because the work is associated with a specific historical event or period, or because it played an important role in the development of a society. For example, weapons used in a war or the writings of a statesman have a direct connection with events on the stage of history.
- **Safeguard Status:** Works accepted as cultural heritage must be safeguarded without deterioration or change over time. This requires, in addition to physical preservation, preservation of the original context and meaning of the work. For example, when restoring a historic building, the methods and materials used must safeguard the structure to its original form.
- **Social Awareness:** The safeguarding and evaluation of cultural heritage is closely related to the level of awareness of society towards this heritage. Society's appreciation of cultural heritage and its awareness of safeguarding this heritage play a critical role in passing it on to future generations. This can be achieved through educational programs, museums, and the media.

İşçi's (2000) explanations on cultural heritage emphasize that this concept is not limited to concrete works and objects, but also includes abstract elements such as people's beliefs, knowledge, and values. Cultural heritage appears in many different forms in terms of tangible elements, such as historical buildings, works of art, books, ancient inscriptions, ancient objects, and archaeological sites. These elements reflect the lifestyles, technologies, artistic and craft skills of past civilizations and societies. These works attract attention not only for their aesthetic value but also for their historical and cultural importance. On the other hand, intangible aspects of cultural heritage include cultural expressions such as language, music, dance, song, theatre, rituals, festivals, and ceremonies. These expressions not only convey the cultural identity and social memory of a society but also reflect the worldview and philosophy of life of that society.

Table 1
Categorization of Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage		
Tangible Cultural Heritage		Intangible Cultural Heritage
Immovable cultural heritage	Movable Cultural Heritage	
Architectural Works	Museum Exhibitions	Music
Monuments	Libraries	Dance
Archaeological sites	Archives	Literature
Building Groups	Jewelry	Theater
Historical Centers	Decorative Objects	Oral Culture Tradition
Cultural Landscapes	Antique Coins	Traditional Festivals
Historical Parks and Gardens	Everyday Items	Ceremonies
Botanical Gardens	Musical Instruments	Handicrafts
Canals, bridges, etc.	Pictures	Parades
		Games

Reference: (Toyvan et al., 2017)

Tangible cultural heritage includes structures and objects created by human hands; these works are preserved and valued with the aim of being passed on to future generations. As defined by Can (2009), these heritage elements consist of movable or immovable tangible heritage items such as archaeological sites, monuments, ancient architectural structures, cultural landscapes, and parks. McKercher and Cros (2003) emphasized the importance of preserving

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these works. Movable cultural heritage includes physically vulnerable and valuable works of art such as glass, leather, ceramics, carpets, kilims, sculptures, furniture, manuscripts, and coins. Immovable cultural heritage encompasses structures that meet various societal needs, such as social complexes, inns, theaters, mosques, workshops, and areas with ethnological or anthropological value formed through natural means (Ahunbay, 2007; Kurtar & Somuncu, 2013).

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage characterizes intangible cultural heritage as encompassing a broad spectrum of rituals, representations, and expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills that communities and, in certain instances, individuals consider essential to their cultural identity. These cultural elements, along with their associated tools, materials, and spaces, are fundamental for the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. They are preserved and continuously revitalized through the interactions between communities and their surrounding environments, natural conditions, and historical contexts, thereby reinforcing a sense of identity and continuity within these communities. In this context, some examples of intangible cultural heritage are given below (Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2006).

- **Cultural Heritage Transmitted through Language**: Oral culture elements such as epic poems, myths, social stories, traditional proverbs, folk tales, and comic stories.
- **Performing Arts**: Stage arts such as shadow plays, storytelling, traditional puppet shows, and local theater.
- **Traditional Social Events and Ceremonies**: Personal and seasonal social events such as engagement and wedding ceremonies, birth celebrations, and New Year's Eve.
- **Traditional Knowledge Regarding Nature and the Cosmos**: Practical knowledge related to nature such as local culinary culture, traditional medicine, annual time calendars, and old weather forecasting methods.
- **Crafts and Handicrafts**: Handicrafts such as textile weaving, eye bead making, fine metalworking, coppersmithing, and traditional building arts.

These factors are essential in maintaining the cultural identity of communities, facilitating its transmission across generations, and ensuring its vitality through continual reproduction.

The concepts of material and nonmaterial (spiritual) culture defined by Arıkan (2012) explain the two basic aspects of culture. Material culture is the totality of physical artifacts and technologies created by humans. This includes a society's technological development, its economic activities, and the social practices associated with the use of these products. For example, a society's architecture, agricultural tools, clothing, and kitchen utensils are part of material culture. While these elements reflect the technological capabilities and economic conditions of a society, they also demonstrate the aesthetic preferences and environmental adaptations of that society. Nonmaterial culture, on the other hand, is a more abstract concept that includes people's religious beliefs, moral values, customs, and traditions. This includes how individuals and societies think, feel, and interact with each other. Spiritual culture is transmitted through unwritten rules, language, stories, music, dance, rituals, and other artistic expressions. These cultural elements shape the character, ethical values , and social norms of society.

As a result, both forms of culture are important factors that affect the identity of a society and the interactions of individuals within the society with each other and their environment. While material culture shows the physical and economic capacity of a society, spiritual culture reflects the worldview of individuals and the moral structure of the society. Together, they can help us understand a society's past, its present, and the way it shapes its future.

Cultural Heritage and Tourism

The meaning and importance of cultural heritage are closely related to people's lifestyles, thoughts, and historical processes. As emphasized by Richards (2001), cultural heritage is not just about physical objects or monuments; it also includes social practices, beliefs, language, art, and ways of thinking that people have developed over time. These dynamics play a fundamental role in maintaining the identity and continuity of a community. Cultural heritage builds bridges between a community's past and present. For example, practices such as traditional festivals, rituals, and crafts show how a society has evolved throughout history and what values it has

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safeguarded along the way. At the same time, such cultural elements strengthen individuals' sense of belonging to their communities and ensure the transfer of knowledge between generations.

Associating cultural heritage with tourism enables the promotion and evaluation of this heritage on a global scale. While tourists have the chance to explore different cultures and experience their unique elements, local communities also have the opportunity to safeguard and promote their cultural heritage sustainably. This process provides both economic benefits and enables the cultural heritage to be appreciated by a wide audience (Richrads, 2001; Timothy, 2011).

Cultural heritage tourism, according to the definition by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), includes people participating in cultural activities, festivals, art events, educational trips, visiting historical sites and statues, or religious travel such as pilgrimages. This type of tourism not only encourages people to participate in these activities but also offers the opportunity to experience the lifestyle of local people and the identity and characteristics of the local area (UNWTO, 2010).

Historically, spiritual and religious motivations have held an important place in the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism. For centuries, people have traveled to visit various holy places, temples, and religious sites for their spiritual development, religious beliefs, and spiritual quests. Timothy (2011) stated that people make such trips and visit places to enrich their spiritual world. Such travels can be seen as part of both individual and collective spiritual life. For example, in Islam, the Hajj pilgrimage, which every Muslim must perform at least once in their lifetime, is performed in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. In Hinduism, religious visits to holy cities in India are important. In Buddhism, visits to the holy places in Nepal and India, where the Buddha spent his life, have similar significance (Timothy, 2011).

Cultural heritage tourism, as a type of tourism built on fundamental principles based on epistemology and ontology, requires an in-depth examination of both how cultural knowledge is formed and what culture is in terms of ontology. This type of tourism focuses on the use of cultural elements, both tangible (e.g. historical buildings, monuments) and intangible (e.g. rituals, festivals, language), for touristic purposes. In recent years, it has been an issue that has been frequently brought to the agenda, especially in economic, environmental, and cultural aspects. It is observed that cultural heritage tourism has great potential for countries with developing economies. In these countries, the integration of cultural heritage with tourism provides economic benefits by accelerating economic growth, creating employment, and increasing foreign exchange inflows. Tourists' desire to interact with local culture creates an increased demand for local services and products, thereby contributing to the support of small businesses and traditional crafts such as handicrafts (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009).

The existence of various cultural elements in different locations significantly contributes to the development of cultural heritage-based tourism (Emekli, 2006). This form of tourism offers a holistic experience by encompassing both the tangible heritage, which includes physical objects such as structures and monuments, and the intangible heritage, encompassing cultural practices such as rituals, music, and language, of the places visited. While tangible cultural heritage is generally considered to include historical and physical structures perceived as static, unchanging, and requiring preservation, intangible cultural heritage represents the dynamic and constantly evolving cultural practices, knowledge, and skills of society. However, studies in the literature emphasize that when both types of heritage are considered together, they create a richer and more attractive tourism product (Basat, 2013; Karakul, 2011; Timothy, 2011).

This integration allows cultural heritage tourism to not only safeguard the past but also showcase the vitality and dynamism of local cultures. It can provide visitors with the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of the history and traditions of a region, while also experiencing contemporary cultural expressions and lifestyles.

Cultural heritage tourism can highlight the history, art, architecture, and traditions of visited areas, allowing tourists to discover the unique cultural characteristics of these places. This type of tourism helps increase cultural awareness and respect while also providing economic support to local communities. Visitors directly contribute to the local economy by purchasing local artworks and handicrafts and benefiting from local services (UNWTO, 2010).

Conversely, the effective administration of cultural heritage tourism necessitates the protection and sustainable promotion of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements.

This strategy not only reinforces the cultural identity of local communities but also generates economic benefits while mitigating the adverse effects associated with tourism.

Finally, cultural heritage tourism can contribute to the development of global understanding and intercultural dialogue. Visitors can gain new perspectives by interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. This can help increase understanding and peace between people, especially in a world where diversity and cultural richness are celebrated.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage from a Tourism Perspective

Cultural heritage encompasses the historical, artistic, linguistic, and traditional values of a community. Tourism can act as both a beneficial and potentially harmful factor in the preservation and sustainability of this heritage. International organizations, such as UNESCO, advocate for the protection of cultural heritage. Simultaneously, the tourism industry has the capacity to enhance awareness and provide economic support by promoting cultural heritage on a global scale (UNESCO, 2021).

The tourism sector has great potential in terms of preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Cultural heritage includes tangible and intangible elements that encompass the history, art, architecture, and traditions of a region. The contribution of tourism to the safeguarding of cultural heritage provides both economic and social benefits by ensuring the sustainable use of these elements. For example, revenues generated through visitor spending can be used to finance restoration and conservation projects. Additionally, cultural tourism can encourage local people to embrace and actively safeguard their cultural values (Smith & Richards, 2013; Richards, 2018).

The impact and continuity of cultural heritage tourism are directly linked to the conditions of the environment in which it is located. As stated by Poria (2001), this type of tourism is influenced by several factors such as the local environment, the cultural structure of the society, economic conditions, and environmental factors. All of these elements determine how cultural heritage tourism takes shape, how it should be managed, and the impacts of tourism activities on local communities. These are:

- **Importance of Environmental Conditions**: Cultural heritage tourism should be planned by considering environmental conditions. This includes preserving natural landscapes, maintaining historical sites, and developing infrastructure sustainably. For example, the natural beauty and biodiversity of a region may be a major attraction for tourism, but damage to these areas as a result of overuse may reduce tourism potential in the long run. Therefore, environmental sustainability is a critical factor for the success of cultural heritage tourism.
- **Cultural Dynamics:** Cultural heritage tourism plays a pivotal role in the preservation and enhancement of local cultural identities. The inherent cultural values, traditions, and lifestyles of the indigenous population provide both educational and appealing elements that attract and engage tourists. However, there is also the possibility that tourism may harm these cultural characteristics. The commodification (commercialization) of local cultures, that is, the use of cultural elements solely for economic value, can lead to cultural degradation. This requires careful management to safeguard the authenticity of the cultural heritage.
- **Economic Impacts**: Cultural heritage tourism can make significant contributions to local economies. Tourist spending creates new jobs and improves local services. However, these economic benefits must be distributed fairly to local communities. Otherwise, a large share of the economic benefits may flow to non-local businesses, resulting in local people not benefiting sufficiently from tourism revenues.
- **Management Strategies**: For effective cultural heritage tourism management, supporting strategies for both environmental and cultural sustainability should be created by considering these factors. This includes the active participation of local communities in tourism planning and management processes, control of visitor numbers, infrastructure development appropriate to the local environment, and allocation of resources for the preservation of cultural heritage.

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However, uncontrolled growth of tourism can lead to overuse of cultural sites and environmental damage. In this context, it necessitates the adoption of sustainable tourism practices, especially in sensitive areas. For example, limiting the number of visitors, carefully planning infrastructure investments, and involving local communities in management processes can minimize potential negative impacts (Garrod, 2019).

Effective and strategic management is vital for the preservation of cultural heritage through tourism. Such management must concurrently promote the long-term conservation of cultural values and the sustainable growth of the tourism sector. Preserving cultural heritage not only maintains elements of the past for future generations but also upholds the identities and historical connections of local communities. Within this framework, balancing the economic benefits derived from tourism with the protection of cultural heritage is of paramount importance. Moving forward, sustaining this balance will be crucial for professionals working in both the tourism and cultural preservation industries. Additionally, the protection of cultural heritage through tourism necessitates the involvement and awareness of local populations. The active participation of community members in this process will enhance the recognition of cultural value preservation and facilitate the transmission of these values to future generations (Grilli et al., 2021).

The Role of Social Studies Education in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage from a Tourism Perspective in Turkey

Cultural heritage education allows students the opportunity to investigate their identities and the cultural origins of their communities. According to Özbaş (2009), within this framework, social studies curricula enable students to contemplate fundamental questions such as "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" while also offering opportunities to comprehend both their cultural heritage and that of other cultures. This educational process facilitates students' understanding of their identities and the historical and cultural milieu of their society, thereby fostering their development into more informed and effective citizens.

While social studies support societies' efforts to promote and develop their cultural values, it also shows students the interactions and connections between these cultures. This provides students with a broad perspective and equips them with global citizenship awareness. Social studies education not only introduces students to their cultural heritage but also helps them understand the interactions and connections between different cultures. In this way, students become more tolerant and understanding individuals by becoming aware of cultural differences and similarities. In the education provided within the scope of social studies courses, the richness and diversity of cultural heritage are taught by making use of various disciplines such as history, geography, economy, art, and language. History education elucidates the evolution and impact of ancient civilizations and cultures, while geography education explores the interconnections between these cultures and their geographical settings as well as environmental contexts. On the other hand, economics classes delve into the economic aspects of cultural heritage and its intersection with tourism. Art education highlights the significance of cultural expressions and aesthetic contributions. Moreover, language education is pivotal in perpetuating cultural heritage through both oral and written mediums" (Deveci, 2009; Safran, 2011).

The Social Studies Curriculum in Turkey places great importance on the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the development of national awareness. Updated by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) in 2018, this program aims to create cultural awareness in students by conveying the basic elements of Turkish culture and history to them through the "Culture and Heritage" learning area. This provides students with the opportunity to understand not only their past but also how this heritage can be safeguarded and developed in the future. The fourth article of the program aims to enable students to understand the basic components and processes in Turkish culture and history and to accept the need to safeguard the cultural heritage that contributes to the formation of national consciousness. This encourages students not only to gain knowledge about cultural heritage but also to combine this knowledge with the responsibility of safeguarding and developing it. The Culture and Heritage learning area offers students a broad perspective by addressing various aspects of Turkish culture. The courses in this learning area aim to make students understand the rich cultural texture of Turkey and to

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raise awareness about how to safeguard these cultural values and how to pass them on to future generations (MNE, 2018).

Social studies education imparts students with the knowledge and awareness necessary to understand the significance and preservation of cultural heritage (MNE, 2018). The Ministry of National Education (MNE) has outlined various educational objectives within the "Culture and Heritage" framework in its 2005 and 2018 Social Studies Curriculums for 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade levels. These objectives are essential for enabling students to recognize cultural heritage, develop an awareness of its safeguarding, and comprehend the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism.

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Table 2

Learning Areas and Achievements Related to Cultural Heritage in the Social Studies Curriculum

Program Year	Grade	Learning Area	Achievements
2005 Program	4th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. It exhibits traces of change and continuity through his family and objects in his/her environment. 2. Emphasizes the necessity of preserving the natural habitats and cultural factors in the region where he/she lives. 3. Analyzes the differences and similarities between the cultural elements of various countries and those of our nation.
2018 Program	4th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. Conduct a study on family history using oral, written, and visual materials and objects. 2. Provides examples by examining the elements that represent the national culture in his/her family and environment. 3. Compare traditional children's games with modern games in terms of change and continuity.Formun Üstü
2005 Program	5th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. Provides examples of cultural characteristics in different regions of our country. 2. Individuals evaluate the cultural elements in their own culture and those around them in terms of similarities and differences. 3. Details the importance of cultural values in social coexistence
2018 Program	5th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. Describe the natural and historical places, objects, and works in his/her environment. 2. Individuals define cultural elements in their own culture and their environment in terms of similarities and differences. 3. Analyzes the impact of cultural values on living together in the community.
2005 Program	6th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. Examines the relationship between the rituals in celebrations and ceremonies and the elements that make up our culture from the perspective of change and continuity. 2. Analyze the impact of international culture, art, and sports events on interactions between societies. 3. Interpret female figures in Turkish history and the development of women's rights.
2018 Program	6th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. Analyzes the geographical locations, political structures, economic conditions, and cultural characteristics of the earliest Turkish states established in Central Asia. 2. Examines in detail the processes of Turks settling in Anatolia between the 11th and 13th centuries. 3. Examines the effects of historical trade routes on the political, cultural, and economic relationships between various societies.
2005 Program	7th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. Provides examples supporting the importance of tolerance and the culture of living together in Ottoman society. 2. Documents the unique aspects of Turkish culture using travel books. 3. By examining the Anatolian Seljuk period, it analyzes the effects of the political struggles and cultural activities of the Turks on the Turkification process of Anatolia.
2018 Program	7th Grade	Culture and Heritage	1. Details the process of the rise of the Ottoman Empire as a political power and the internal and external factors that affected this process. 2. Understand the transformation processes forced by the impact of political and technological developments in Europe on the Ottoman Empire. 3. Deduces socio-economic changes by scrutinizing the institutions that emerged from reform initiatives in the Ottoman Empire.

Note: Ministry of National Education (MNE) 2005 and 2018 Social Studies Curriculums

In the given table, we can see that the educational outcomes specified under the "Culture and Heritage" learning area for the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of the 2005 and 2018 programs are addressed from various aspects. Comparison of outcomes between the two programs shows how course content has evolved and how particular themes have been emphasized.

Table 3

Comparison of the 2005 and 2018 Educational Programs Between Grades 4 and 7

Grade Level	2005 Educational Program	2018 Educational Program	Similarities
4th Grade	The concepts of change and continuity were addressed through the preservation of environmental and cultural heritage, as well as connections with the environment.	Focused on family history studies, research on national cultural elements, and a comparison of the evolution of children's games from past to present.	-
5th Grade	Cultural characteristics and differences were examined through similarities.	Added new competencies to the program, such as the introduction of natural and historical assets and the analysis of the role of cultural values in social life.	In both programs, cultural characteristics and differences were addressed through similarities.
6th Grade	Explored themes like cultural activities, inter-societal interactions, and the role of women in Turkish history.	Adopted a more historical perspective by delving deeply into topics such as the establishment of Turkish states, the Turkification process of Anatolia, and historical trade routes.	-
7th Grade	Focused on the political, cultural, and social aspects of the Ottoman Empire.	Specifically examined the processes of change within the Ottoman Empire and the external factors influencing these processes in greater detail.	Both programs concentrated on the political, cultural, and social aspects of the Ottoman Empire.

Note: This table summarizes the fundamental differences and similarities between the 2005 and 2018 educational programs for grades 4 through 7, highlighting shifts in curricular focus over time.

In general, it is observed that the 2018 program offers students a broader historical and cultural perspective and encourages more analysis and comparison skills. It is also clear that both programs are designed to enable students to understand their own and other cultures and to underline the importance of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage.

In addition, the role of social studies education in protecting cultural heritage through a tourism lens in Turkey could be significantly impactful. By educating future generations, social studies can foster a deep understanding of the need to preserve and sustainably use cultural heritage. The accompanying table, which details how cultural heritage and historical awareness are incorporated into the social studies curriculum, helps illustrate how this education plays a crucial role in this area. From these accomplishments, the contribution of social studies education in the protection of cultural heritage within the context of tourism can be summarized as follows.

Developing Cultural Consciousness and Identity Awareness

• According to the table, in the 4th and 5th grade outcomes, students' ability to recognize their cultural heritage and compare it with other cultural elements is improved. This allows students to embrace their cultural identities and evaluate these identities from a broader perspective. From a tourism perspective, this could enable local people to take a more conscious and active role in preserving and promoting their cultural heritage. For example, by learning about local traditions, festivals, and historical buildings, students can understand why it is important to safeguard them. Such enhanced comprehension may foster individuals committed to the conservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of sustainable tourism in the coming years.

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Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage and Sustainability through Tourism:

- Especially in the 5th and 7th-grade outcomes, the importance of introducing and safeguarding natural and historical assets is emphasized. Social studies courses provide students with important information about how environmental safeguards and the sustainability of cultural heritage can be integrated with tourism. Raising awareness among tourists and local people in these areas can contribute to the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the sustainable development of tourism. For example, the safeguarding of natural and historical areas such as Cappadocia or Pamukkale, how to manage the impacts of tourism in these regions, and what role the local people will play in this process can be emphasized. This information can enable students to act more consciously both as tourists and as tourism professionals in the future.

International Cultural Interaction:

- In the 6th-grade outcomes, the influence of international culture, arts, and sports activities is explored, illustrating to students the value of cross-cultural exchanges and their role in preserving and enhancing cultural heritage. Tourism, serving as a vehicle for cultural interaction, can facilitate the growth of intercultural understanding and tolerance. The significance of these cultural interactions and international partnerships teaches students about the importance of not only safeguarding local heritage but also promoting it on a global stage. This underscores the contribution of tourism to fostering intercultural comprehension and tolerance.

Evaluation of Historical and Cultural Heritage:

- Especially in the 7th grade, a detailed examination of historical periods such as the Ottoman Empire can provide students with the opportunity to understand the effects of these legacies on modern Turkey and how they constitute value in tourism. Students learn about the touristic value of architectural works, palaces, and mosques from the Ottoman period and why it is important to safeguard these structures. This information can enable students to see historical heritage not only as a relic of the past but also as a touristic asset.

Social studies education in Turkey can play an important role in providing the necessary skills for the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, and in cultivating a deeper understanding and appreciation among students. This training can directly contribute to the tourism sector by improving students' abilities to evaluate, safeguard, and sustainably promote their cultural heritage. A social studies course integrated with tourism can support efforts to safeguard and promote Turkey's cultural richness by increasing local and international visitors' respect and interest in cultural heritage.

Discussion

The integration of education and tourism presents a new paradigm in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. When examined in the context of Turkey, a country rich in history and culture, the strategic benefits it can provide to the education and tourism sectors become more apparent. However, for this process to be successful, the potential challenges and complex dynamics that need to be addressed should not be overlooked.

Particularly, the preservation of cultural heritage has become increasingly complex due to factors such as economic challenges, rapid population growth, and escalating land valuation pressures. Aygün (2011) noted that these challenges rendered efforts toward preserving cultural heritage inadequate. Dönmez and Yeşilbursa (2014) drew attention to the lack of public awareness on this issue, while Sayan (2009) pointed out the insufficiency of legal support mechanisms and expert assistance. This situation constitutes a serious obstacle to the development of effective conservation strategies.

Sarfo-Mensah and colleagues (2014) assessed the tourism sector's effect on cultural heritage, highlighting the critical need for sustainable tourism approaches. These approaches are

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crafted not merely for the preservation of cultural heritage, but also to benefit local communities economically. By enhancing the sustainability of the tourism industry, these strategies are essential for perpetuating cultural heritage for future generations. Likewise, Conti (2015) found that achieving sustainable cultural tourism necessitates the adoption of well-balanced and suitable policies across economic, social, and environmental spheres. Such policies strive to maintain a balance between preserving cultural heritage and ensuring the sustainability of tourism ventures.

This study reveals that integrating education with tourism is a significant strategy for the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage. Leading organizations such as UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization highlight the capacity of education-focused tourism to protect cultural heritage and enhance cultural awareness (UNWTO, 2018). In countries with rich cultural legacies, educational programs are frequently integrated with tourism strategies to both preserve and develop cultural resources (Richards, 2007). In this context, curricula are redesigned and practical experiences are offered to deepen students' awareness of cultural heritage.

This research on social studies education in Turkey demonstrates that the social studies curriculum includes elements that promote the conservation and enhancement of cultural awareness. An analysis of the 2005 and 2018 Social Studies Curricula for grades 4 through 7 reveals that this education not only increases students' awareness of cultural heritage but also integrates this awareness sustainably with tourism. The findings show that social studies courses do more than just transmit historical and cultural knowledge; they also develop skills in students to process this information and actively participate in the preservation and development of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, it has been determined that social studies education aligns with international goals of enhancing cultural awareness and conservation consciousness through education (Timothy, 2009). The Social Studies Curriculum in Turkey adopts an interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes cultural heritage as not just an echo of the past but also a resource for the future. This educational approach enables students to internalize the responsibility of preserving and developing cultural heritage (Ministry of National Education [MNE], 2018). This study is significant as it illustrates how social studies education can contribute to international efforts aimed at the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research has determined that social studies education plays a significant role in the preservation of cultural heritage within the context of tourism in Turkey. A comprehensive literature review and detailed analysis of the 2005 and 2018 Social Studies Curricula for 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades have revealed that social studies education increases students' awareness of cultural heritage and contributes to its sustainable integration with tourism.

The research findings indicate that the Social Studies Curriculum emphasizes not only the transmission of historical and cultural knowledge but also the development of necessary skills to process this information and actively participate in the preservation of cultural heritage. The programs encourage students to perceive cultural heritage not merely as a reflection of the past but as a potential for the future. Particularly, the learning outcomes presented under the "Culture and Heritage" learning area enable students to recognize their own cultural identities, make comparisons with different cultures, and understand the importance of cultural heritage.

An examination of the achievements in the 2005 and 2018 curricula shows a focus on students researching their family histories, recognizing the natural and historical sites in their environment, comparing cultural elements, and understanding the importance of communal living in society. These achievements contribute to raising students' awareness about the

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preservation of cultural heritage and the development of sustainable tourism practices. Moreover, the historical and cultural content of the programs helps students establish a connection between the past and the present and gain awareness of how cultural heritage can be leveraged through tourism.

The research also demonstrates that social studies education encourages students' active participation in the preservation of cultural heritage within the context of tourism. By gaining experience through projects and activities related to the preservation of cultural heritage and its integration into tourism, students increase their awareness and sense of responsibility in this area. This contributes to cultivating conscious individuals who will support the future preservation of cultural heritage and the development of sustainable tourism practices.

In light of these findings, it has been concluded that social studies education plays a critical role in the preservation of cultural heritage within the context of tourism. It is imperative to enrich educational programs to enable students to understand the value of cultural heritage and develop a preservation consciousness. Additionally, overcoming economic and legal obstacles, increasing public awareness, and providing expert support are necessary for the implementation of effective preservation strategies.

Within the scope of this study, the following recommendations can be considered.

- **Supporting Local and Regional Research**: By offering students opportunities to explore the cultural and historical features of their local areas, projects can be developed to understand the value of local heritage and to promote its preservation. This approach aids in highlighting locality and authenticity in both education and tourism.

- **Digitization of Cultural Heritage and Virtual Tourism**: Presenting cultural heritage in digital environments and developing virtual tourism applications can ensure the sustainability of cultural interaction and tourism even during restrictive periods like pandemics. This also enhances accessibility and interest among international visitors.

- **Use of Innovative and Interactive Methods in Education**: Employing interactive learning methods such as gamification, storytelling, and field trips should be increased for student engagement. These methods allow students to actively participate in the learning process and better comprehend the material.

- **Ensuring the Participation of All Segments of Society in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage**: It is important to raise awareness and involve not only students but also teachers, local authorities, tourism professionals, and other societal groups in efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage. This inclusive approach supports the adoption of multifaceted strategies and contributes to transforming cultural heritage preservation into a collective societal endeavor.

These recommendations can provide a roadmap for social studies education to more effectively integrate the preservation of cultural heritage with tourism. When implemented, positive outcomes can be achieved in terms of sustainability and inclusivity in both education and tourism. Further research is needed on how the education and tourism sectors can collaborate more effectively, how sustainable tourism strategies can be developed, and how social participation can be integrated into cultural heritage preservation efforts. Additionally, studies on how new technologies such as digitization and virtual tourism can be incorporated into these processes would be beneficial. Such research can assist in developing new methods and strategies for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage.

Note

All data and methods used in this study do not involve any experimental procedures with human or animal participants, therefore ethical approval was not required. The study was entirely based on secondary data analysis and a literature review.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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