

## **Turkish Children's Construction of Identities Through Illustration in Life Sciences Textbooks**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this research is to reveal the identity to be constructed with the illustrations in the life science textbooks in terms of identity types. Case study, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. The data sources of the research consist of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade Life science textbooks taught in Turkey in 2021-2022. The research used 'content analysis' to provide a detailed description based on the purpose of the study. The illustrations in the life science textbook of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade are coded separately with regard to the types of identity in the literature. Categories and themes were the result of the combination of the codes. In life science textbooks, only illustrations that could have a connection with identity construction have been analysed. As a result of the research, it has been determined that the illustrations for the collective identity are prominently included in the Life Science textbooks. In the theme of collective identity, there are illustrations emphasizing national, social and religious identity. For digital identity and universal identity topics, there are a limited number of illustrations.

**Keywords:** Identity construction, Identity, Life science textbook, Illustrations

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## Introduction

Although the concept of identity has a long history, it only began to be discussed and studied as a result of modernity in the 20th century. Scholars of identity studies in different disciplines focus on different aspects of identity. Some study the structure of identity, defining different aspects such as different cultural, religious and gender identities, while others focus on how individuals arrive at the identity structure that underlies their constant change (Waltzlawik, 2012). In recent years, the concept of 'identity building' has attracted attention, particularly as a result of efforts by a particular group, state or government to give individuals a particular identity.

What is identity? In the modern scientific literature, the concept of "identity" is used with a wide variety of qualities. Mental, ethnic, ideological, class, state, power, defence, cultural and sexual identities, etc. can be mentioned. According to Gutorov (2015), the basic principle of an identity (individual or group identity) is the relationship between We and I, not I and I. While expressing the concept of identity, Bauman (2017, p. 30) states that it was created by people and they were persuaded to this situation (fiction) with the establishment of modern states. Schools are the places where identity is most clearly built after the family. Therefore, in recent years, educational studies have also focused on studies on identity and identity building.

Approaches to identity building continued as approaches based on identity interactions with postmodernism, globalization, knowledge-power, individual-society/state, religion, ethnicity, etc. However, modernism is one of the most discussed approaches, based on the assumption that the notion of identity, whose relationality is generally accepted, is a product of modernism (Dalbay & Avcı, 2018). Modernity has started to build new identities with the ideas it produces. Therefore, while individuals had innate identities before the French Revolution, they had identities created with the French Revolution, in other words, acquired later (Karpas, 2019, p. 58). The concept of identity may differ in direct relation to the daily lives of individuals. The mentioned differences express having roles in different dimensions as regional, local, religious, professional, cultural, national, and ethnic identity forms (Türkcan & Bozkurt, 2015).

Identity can basically be classified in the context of "individual identity" in the context of an expression of self-identification with the answer given to the question "who am I", and "collective identity" as the plural expression of social belongings with the answer given to the question of "who are we" (Alpman, 2018). On the other hand, Pamuk (2014) discusses identity classification in the context of collective identities such as national identity, cultural identity, and religious identity. Identity theory of Stets and Burke's (2000) is based on society. They focused on the influence of society in the building process of identity and explained identity in terms of group, role, and person.

Identity classifications become evident on the basis of cultural differences. While identities are determined as non-individual, community-centred, and almost never change in traditional societies, they are based on social structures that transcend locality in parallel with the intellectual and social structure in modern societies. On the other hand, in the postmodern situation, the extreme fragmentation and diversity of identity as well as its temporality are striking. This quality of identity prevents it from forming values that bind individuals (Akça, 2005). The fact that national, religious, ethnic, professional, citizen, and consumer, etc. identity types have different priorities in some societies is mainly due to the classification made on the basis of tradition and later. It can be said that while individual identities are in the primary position in modern societies where individuality and individual rights are emphasized more, the collective identities that make up the religious community are more prominent in the traditional society (Özdil, 2017).

### **Identity Building in Turkey**

The main point of identity building in Turkish society is political changes. In this context, the end of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the new Republic of Turkey constitute a turning point in the construction of identity in Turkey. With the proclamation of the republic in 1923, the political system radically changed, and the identities of individuals were shaped through the nation-state project. While the concept of nationality was seen and expressed as a national part of religion, that is, Islam, in the first years of the national struggle, after 1930, religion was left out of the definition and expression of nationality. In this context, it is seen that the foundations of the age of ideology were laid for the first time between 1923 and 1930 in Turkey (Karpas, 2019, p. 321). Between these years, the Turkish State has made innovations in all areas of state and social life for the construction of a secular society. Thus, an attempt was made to construct a secular and modern Western identity. In this context, Kemalism declared the birth of a New Turkey, a new Turkishness, and a new nationalism with the claim of a complete break with the Ottoman Empire, especially the last period of the Ottoman Empire that started with the Tanzimat (political reforms in Ottoman Empire) (Bora, 2017, p. 213).

The instrumentalization act of education, experienced in all nation-states, was impeccably implemented in the founding process of the Republic of Turkey. Especially in the process of building the identity of the new state, the biggest mission has been given to education (Kuş, 2020).

In general, the whole educational system in Turkey, the citizenship course taught under various names, the social studies, history and geography courses have an important place in constructing identity. One of the important lessons in identity building in Turkey is the life sciences lesson, which is one of the first courses taken by children starting primary school. Life sciences course is taught four hours a week in the 1st and 2nd grades of primary school, and three hours a week at the 3rd grade.

The crucial basic material in the educational process is the textbook. Illustrations are one of the important elements that create meaning in textbooks and develop the child's imagination (Yaylı&Kitiş-Çınar, 2014). In this context, illustrations are important in terms of conveying the types of identity to be built in life sciences textbooks. The aim of the study is to reveal the identity that is desired to be built with the illustrations in the life sciences textbooks being taught in terms of types.

### **Method**

The case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the study. Case studies are qualitative approaches that gather detailed and deep information about a real, current, or multiple limited circumstances over a period of time through multiple sources of information to provide a situational description or situational theme (Creswell, 2018, p. 97). One of the important data sources for case studies is documents. In terms of this study, textbooks were considered as data sources, and it was aimed to reveal realistic results regarding the situation by examining the illustrations in the textbooks in depth in terms of identity building.

### **Data Sources and Analysis**

In this study, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Life Sciences textbooks in 2021-2022 were examined. Among the examined textbooks, those at the 2nd and 3rd grade were prepared by the Ministry of National Education and it is foreseen that they can be used as textbooks for 5 (five) years starting from the 2018-2019 academic year.

In qualitative research, data analysis methods are generally classified by Straus and Corbin (1990) as descriptive and content analysis. In this study, the illustrations in the textbooks were analysed using "content analysis". The illustrations in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade life science textbook were coded separately for identity types in the literature, and categories and themes were created by combining the codes. In the analysis process, the illustrations were analysed as a whole and in terms of the figures that are important for identity building. While analysing the illustrations, attention was given to the description of the illustration, the relevant text, and the unit in which it was located. Thus, it was analysed within the scope of its illustration context.

In this study, the codings were done separately by two different researchers specialised in social studies education and citizenship education and then cross-checked. There was an understanding that the codings in the comparison would be largely similar, and those that did not have similarities were checked. In this study, the theories in the literature in terms of identity types were used in determining the thematic framework and the emergence of subcategories (Bauman, 2017; Bilgin, 2013; Copeaux, 2016; Smith, 1994; Vatandaş, 2010). The clear explanation of the analysis process with the help of an example is an element that has a positive effect on reliability. Table 1 shows the thematic framework, subcategories and associated coding used in the analysis process.

Table 1

*Framework of themes, subcategories and codes used to analyse content*

Theme (Identity Types)	Sub-categories	Sample Codes
National Identity	National symbols	Turkish flag, National Anthem, martyr, soldier, national team (sport)
	Ataturk and Turkish Elders	Atatürk, Anıtkabir, Address to Youth, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Ziya Gökalp, Piri Reis, Zihni Derin
	National culture	National dances (horon dance, zeybek and çaydaçıra dance), local clothes, local foods,
	Specific days and weeks	National Holidays: May 19, April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day, October 29 Republic Day, August 30 Victory Day, March 18 Martyrs' Day,
	Place	Ankara (capital), Turkish Grand National Assembly, Turkey Map
Social Identity	Environment	Love of nature, environmental protection, environmental pollution, zero-waste project, recycling, natural disasters, earthquake bag preparation.
	Values	Respect for differences, helpfulness, cleanliness, saving, cooperation, honesty.
	Rules	Safety rules, school rules, classroom rules, courtesy rules, traffic rules, and etiquette.
	Occupation	Education workers (teachers, principals, etc.), health workers, firefighters, bankers, security
	Family	Family members, elders, and family communication,
	Customs and Traditions	Kissing the hands of the elders, visiting the sick, wedding, military ceremony, henna night
	Specific days and weeks	Library Week, Museums Week, Green Crescent Week, Teachers' Day
Individual Identity	Self-care	Regular eating, brushing teeth, washing hands, combing hair, cutting nails.
	Getting to Know Self	Physical traits, self-expression, discovering talents and things he/she likes to do.
	Planning	Planning for his/her life, arranging the environment he/she lives in
	Saving	Comparison of wants and needs, being a conscious consumer
Religious Identity	Symbol	Headscarved woman, man wearing pray cap, religious holidays, prayer for food
	Place	Mosque.
Digital Identity	Digital Tools	Computer, television, tablet, smart board, and mobile phone
Universal Identity		World theatre day, human rights and democracy week, children from different nationalities.

## Findings

The textbooks in the study have five themes: national identity, social identity, universal identity, digital identity and religious identity.

### National Identity

In the Life Sciences textbooks, there are generally illustrations related to *national symbols* (182), *Atatürk and Turkish elders* (75), *national culture* (27) *Specific days and weeks* (11), and *Place* (8) sub-categories under the theme of national identity.

#### National symbols

In the examined Life Sciences textbooks, there are mostly illustrations related to the *National Symbol* sub-category. It is observed that the symbols expressing independence among the national symbols are widely emphasized in the books.

Among the *National Symbols*, the Turkish Flag illustrations are the most common in the textbooks. The Turkish Flag can be included in the content of the books directly as a single symbol or among many elements in the content of the illustrations. The symbol of the Turkish flag is depicted many times in illustrations related to the National Anthem, in front of the school/building, over the board in the classroom, in a ceremony, in a painting event, and as a flag in the hands of students. The symbol of the Turkish Flag is also put on symbols considered as symbols of Turkey and Turks in life sciences textbooks. For example, the illustration of the Turkish Flag was shown on a balloon in Cappadocia, one of Turkey's most important tourism symbols.



Figure 1. Ministry of National Education (MoNE) 2nd Grade, p. 26



Figure 2. MoNE 1st Grade, p. 23

Also, the bird figure is included in many parts of the 2nd grade life sciences textbook in terms of symbolizing freedom and independence.



Figure 3. MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 104



Figure 4. MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 63

Also, illustrations of ÖmerHalisdemir and FethiSekin, who were martyred during the July 15 process (school name, street name, photos) and the soldier embracing a martyr (Çanakkale), the illustration of the War of Independence (the spirit of the National Forces), the illustration of the acceptance of the National Anthem, the crescent-star, and Turkish Lira illustrations constitute the other symbols in the subcategory.



Figure 5. MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 42



Figure 6. MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 177

Again, it is seen that the republic is emphasized as a symbol of independence. The illustration related to celebration of the Republic Day, the proclamation of the Republic, the literacy campaign, the rights of women, the freedom of settlement and travel are included in the books. Also, the name Republic is mentioned as the street name in a sketch.



Figure 7. MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 122



Figure 8. MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 184

### *Ataturk and Turkish elders*

Another sub-category under the theme of National Identity is *Atatürk* and Turkish elders. In the sub-category of *Atatürk and Turkish Elders*, the illustration of Atatürk is mainly included. In the life sciences textbook, there are many illustrations such as Atatürk's effigy in front of the school, pictures hanging in the classroom, his name on the primary school sign, Anıtkabir, the house where he was born, the picture of his family members, the poster on the school board (November 10, Atatürk week), his picture on the wall, etc. Apart from these illustrations, the textbooks include Atatürk in the street name on the sketch illustration, in his address to youth, in the school names, and in the activities section for creating an Atatürk album.



Figure 9. MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 73



Figure 10. MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 178

It is observed that the illustrations of Mehmet Akif Ersoy (fig. 10), Ziya Gökalp (primary school name illustration), and Hafsa Sultan (name of street) are also included in the life sciences textbooks. In the 3rd grade textbooks, Aziz Sancar (fig. 11), Jale İnan, Nuri Demirağ, and Sabiha Gökçen (fig. 12) were included in the painting activity, while Engin Arık, Nene Hatun, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Piri Reis, and Zihni Derin were included in the form of illustrations.



Figure 11. *MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 144*Figure 12. *MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 144*

### *Specific days and weeks*

Another sub-category under the National Identity theme is the *Specific days and weeks* sub-category. It is observed that the majority of the illustrations in the specific days and weeks subcategory are related to the national holiday ceremony. For example, there are illustrations at every grade level regarding "19 May Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day", "23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day", "29 October Republic Day", "30 August Victory Day", and "July 15 Democracy and National Unity Day".

Figure 13. *MoNE 1st Grade, p. 155*Figure14. *MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 180*

Apart from National Holidays, there are illustrations related to "Attitude, Investment, and Turkish Goods Week", "Red Crescent Week", "March 18 Martyrs' Day", and "Green Crescent Week" for national identity. The majority of the illustrations in the Specific Days and Weeks subcategory are included in the book as a celebration ceremony illustration. Writing on the board, banner on the board, and celebration on the street are another form of illustration expression.



Figure 15. MoNE, 2nd Grade, p. 139



Figure 16. MoNE, 2nd Grade, p. 167

### National culture

Another sub-category under the theme of National Identity is the sub-category of *national culture*. In the sub-category of national culture, illustrations of national dances (alay, kaşık dance, horon dance, zeybek and çaydaçıra dance), agricultural products produced in Turkey (figs, olives, grapes, cherries, melons, strawberries, chestnuts), and local clothes are included. Also, the illustrations of simit, which is considered as a traditional food, and tea as a national beverage, are included in the book as national cultural elements.



Figure 17. MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 193



Figure 18. MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 117

### Place

Within the sub-category of *Place*, Ankara is emphasized as the capital. In addition, there are illustrations of places with tourism value for our country such as the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Adıyaman (Nemrut), Denizli (Pamukkale), Nevşehir (Fairy Chimneys), Aigai Ancient City, Sardis Ruins, and Manisa (Şehzadeler city), Turkey Map (painting the capital, where we live, painting the city where we live), and World Map illustrations.

Figure 19. *MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 173*

### Social Identity

In life sciences textbooks, there are illustrations related to the *environment* (163), *values* (121), *rules* (105), *occupation* (34), *family* (34), *customs and traditions* (14) and *Specific Days and Weeks* (5).

### Environment

At the 1st grade level, there are findings related to the *environment* sub-category the most. Within the sub-category of the environment, the emphasis was placed mainly on the illustrations for the love of nature. Getting know animals (fish, bird reptile, insect, pet), love of animals (animal protection day), getting know plants (garden plants, wild plants, trees, planting saplings), the importance of water, and illustrations related to the seasons are examples of them. Also, illustrations such as the trash can illustration for environmental protection and environmental pollution and throwing the trash into the trash can are also included in the book. In addition, recycling is emphasized with the zero-waste project and illustrations for the separation of wastes.

Figure 20. *MoNE 1st Grade, p. 38*Figure 21. *MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 221*

In addition to these, at the 2nd grade level, there are illustrations emphasizing animal love (pet emphasis, animal protection day, goat feeding illustration), plant protection (planting saplings, watering flowers, forest illustration). In addition, there are illustrations related to measures to be taken in case of natural disasters, rules to be followed during disasters, preparing an earthquake kit, 112 emergency calls, 183 social support lines and AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency).

At the 3rd Grade level, the illustrations related to the *environment* sub-category are emphasized the most. It is observed that the most emphasis is placed on environmental cleaning in the sub-category of environment. Throwing garbage in the trash, cleaning the garden, and trash can illustrations are examples of it. Also, illustrations aimed at protecting nature (planting saplings, watering trees, forest week, drought, unconscious hunting, sea pollution) are also included in the book. Recycling is also emphasized. The recycling logo and the recycling campaign activity are included in the book. Illustrations of organizations related to animal love and the environment can also be seen. In addition, there are illustration information regarding an earthquake poster for disasters, precautions, and activities to be taken before the earthquake, AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) search and rescue illustration, and special numbers (110, 155, 112).



Figure 22. *MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 215*



Figure 23. *MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 167*

### Values

In the *Value* sub-category, the value of respecting differences is emphasized the most in the 1st grade. Illustrations of refugee students and individuals with special needs support this value. In addition, illustrations related to the values of friendship (constructive communication), helpfulness, and cleanliness are also included. Also, there are illustrations on the importance and use of resources (such as water, light, electricity, natural gas) for saving value.



Figure 24. *MoNE 1st Grade, p. 14*



Figure 25. *MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 196*

At the 2nd Grade level, the illustrations related to the *value* sub-category are emphasized the most. Within the value sub-category, it is observed that there are illustrations reflecting the values of respect for differences (person with special needs, refugee student), friendship (constructive communication), cooperation (decorating the board), helpfulness (patient, elderly, pregnant woman, person with special needs). Also, illustrations on the importance and use of resources (such as water, light, electricity, natural gas) for savings are included in the 2nd and 3rd grade textbooks.

In the *Values* subcategory, in the 3rd grade, there are illustrations related to the values of respect for differences (refugee student), friendship (constructive communication with a friend), honesty, respect (listening to the other's opinion), and helpfulness (refugee student, neighbour, book campaign, toy campaign, elderly, special needs person). In addition, there are illustrations about being thrifty, using resources correctly, and shopping list activity.



Figure 26. *MoNE 3rd Grade*, p. 28



Figure 27. *MoNE 2nd Grade*, p. 89

### **Rules**

In the *Rules* subcategory, there are illustrations for the 1st grade safety rules, school rules, classroom rules, courtesy rules, traffic rules, and rules in common areas. In the subcategory of Rules, the most emphasis was placed on traffic rules in all books. These are illustrations for traffic signs, traffic flow, and pedestrian crossing. Also, rules for common areas (such as taking turns on public transport), school rules (such as not running in the corridor, using school property cleanly), and classroom rules (such as speaking in turn, waiting in line) are also included in the book.



Figure 28. *MoNE 2nd Grade*, p. 146



Figure 29. *MoNE 1st Grade*, p. 17

In the 3rd grade, there are illustrations related to school rules (not running in the corridor, keeping the classroom clean, standing in line in the canteen), rules of common areas (turning down the music at late hours, not beating carpets from the window, taking turns on the bus, museum rules), and rules of courtesy (thanking). It is also observed that there are illustrations related to traffic rules and traffic signs.



Figure 30. *MoNE 1st Grade*, p. 38



Figure 31. *MoNE 3rd Grade*, p. 51

### **Occupation**

In the sub-category of *Occupation*, illustrations of school employees in terms of social roles were included in the 1st grade. A colouring activity for school staff is also available in the book. In the 2nd grade, there are illustrations of pharmacist, nurse, doctor, dentist, emergency team, firefighter, banker, police, and teacher. In the 3rd grade, there are illustrations for the professions of doctor, gardener, ballerina, firefighter, painter, cook, teacher, dentist, and police.



Figure 32. *MoNE 1st Grade*,  
p. 30



Figure 33. *MoNE 2nd Grade*,  
p. 123

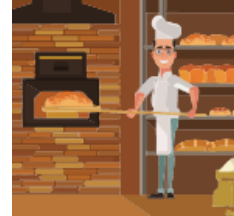


Figure 34. *MoNE 3rd Grade*,  
p. 35

### **Family**

Another subcategory is *family*. In the 1st grade in the family subcategory, mostly family members and communication within the family (courtesy rules) are emphasized with illustrations. Also, illustrations related to values are frequently seen in the family subcategory. Values such as respect (visiting patient), love, compassion, helpfulness (crossing the elderly) are emphasized in the book.

In the 2nd grade in the *family* sub-category, it is observed that the loyalty of the members of the family and the family tree are emphasized. In addition, illustrations expressing the values of cooperation and respect are included in the book.

In the 3rd grade, it is seen that there are illustrations for family elders, family members, family rules, and domestic cooperation.



Figure 35. *MoNE 1st Grade*,  
p. 57



Figure 36. *MoNE 2nd Grade*,  
p. 78



Figure 37. *MoNE 3rd Grade*,  
p. 45

### ***Customs and Traditions***

In the sub-theme of *Customs and Traditions*, there are customs such as offering candy and cologne to the guests (fig. 38), kissing the hands of the elders, and illustrations for applications such as making pickles, making tomato paste, drying peppers at certain times of the year, reflecting our culture in the 1st grade.

In the sub-category of *customs and traditions*, there are illustrations of patient visitation, wedding, military farewell ceremony, riding the bride on horseback, kissing the hands of elders, and henna night ceremony reflecting our culture in the 2nd grade.



Figure 38. *MoNE 1st Grade*, p. 160



Figure 39. *MoNE 2nd Grade*, p. 187



### *Specific days and weeks*

In the *Specific Days and Weeks* subcategory, there are illustrations for Mother's Day, Library Week, Museums Week, Green Crescent Week, Energy Saving Week and Forest Week, Animal Protection Day and Teachers' Day.



Figure 40. *MoNE 1st Grade, p. 176*



Figure 41. *MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 92*

### **Individual Identity**

In life sciences textbooks, there are illustrations related to the sub-categories of *self-care* (52), *self-knowledge* (33), *planning* (7), and *savings* (3), under the theme of individual identity.

#### *Self-care*

Self-care subcategory is emphasized the most in life sciences textbooks. In this category, there are illustrations about regular nutrition, regular sleep, getting vaccinated, and doing sports. There is also an event for regular nutrition. Also, there are illustrations related to developing basic self-care skills (tooth brushing, face washing, hand washing, hair combing, nail cutting, bathing).



Figure 42. *MoNE 1st Grade, p. 86*



Figure 43. *MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 108*



### ***Getting to Know Self***

In the sub-category of *getting to know self*, there are illustrations related to physical characteristics, self-expression, and discovery of talents and responsibility for the individual to get to know himself/herself and introduce himself to his/her friends. At the 3rd grade level, in the sub-category of *Getting to Know Self*, there are illustrations for the things he/she likes to do, his/her strengths and weaknesses, self-expression, being responsible, and discovering his/her talents.



Figure 44. *MoNE 1st Grade, p. 12*



Figure 45. *MoNE 3rd Grade, p. 12*

### ***Planning***

In the sub-category of *planning*, there are illustrations related to planning for his/her life and arranging the environment he/she lives in.

### ***Saving***

In the *Saving* subcategory, there are illustrations for the comparison of wants and needs in the 2nd grade, and illustrations for being a conscious consumer in the 3rd grade.



Figure 46. *MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 78*



Figure 47. *MoNE 2nd Grade, p. 54*

### ***Religious Identity***

In life science textbooks, there are generally illustrations related to the subcategories of *symbols* (46) and *place* (7) under the theme of religious identity. It is observed that the elements reflecting the religious identity are mostly included in the 2nd grade life sciences textbook (26). There are fewer religious identity elements at 1st Grade (10) and 3rd Grade (13).

#### ***Symbol***

In the *Symbol* subcategory, the heads carved woman (teacher, assistant principal, grandmother, nurse, relative) symbol comes to the fore. In addition, a man wearing a pray cap, circumcision ceremony, and Mevlevi illustration are also included in the book. Also, the expression "God's welcome", religious holidays (Ramadan and Eid-al-Adha, preparing celebration cards for them), performing Eid prayers, a goat illustration, and illustrations of praying for food are included in the book as religious symbols.



Figure 48. *MoNE 3rd Grade*,  
p. 35



Figure 49. *MoNE 2nd Grade*,  
p. 187



Figure 50. *MoNE 3rd Grade*,  
p. 125

#### ***Place***

In the subcategory of *Place*, the illustration of the mosque draws attention. Blue Mosque, Manisa Sultan Mosque, and a mosque illustration are in the background in the sketch and illustrations.

### ***Digital Identity***

#### ***Digital Tools***

In the Life Sciences textbooks, the subcategory of *digital tools* is included under the theme of digital identity. These are computer (18), television (5), tablet (3), smart board (1), and mobile phone (1) illustrations in the book. There are also technological elements in the textbooks at the 3rd grade level. Playing with the computer, painting computer illustrations and technology-family illustrations, watching the news on television, and learning with a smart board in the classroom are the details of the illustrations.



Figure 51. *MoNE 1st Grade*,  
p. 25



Figure 52. *MoNE 2nd Grade*,  
p. 96



Figure 53. *MoNE 3rd Grade*,  
p. 134

### ***Universal Identity***

In life sciences textbooks, there are illustrations related to specific days and weeks, the world, and value under the theme of universal identity. World theatre day and human rights and democracy week constitute the details of the illustrations related to specific days and weeks. In the illustration, which includes respect for differences, there are children holding hands. Children on the world illustration and the world map illustration also emphasize the universal identity.



Figure 54. *MoNE 2nd Grade*, p. 138



Figure 55. *MoNE 3rd Grade*, p. 75

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

In this study, which examined illustrations in life science textbooks in terms of identity construction, the following results were obtained:

The results of the study revealed that images of collective identity (national, social and religious) are prominently featured, with less emphasis on individual identity. As Özdil (2017) states, collective identity constitutes the main element of social integration while the contributions of individual identities to social integration depend on conditions. Illustrations related to the theme of national identity within collective identity are most common in the textbooks studied. Many national symbols, especially the Turkish Flag, are included in the textbooks for the construction of national identity. It is a well-known tradition of the nation-states to include national symbols and important days for the nation in textbooks. According to Smith (1994, p. 34), in order to establish a social bond, a repertoire of common values, symbols, and traditions is

created and a social bond is established in this way. National identity is created by reminding the members of the society related to their common affinity and cultural heritage with symbols such as flags, money, anthems, uniforms, and monuments. Another result reached in the study is the illustrations of the national days, which are important for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the nation-state, the Republic of Turkey, at all levels. For example, there are many illustrations related to the days such as “19 May”, the beginning of the War of Independence, “23 April”, the opening day of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, “29 October”, the proclamation of the Republic, and the Great Offensive “30 August”, which resulted in victory under the Commander-in-Chief of Atatürk. Since these days are important days in Turkish History, they are also celebrated as national holidays. As Copeaux (2016) states, history instils a sense of belonging to a community, a sense of identity, and a sense of duty, and creates a collective identity by giving a nation a common past.

Another of the most frequently used sub-categories within the theme of national identity is Atatürk. The illustration of Atatürk is featured in many different ways, including an effigy in front of the school, a picture hanged in the classroom, the name of the school, the Anıtkabir, a picture on the wall, and the name of the street. Also, it is observed that illustrations of other Turkish elders such as Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Ziya Gökalp, Hafsa Sultan, Aziz Sancar, and Jale İnan are also included in the textbooks. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is the founding leader of the nation-state Republic of Turkey.

One of the most basic goals of the Turkish education system is to raise Kemalist individuals. Doğu and Kuş (2022) concluded in their study that the national identity built in social studies curricula since 1968 was shaped around the Kemalist thought system, but this situation was more dominant in the curricula that existed in the past. Kuş and Mert (2021) found in their study that Kemalist themes were widely included in the geography curriculum of 2005, but that there was no link to Kemalist themes in the most recent curriculum of 2018.

Another result reached in this study is the place emphasis on important places for Turkey within the theme of national identity. Among these illustrations, Turkey's important historical places, touristic places, central government places, and Turkey map are included. In this way, it is observed that it is aimed for the students to know all the natural and historical beauties of the country and to know the borders of the country. Smith (1994, p. 25) states that one of the basic requirements for the formation and survival of national identity is "a historical land/country or fatherland". Fatherland is where “our” wise people, saints, and heroes live, work, pray, and fight. All these make the fatherland unique on earth. Fatherland becomes “sacred” with its rivers, seas, lakes, mountains, and cities.

Another conclusion reached in this study is that after the national identity theme, the illustrations related to the social identity theme are the most common. According to Özdemir (2001), social identity refers to a sense of belonging that an individual develops against the values, norms, reasoning, art, language, religion, traditions, and customs and other institutions of the social environment to which he/she belongs. In this study, it was observed that illustrations related to social values were included under the theme of social identity. Illustrations on the values of respect for differences, friendship, benevolence, cleanliness, thrift, respect, and truth are included in the books of all grade levels.

Another result reached in the study is that the illustrations related to the environment are mostly included in the textbooks regarding the theme of social identity. At every grade, the love of nature, the importance of water, environmental protection, environmental pollution, recycling, and disasters are included in the books. Industrialization and rapid urbanization, global environmental disasters, and global warming in recent years have begun to be perceived as a threat to the human species. Depressions in the social sphere also pave the way for the emergence of new identities (Yıldız, 2007, p. 13).

As a result of the study, it was determined that there are many illustrations related to social rules within the theme of social identity. It was concluded that in all the books, the illustrations emphasizing the traffic rules are the most. Apart from this, there are illustrations for safety rules, school and classroom rules, courtesy rules, and rules in common areas in the book for each grade.

Another subcategory in the category of social identity is family. Illustrations emphasizing family communication, values, and commitment of family members are included. Karpat (2006) stated that in gaining social identity, the family is the most important institution that preserves and transfers the culture to the next generation, as well as the foundation of the society.

Also, illustrations related to customs such as hand kissing, henna night, military farewell ceremony, patient visitation, which reflect our culture at the 1st and 2nd grade, are included in the books. There is a close relationship between culture and identity, which is one of the basic functions of identity formation. Indeed, the culture in which a person was born and grew up has a great share in shaping the identity. Identity and culture must be in harmony with each other and open to change towards each other. Different kinds of patterns (such as art, literature, folklore, music, education, customs, belief, language, discourse, representation) support each other (Aydoğdu, 2004).

At the end of the study, there are more limited illustrations related to individual identities in the illustrations in the books compared to the collective identities such as family, nation, and culture. The main reason for this is that we can say that individual identities are built on difference rather than emphasizing the similarities between individuals (Özdil, 2017). It was observed that the books studied include illustration content for developing self-care skills, recognizing and expressing oneself, discovering talents and taking responsibility, and planning for life.

As a result of the study, it was determined that the illustrations related to religious identity were included with religious symbols in the textbooks studied. These religious symbols are the headscarf, religious holidays, and mosques, which are important for Muslims. Aratemur-Çimen and Bayhan (2019) in their study, which examined the textbooks comparatively, concluded that the weight of the Political Islamist discourse increased in the textbooks renewed after the 2017 curriculum. Religion is the most influential factor in the formation of cultural (social) identity.

When the life sciences textbooks are examined, it is observed that these tools are emphasized in the books at every grade on the theme of digital identity. It can be said that digital tools such as tablets, computers, and televisions and illustrations for their use are included in the books. In Turkey, "Digital Competence" has been included in all curriculums as a common skill in the curriculum that was last updated in 2018 (Başarmak, Yakar, Güneş & Kuş, 2019). Textbooks prepared in line with the curriculum include content for digital identity. Ekmen and Bakar (2019) found in their study that digital competence is included in all primary education Curriculums and Textbooks in Turkey, but it is not at a sufficient level.

The Universal Identity theme includes illustrations for certain days and weeks of universal importance, such as World Theater Day, Human Rights and Democracy Week. Again, the theme of universal identity includes illustrations emphasizing respect for differences. In the studies, it is observed that the expressions related to globalisation are more frequent in all the curricula that have been updated since 2005 in Turkey (Doğu & Kuş, 2022; Kuş & Mert, 2021).

### **Recommendations**

- Global identity and digital identity contents can be expanded in textbooks.
- The ideological effects of government party on textbooks can be investigated in the identity construction process.
- The research can be deepened by adding teacher opinions.
- The research can be deepened by focusing on one type of identity throughout the textbook (illustrations and text).

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