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The Role of Religious Education in Ensuring Social Peace

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Abstract: This study conceptually examines the role of religious education in promoting social peace by integrating Islamic principles with contemporary educational approaches. Adopting a qualitative and literature-based methodology, the research explores how religious education contributes to individuals' moral development, empathy, coexistence consciousness, and social responsibility. The study discusses key dimensions through which religious education strengthens social harmony, including the nurturing of innate belief (fitrah), personality and character development, the enhancement of moral awareness, and the cultivation of respect for diversity. In addition, the research highlights historical and contemporary Islamic perspectives—such as the Qur'anic emphasis on mutual acquaintance (ta'āruf), freedom of belief, and solidarity—as foundational elements supporting social peace. Classical examples from Islamic civilization and the Ottoman millet system are revisited to illustrate how religious education historically fostered coexistence among diverse communities. Contemporary educational frameworks, particularly insights from the Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli (TYMM), are briefly considered to demonstrate how values-based and empathy-centered approaches can enhance the social function of religious education without making TYMM the central focus. The findings suggest that effective religious education cultivates individuals who are morally sensitive, socially responsible, and capable of engaging peacefully in diverse societies. Overall, religious education emerges as a transformative domain that supports national unity, global understanding, and sustainable social peace.

1. Introduction

Throughout history, religion has been one of the most influential factors shaping individual and social life. Religious beliefs, practices, and values have played a decisive role in directing people's behaviors, establishing moral norms, and creating social order (Yılmaz, 2003). The education of religion is among the most effective instruments in transferring religious values to individuals and building a peaceful society (Altaş, 2003).

In today's world, where cultural diversity and social tensions often coexist, religious education holds significant potential in fostering social peace and promoting tolerance. Social peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but a comprehensive phenomenon encompassing justice, respect for human rights, solidarity, coexistence, and social responsibility (Dökmen, 2002; Tarhan, 2012). Religious education, if implemented with an emphasis on values education, empathy development, respect for diversity, and raising social awareness, can contribute to the strengthening of peace within both national and global contexts (Aydın, 2018). In Turkey and abroad, several studies have examined the relationship between religious education and social peace, focusing on themes such as multiculturalism, tolerance, and values education (Dökmen, 2002; Altaş, 2003; Aydın, 2018; Banks, 2019; UNESCO, 2021; Güneş, 2018). However, these works mainly discuss the theoretical connection between religion and peace, without providing a systematic conceptual framework that directly relates religious education to social peace. This study aims to fill this gap by offering a comprehensive conceptual analysis that emphasizes the pedagogical functions of religious education—such as moral development, empathy, coexistence, and civic responsibility—in promoting social peace. Thus, the originality of this research lies in integrating Islamic perspectives with contemporary educational models, including the Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli (TYMM) (The Maarif Model of the Century of Turkiye), to highlight the transformative potential of religious education for both national and global contexts. It should also be noted that this article is based on a master's thesis previously completed under academic supervision. In revisiting the thesis topic, the study seeks to contextualize the issue with recent educational developments and therefore occasionally refers to the TYMM. These references are not intended to make TYMM the central focus of the research but to highlight contemporary educational elements relevant to the discussion.

In this regard, the relationship between religious education and social peace requires not only theoretical discussion but also pedagogical reflections. Religious education is not limited to transmitting doctrinal knowledge; it also plays a crucial role in shaping moral behavior, developing empathy, fostering coexistence, and cultivating a culture of tolerance and peace (Banks, 2019; UNESCO, 2021).

This study aims to explore the role of religious education in promoting social peace from a theoretical perspective. Within this framework, a conceptual analysis and literature review were conducted, and the following research questions were addressed:

1. How does religious education contribute to individuals' moral development and social peace?
2. In what ways does religious education foster empathy, tolerance, and coexistence?
3. What is the significance of religious education in building national unity and global peace?

In the study, religious education and social peace were examined in the context of Islamic teachings, focusing on key concepts such as values education, personality development, empathy, social responsibility, coexistence, national unity, and global peace. The study also discusses contemporary educational approaches that emphasize empathy-based learning,

values-centered pedagogy, and respect for cultural diversity (Kaya, 2021; Öztürk and Demirtaş, 2022).

2. Literature Review

This study is designed as a qualitative, theoretical research based on conceptual analysis and an extensive literature review. It does not involve any experimental fieldwork or empirical data collection. Instead, the research is structured as a conceptual inquiry focused on exploring the relationship between religious education and social peace within a theoretical, pedagogical, and social framework.

In this context, the study adopts the qualitative research principles proposed by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016), emphasizing conceptual analysis and literature-based examination. The process of conceptual interpretation and theoretical analysis is also guided by the approaches suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), particularly in terms of systematically identifying key concepts and understanding their interrelations within the framework of social sciences.

The research specifically focuses on the interaction between religious education and social peace, examining key dimensions such as values education, empathy development, coexistence awareness, respect for diversity, and social responsibility. The Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli (TYMM, 2024), which introduces new approaches to religious education in Turkey, is also considered in the evaluation process, providing a contemporary educational policy perspective.

The following research questions are addressed in the study:

How does religious education contribute to individuals' moral development and social peace?

In what ways does religious education foster empathy, tolerance, coexistence, and respect for diversity?

What is the significance of religious education in building national unity and global peace?

How can the Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli (TYMM, 2024) enhance the role of religious education in promoting social peace?

The primary goal of this research is to reveal how religious education, when structured in accordance with Islamic values and contemporary educational approaches, can contribute to individual moral development, strengthen social peace, promote coexistence, and cultivate a culture of tolerance and responsibility (Banks, 2019; Gündüz, 2002; Kaya, 2021; UNESCO, 2021; Öztürk and Demirtaş, 2022).

3. Diversity and Social Peace in Islam

Islam presents an understanding that is based on the inherent rights and freedoms granted to human beings by birth and views social diversity as a manifestation of divine wisdom. The Qur'an explicitly states that the creation of humanity into different nations and communities serves the purpose of mutual acquaintance and cooperation: "O humankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another" (Qur'an, al-Hujurat, 49/13). The key concept here is ta‘āruf (mutual acquaintance), which goes beyond mere recognition and implies establishing meaningful relationships, dialogue, and cooperation among different communities. As Mualla Selçuk (2020) points out, ta‘āruf emphasizes not only coexistence but also the active effort to build bridges of understanding in diverse societies. This concept constitutes a foundational principle for Islamic approaches to diversity and social peace. This perspective emphasizes that diversity should not

be seen as a threat but rather as a source of richness in ensuring social peace (Aydın, 2011; Momin, 2012; Köylü, 2005).

From a sociological point of view, one of the most important elements of social peace is the development of coexistence awareness among individuals with different religious, ethnic, or cultural identities within society. The increasing diversity in modern societies necessitates the institutional integration of values such as tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect into educational processes (Güngör, 1998; Dökmen, 2002).

As a religion that prioritizes freedom of belief and thought, Islam envisions that individuals express their religious choices not through coercion, but based on conscious and free will: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an, al-Baqarah, 2/256).

The practices of the Prophet Muhammad during the Madinah period, especially the agreements made with different religious groups and the Constitution of Madinah, offer historical examples of how social peace can be established on the basis of pluralism (Doğan, 2006; Sancak, 2015; Ünal, 2015).

Throughout history, Islamic civilizations such as Al-Andalus and the Ottoman Empire have demonstrated models of peaceful coexistence among different religious groups. The Ottoman millet system (a framework of autonomous religious communities with legal and cultural autonomy), which allowed each group to practice its own faith and culture, played a crucial role in maintaining social peace (İnalcık, 1994; Eryılmaz, 2000; Akgündüz, 2000; Masters, 2001; Altaş, 2003). For instance, non-Muslim communities such as Armenians, Greeks, and Jews were allowed to establish their own schools, educate their children in accordance with their religious traditions, and preserve their cultural identity. This autonomy in education and community life constituted one of the most significant contributions of the millet system to long-term social stability. In contemporary Turkey, religious education continues to play a vital role in promoting social peace. Compulsory Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi: DKAB) courses emphasize respect for diversity, empathy, and shared values, while elective courses such as Qur'an, Prophet's Life, and Basic Religious Knowledge strengthen ethical awareness and mutual understanding among students. Furthermore, the Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Model (TYMM) incorporates educational components that explicitly highlight cultural diversity, empathy, and peaceful coexistence. For instance, DKAB lessons can operationalize "respect for diversity" through classroom discussions that compare different cultural practices within society, emphasizing common ethical principles (e.g., justice, honesty, and compassion) while recognizing legitimate differences in traditions and interpretations. At the pedagogical level, teachers frequently employ case-based activities in which students analyze everyday social dilemmas -such as bullying, discriminatory language, or exclusion of minority peers- and propose value-based responses grounded in empathy and fairness. Similarly, elective courses on the Qur'an and the Prophet's life allow students to engage with narrative examples that highlight mercy, reconciliation, and non-violence, which can be translated into school-based practices such as peer-mediation, cooperative learning tasks, and community-service projects aimed at strengthening solidarity. In line with TYMM's emphasis on values-oriented and skills-based learning within formal education, such practices can be supported by structured outcomes (e.g., perspective-taking, dialogue skills, and conflict-resolution strategies) and by project assignments that encourage students to observe and document positive examples of peaceful coexistence in their local environments. These historical and modern examples together demonstrate how religious education can serve as a key instrument for fostering social peace across different contexts.

In this context, religious education today should be considered one of the fundamental tools that enable individuals to develop tolerance and empathy toward diversity. Integrating

tolerance, empathy, and intercultural dialogue into the educational process is essential for building a peaceful and cohesive society.

4. The Functions of Religious Education in Ensuring Social Peace

The sustainable construction of social peace depends on shaping individuals' belief systems, moral understanding, and behaviors through a holistic approach. Islam does not perceive the individual and society as two separate or disconnected structures. On the contrary, it establishes a strong relationship between an individual's inner peace and the general order of society. Individual tranquility and a sense of moral values constitute the foundation for the stability of the social structure and the maintenance of peace (Weber, 1996; Yılmaz, 2003).

In this context, religious education is not merely a process of conveying religious knowledge to individuals. It is a comprehensive educational field that shapes individuals' emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and social behaviors, preparing them for social equilibrium and peace. Particularly, the Islamic understanding of unity and solidarity takes root in individuals' minds and value systems through religious education, fostering social consciousness that prevents individual differences from turning into social conflicts (Yılmaz, 2003; Berktay, 2003; Aydın, 2018).

Religious education, therefore, should be considered not only a personal quest for truth or a process of religious information transfer but also a strategic educational domain with social responsibility. It transforms individuals' behavioral patterns in ways that contribute to social peace. Promoting values that strengthen social cohesion, such as tolerance, empathy, respect for diversity, and the culture of coexistence, is an essential component of the social function of religious education.

Within the scope of TYMM (2024), the updated religious education curricula aim to further emphasize this multidimensional function. This emphasis is pursued through a curriculum framework that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning outcomes, placing values education at the center of religious instruction. Within TYMM, religious education is designed not only to transmit doctrinal knowledge but also to develop students' social skills, moral reasoning, and responsibility toward others. In this context, learning objectives increasingly focus on empathy, dialogue, respect for differences, and peaceful conflict resolution, while instructional strategies encourage reflective discussion, value-oriented activities, and student-centered engagement. In courses such as Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (DKAB) and elective religious courses, values that foster both individual faith development and social integration are systematically incorporated. These efforts directly contribute to strengthening social peace (TYMM, 2024).

This section will elaborate in detail on the multidimensional functions of religious education concerning social peace.

4.1. Religious education nurtures the innate tendency to believe and lays the groundwork for social peace

The innate tendency to believe, which exists within human nature, serves as a fundamental element in building peace at both the individual and societal levels. In Islamic thought, this tendency is conceptualized under the notion of "fitrah." Fitrah refers to the natural inclination within human beings toward seeking truth, turning to the divine, and striving to find meaning (Yılmaz, 2003).

As stated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Every newborn is born upon fitrah; then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian" (Bukhari, Janaiz, 70; Muslim, Qadar, 6).

This hadith demonstrates that the human potential for belief exists from birth; however, this potential is shaped by family, environment, and education. Properly nurturing fitrah through accurate knowledge and education strengthens both individual peace and social harmony (Aydın, 2018).

If the innate inclination to believe develops without guidance or under misleading influences, it may result in social problems such as bigotry, fanaticism, and conflicts that threaten social peace. Especially in environments where ignorance, prejudice, and distorted religious understandings prevail, this tendency can lead individuals toward intolerance, exclusion, and extremism (Yılmaz, 2003).

At this point, religious education plays a crucial role in guiding individuals' inherent capacity for belief onto a healthy foundation and ensuring that they acquire values that support social peace. Through religious education, individuals:

• Develop their tendency to believe through a knowledge-based and questioning approach,

• Adopt respectful attitudes toward differences in belief and thought,

• Perceive diversity not as a threat, but as a part of societal richness,

• Prevent fanaticism and intolerance, thus contributing to social peace.

The Qur'an expresses this connection as follows: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth; [adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created all people" (Qur'an, al-Rum, 30/30).

In addition, the Qur'an consistently emphasizes the importance of knowledge, reflection, and the use of reason as essential components in understanding religious truths (Watt, 1982; Usta, 2001). Religious education, when structured with these principles, nurtures the individual's belief tendency in a way that promotes both personal development and social harmony.

In this regard, TYMM (2024) also highlights the importance of designing religious education programs that support the healthy development of fitrah, based on knowledge, critical thinking, and respect for diversity, thereby contributing to the sustainability of social peace. For example, within TYMM, supporting the healthy development of fitrah is reflected in an educational approach that encourages students to engage with religious knowledge through understanding rather than rote memorization. Learning processes are structured to promote questioning, reflection, and meaning-making, enabling students to relate religious concepts to their personal experiences and moral intuitions. At the same time, respect for diversity is fostered by presenting different interpretations, cultural expressions, and belief-related sensitivities in a balanced and inclusive manner. Such an approach helps students develop a confident yet open religious identity, reducing tendencies toward exclusion or dogmatism and reinforcing attitudes conducive to social harmony and peaceful coexistence.

4.2. Religious education develops personality, enhances morality, and spreads empathy

Personality development is a multidimensional process shaped not only by biological and psychological factors but also by social, cultural, and religious interactions. Recent studies also emphasize that religious education, particularly within school contexts, plays a significant role in shaping personality development and social adjustment (Sevinç, 2023). Within Islamic thought, belief, morality, and social responsibility are regarded as central components that shape an individual's personality structure (Kuşat, 2001; Yılmaz, 2003; Kurt, 2017).

Religious education is a holistic educational domain that aims not only to provide individuals with religious knowledge but also to develop their emotional, moral, and social orientations. Personality development determines how an individual's attitudes and behaviors are reflected in their social relationships. From this perspective, religious education plays a functional role both in the formation of personal identity and in establishing social peace (Aydın, 2018).

The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes moral principles in social relationships: “Cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and hostility” (Qur'an, al-Ma'idah, 5/2).

Values such as morality, tolerance, and empathy form the basis for individuals to develop respectful attitudes toward diversity in social relationships. The acquisition of these values should not be left to chance but requires a planned and systematic educational process (Dökmen, 2002; Tarhan, 2012).

As an individual's moral sensitivity, tolerance, and capacity for empathy increase, tendencies toward social conflict diminish, while respect for diversity, dialogue, and awareness of coexistence are strengthened (Altaş, 2003; Bakırcıoğlu, 2003). Historically, it is evident that the climate of social peace in Islamic societies has been significantly influenced by personal character education and the transmission of religious values. Particularly in Ottoman society, the millet system exemplified how religious education contributed to fostering a culture of coexistence among individuals of different beliefs and identities (Altaş, 2003).

Childhood and adolescence are the most critical stages in shaping an individual's personality structure. Religious education provided during this period contributes not only to religious knowledge acquisition but also to the development of moral values, emotional maturity, and social competencies that promote peaceful coexistence.

4.3. Religious education raises awareness and promotes freedom

Religious education is not limited to providing individuals with religious knowledge; it is a multidimensional process that develops one's ability to think, question, interpret, and build awareness. An educational approach based solely on theoretical knowledge may hinder individuals from critically questioning and meaningfully understanding religious realities. However, the development of a conscious, free, and responsible belief system is of vital importance for establishing social peace (Selçuk, 1997).

Islamic thought emphasizes the necessity of individuals making choices based on free will, and it advocates for a social environment free from coercion regarding religious matters. The Qur'an explicitly states: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an, al-Baqarah, 2/256).

Conscious belief contributes to forming a more solid, rational, and peaceful structure in individuals' religious preferences. Educational processes should not only provide ready-made knowledge but also teach individuals how to obtain, use, and evaluate this knowledge within an appropriate context. This approach enables individuals to make religious choices freely, develop critical thinking skills, and establish an informed stance against the exploitation of religion (Selçuk, 1998).

Religious knowledge acquired unconsciously or imposed by coercion may lead to fanaticism and extreme attitudes in individuals. Such tendencies can create social polarization and conflicts that threaten social peace (Yılmaz, 2003; Aydın, 2018).

The process of religious education contributes to individuals gaining an identity that is free, conscious, and socially responsible. As emphasized by Selçuk (1997), a liberating religious education model is critically important for enhancing independent thinking abilities regarding religious preferences, protecting individuals from superstitions and distorted beliefs,

and fostering more tolerant attitudes in social interactions. In contemporary educational policies, this understanding is also reinforced by national frameworks such as TYMM (2024), which highlights the significance of promoting conscious, free, and responsibility-oriented religious education practices to contribute to social harmony and prevent extremist tendencies. In this framework, TYMM supports an educational approach that encourages students to develop religious awareness through informed choice rather than unquestioned acceptance. Learning environments are designed to promote critical thinking, open discussion, and ethical reasoning, enabling students to evaluate religious ideas responsibly and independently. By emphasizing freedom together with responsibility, religious education aims to protect learners from simplistic, dogmatic, or extremist interpretations while fostering a balanced understanding of belief. Such an approach contributes to social harmony by nurturing individuals who can exercise religious freedom with awareness, self-reflection, and respect for others.

4.4. Religious education facilitates coexistence

Throughout history, societies have been composed of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious groups living together. When this diversity is not managed properly, it can lead to conflict and social fragmentation. However, religious education serves as a fundamental tool that facilitates the peaceful coexistence of these differences within a society (Altaş, 2003).

Religious education facilitates coexistence by nurturing respect, tolerance, and understanding among individuals and communities. As also emphasized in Qur'an 49:13, the principle of mutual acquaintance (ta'āruf) provides a foundation for building constructive relationships, fostering dialogue, and sustaining peaceful interaction among diverse groups. In this regard, religious education helps translate this Qur'anic principle into practical attitudes and social behaviors that strengthen social peace.

Historically, Islamic societies have developed exemplary practices that allowed different religious and cultural groups to live together peacefully, based on this principle. In particular, the Ottoman millet system provided religious communities with the freedom to practice their faith while maintaining long-lasting social peace (Altaş, 2003).

Religious education plays a critical role in transmitting this historical experience to contemporary societies and promoting the culture of coexistence among individuals (Momin, 2012; Güneş, 2018). Integrating themes such as respect for diversity, empathy, and tolerance into educational processes constitutes one of the fundamental strategies for strengthening social peace (Dökmen, 2002; Güneş, 2005; Aydın, 2009).

Within the framework of TYMM (2024), religious education programs have been restructured with the goal of recognizing diversity as a source of enrichment and reinforcing the culture of peaceful coexistence. In Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (DKAB) courses, as well as in elective religious education classes, greater emphasis is placed on multiculturalism, tolerance, empathy, and the development of social responsibility (TYMM, 2024). In practical terms, this orientation is reflected in instructional practices that encourage students to explore different cultural and religious experiences through dialogue-based activities, collaborative projects, and comparative discussions. Classroom environments are structured to promote mutual listening, respect for differences, and shared responsibility, allowing students to encounter diversity not as a threat but as a normal and enriching aspect of social life. By engaging students in cooperative learning tasks and value-oriented discussions, religious education supports the development of empathy and social responsibility, thereby strengthening attitudes and skills necessary for peaceful coexistence.

This approach aligns with discussions from the 2023 symposium hosted by Kırıkkale University, titled "The Culture of Coexistence and Religious Education," which emphasized

the significance of religious education in fostering coexistence, empathy, and respect in diverse societies (Kırıkkale University, 2023).

4.5. Religious education contributes to national unity

Social cohesion can only be achieved when individuals from diverse religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds unite on the basis of shared values. National unity is strengthened when individuals embrace their historical and cultural heritage alongside their sense of social responsibility and belonging to society. The Islamic perspective on unity and solidarity provides one of the most significant spiritual foundations for this process (Kaplan, 1969; Weber, 1996).

Religious education plays a vital role in reinforcing individuals' religious and national identity consciousness, thereby enhancing social solidarity and peace. Particularly, attitudes such as respect for diversity, tolerance, preservation of shared values, and acting for the benefit of society are fundamental behaviors cultivated through religious education (Yılmaz, 2003; Aydın, 2018).

The Qur'an emphasizes the principle of social solidarity and unity: "Hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided" (Qur'an, Âl Imran, 3/103).

This principle encourages individuals to internalize the spirit of unity and togetherness both in matters of faith and social relations. In this context, religious education does not solely focus on individual belief development but also aims to instill social responsibility awareness that supports national unity.

Historically, the Ottoman Empire, despite its multicultural and multi-religious structure, succeeded in preserving social peace and national unity for centuries. One of the most critical factors behind this success was religious education processes that fostered empathy, tolerance, coexistence, and a sense of belonging among individuals (Altaş, 2003).

In contemporary times, this approach is also prioritized within the religious education programs restructured under TYMM (2024). Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (DKAB) courses and elective religious education classes are designed not only to provide religious knowledge but also to promote social responsibility, national unity, social solidarity, and the culture of coexistence (TYMM, 2024).

Religious education also contributes to national unity by providing a common ground of values and ethical principles that foster mutual trust and solidarity. In Turkey, this role has been emphasized in various academic discussions and symposia (e.g., the Kırıkkale University Symposium on Coexistence and Religious Education, 2023; see also Diyanet’s Educational Workshops and several national congresses on religious education and values). Such discussions highlight the significance of religious education in strengthening coexistence, empathy, and respect in diverse societies.

4.6. Religious education fosters a global understanding of peace

The establishment of social peace is recognized not only at the local level but also globally as one of humanity's most essential needs. With the increasing impact of globalization, interactions among different religious, cultural, and ethnic groups have intensified, making the necessity of a global understanding of peace even more evident. Islam emphasizes that peace is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical principle that should be maintained and promoted at the individual, societal, and global levels (Aydın, 2018).

Numerous verses in the Qur'an encourage the promotion of peace. Notably: “If they incline toward peace, then incline toward it as well” (Qur'an, al-Anfal, 8/61).

Religious education, by nurturing respect for diversity, tolerance, empathy, and universal values, contributes not only to the strengthening of social peace but also to the development of a global understanding of peace (Usta, 2001; Aslan, 2005). Historically, the multicultural and multi-religious structures within Islamic civilization provided opportunities for people of different faiths and identities to live together peacefully (Altaş, 2003).

Religious education plays a critical role by:

• Promoting empathy and understanding toward others,

• Supporting peaceful coexistence among different faiths and cultures,

• Contributing to the cultivation of individuals who are open to dialogue, peace, and cooperation at the global level.

Today, this approach is integrated into educational programs more systematically. Within the framework of TYMM (2024), religious education curricula have been designed to emphasize multiculturalism, respect for differences, human rights, tolerance, and the principles of universal peace (TYMM, 2024). Within this context, TYMM encourages educational practices that help students situate religious values within a broader human and global framework. Instructional content and learning activities are designed to raise awareness of universal ethical principles such as human dignity, justice, and mutual respect, while also promoting sensitivity toward different cultures, beliefs, and worldviews. Through comparative perspectives, discussion-based learning, and value-oriented projects, students are guided to understand peace not merely as the absence of conflict, but as a shared responsibility grounded in dialogue, cooperation, and respect for human rights. Such an approach enables religious education to contribute to a global culture of peace by fostering openness, empathy, and a sense of belonging to the wider human community.

Religious education fosters a global understanding of peace by encouraging individuals to see themselves as part of a larger human family and by nurturing values such as empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity. This perspective was further reinforced in several papers presented at the 2nd International Symposium on the Experience of Coexistence in Islamic Civilization (Kırıkkale University, 2023), particularly those emphasizing the role of religious education in promoting global peace, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the role of religious education in promoting social peace within the conceptual, pedagogical, and social dimensions of Islam. Through theoretical analyses and literature reviews, it has been demonstrated that religious education directly contributes to strengthening social peace at the individual, societal, and global levels.

Religious education nurtures the innate human tendency to believe by providing accurate knowledge and transmitting values, thereby supporting both individual faith development and the formation of a consciousness of tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity that contributes to social peace. Raising individuals with sound religious awareness plays a decisive role in preventing polarization, conflict, and division within society (Kentel, 1995; Yılmaz, 2003; Aydın, 2018).

The key findings and evaluations of this research are summarized as follows:

Religious education enhances individuals' personality development and moral sensitivity, while strengthening tolerance, empathy, and the culture of coexistence within social relationships (Dökmen, 2002; Altaş, 2003; Tarhan, 2012).

Raising conscious, free, and socially responsible individuals plays an essential role in ensuring and sustaining social peace (Selçuk, 1997; Selçuk, 1998).

Religious education contributes not only at the individual level but also to the development of a culture of coexistence and the preservation of national unity within multicultural societies (Kaplan, 1969; Altaş, 2003).

Establishing a global understanding of peace and strengthening dialogue and mutual understanding among different religious and cultural groups requires that educational processes provide greater emphasis on empathy, tolerance, and multicultural awareness (Aydın, 2018; Kırıkkale University, 2023).

The Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli (TYMM, 2024) provides an updated framework for religious education in Turkey, aiming to systematically integrate values-based learning, empathy development, coexistence awareness, and respect for cultural diversity, thereby contributing to social peace and global harmony.

From a broader perspective, the Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Model (TYMM, 2024) strengthens the role of religious education in promoting social peace by providing an integrated and values-oriented educational framework. By aligning religious education with cognitive, affective, and ethical learning outcomes, TYMM enables the systematic development of empathy, tolerance, social responsibility, and respect for diversity. Through its emphasis on critical thinking, dialogue-based learning, and human-centered values, the model supports a form of religious education that discourages exclusionary and extremist tendencies while fostering conscious, responsible, and peaceful forms of religious identity. In this sense, TYMM does not merely reaffirm the social function of religious education but institutionalizes it within a comprehensive educational vision, thereby enhancing its capacity to contribute to social cohesion, national unity, and global peace.

In conclusion, religious education is not merely about acquiring religious knowledge but constitutes a multidimensional educational process that aims to develop individuals' social responsibility awareness, empathy, tolerance, culture of coexistence, and understanding of universal peace. It is recommended that religious education curricula systematically incorporate empathy-based learning, multicultural awareness, and respect for diversity to foster national unity, global peace, and sustainable social harmony.

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