Seventh Graders' Learning Strategies and Achievement Goal Orientations as Predictors of Their Achievement in Social Studies*

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Abstract

It is aimed to examine the relationships among seventh-graders' achievement goal orientations and learning strategies and achievement in Social Studies. In this quantitative study with a correlational design, the data were collected from 440 seventh-grade students studying in nine public middle schools selected by convenience sampling. As data collection tools, Learning Strategies for Social Studies Scale (Didin & Kasapoğlu, 2017), Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals Scale (Gezer & Şahin, 2016) and Personal Information Form were used. Seventh-graders' achievement in Social Studies was determined based on end-of-term grades. The data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis depicted that seventh-graders' learning strategies for Social Studies positively predicted their achievement in Social Studies, after controlling for gender. After adjustment for both their gender and learning strategies for Social Studies, the task-approach as one of the Social Studies-oriented achievement goals positively predicted their achievement in Social Studies.

Keywords: Social Studies, Achievement Goal Orientations, Learning Strategies, Academic Achievement

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals face with many problems in the society they live in. They need to be prepared to deal with these problems. Social Studies is one of the basic courses required for individuals to have knowledge and responsibility about the problems in society, to understand interpersonal relations and to understand national characteristics (Şahin, 1994). These goals of Social Studies require students to think, understand, question and find solutions to problems, and seek ways to make what they learn more lasting (Akınoğlu & Bakır, 2003). In order to make students learn effectively and lastingly in Social Studies, learning strategies are needed (Çelikkaya & Kuş, 2010). Weinstein and Mayer (1986) characterize learning strategies as a process in which the learner does not passively accept the stimuli offered by the teacher, but instead as a process in which the student is active. Learning strategies are generally classified as attention, rehearsal, elaboration, organization and metacognition strategies, although they are named differently in the literature. Attention strategies help understanding information and distinguishing important information from unimportant one (Senemoğlu, 2015). Rehearsal means that the student tries to actively remember, read or name information (Weinstein & Hume, 1998). In its simplest form, organization strategies generally focus on organizing new information for easier recall (Weinstein & Hume, 1998). With elaboration strategies, new knowledge is made meaningful by comparing it with old one (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). While cognitive strategies are utilized to organize learning and solve problems, metacognitive strategies are used to plan, oversee, assess, manage and understand these strategies (Aleven & Koedinger, 2002).

In addition to the learning strategies, the motivation of the students, the goals they set and the behaviours they display in line with these goals are effective in being successful. In order to explain the underlying causes of students' behaviours while learning, the achievement goal orientation theory has been introduced by Nicholls (1984). Achievement goal orientations create a framework that explains the reasons of the ways that influence individuals' academic achievement and how they perceive their abilities and act according to them (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). The concept of achievement goal orientation, which determines the cognitive, affective and behavioural responses of students to their performance, emphasizes the measurement and assessment of their beliefs and performances that affect students' achievement (Schunk, 2000). The different needs of students lead to different orientations of achievement including learning goals and motivations (Gümüş, 2018). The achievement goal orientation models developed with the aim of investigating the goals that students adopt and the skills they demonstrate have changed over time (Elliot et al., 2011): In the 1970s and 80s, achievement goal orientations were named as a dichotomous model consisting of mastery and performance. In the 1990s and 2000s, a trichotomous model was created by dividing achievement goal orientations into three as mastery, performance approach and performance avoidance. Then, the 2x2 model was created as mastery approach, mastery avoidance, performance approach, and performance avoidance. In the early 2010s, the 2x2 model was converted into a 3x2 model consisting of six orientations: task-approach, self-approach, other approach, task-avoidance, self-avoidance, and other avoidance.

Gezer and Şahin (2016) named the 3x2 achievement goal orientations model developed by Elliot et al. (2011) as task-approach, task-avoidance, self-approach, self-avoidance, other-approach and other-avoidance. The achievement goals of individuals with these orientations are as follows (Gezer & Şahin, 2016):

1. Task-Approach: It is important to answer most of the exam questions correctly and in the best way. They benefit from the opportunities that guarantee achievement. One of the most important goals is to get higher grades than previous ones.

2. Other-Approach: To be successful is to get higher grades than classmates. It is important to look more successful than classmates and to be perceived as successful by classmates. For individuals with this orientation, it is important that the grades they get from the exams are not too high, but higher than the grades of their classmates.

3. Self-Approach: Students learn subjects broadly and comprehensively. The most important goal of the students is to learn new knowledge. The important thing in this framework is to constantly improve knowledge and learn everything that can be learned. They try to understand the topics mentioned in the best way. They are always interested in topics that lead them to think.

4. Task-Avoidance: Students with this orientation refrain from answering questions incorrectly, having many wrong answers, getting lower grades than previous ones and all factors that prevent them from being successful.

5. Other-Avoidance: Students with this orientation are reluctant to perform poorer than their classmates, to answer the teacher's question incorrectly, to be humiliated when answering a question in the classroom, to look like an unsuccessful student, and to get a lower grade than their classmates.

6. Self-Avoidance: Students with this orientation avoid not learning the subjects incompletely, the possibility of learning mistakenly, forgetting what they have learned over time, making mistakes when solving questions and the lack of learning all the subjects that need to be learned.

As these achievement goal orientations can be related to the reasons behind students' success and their different aspects, they might contribute to the definition of academic achievement. Academic achievement is the result of an assessment made during or at the end of an instructional process. Academic achievement is defined as the students' proficiency levels regarding the learning objectives stated in the curriculum (Öztekin, 2012). School scores are often taken into account in determining achievement (Aydıner, 2004). In his experimental study, Dursunlar (2018) took into account the Social Studies grade averages and the achievement test results of the seventh-grade students in order to determine their achievement in Social Studies.

There have been studies in the literature examining the relationship of academic achievement with either learning strategies or achievement goal orientations. Examining the related literature shows that there are studies reporting significant relationships between learning strategies and academic achievement (Çelikkaya & Kuş, 2010; Liu, 2009; Liu et al., 2008). Learning strategies were found to significantly predict academic achievement (Shawer, 2016) and mediate the relationship between motivation and academic achievement (McClintic-Gilbert et al., 2013) and between motivation and feelings of success (Magen-Nagar & Cohen, 2017). Mostly, the impact of learning strategies on academic achievement was studied (Dikbaş & Kaf Hasırcı, 2008; Kayan Fadlelmula, 2011; Tunçer & Güven, 2007; Washburn et al., 2016; Yıldız, 2003; Yorulmaz, 2001). It is also seen that there are studies revealing significant relationships between achievement goal orientations and academic achievement (Akın, 2006; Buluş, 2011; Coutinho, 2007; Jiang et al., 2014; Skaalvik, 2018; Üzbe, 2013). Besides, achievement goal orientations were found to significantly predict feelings of success (Pekrun et al., 2009) and academic achievement (Chan et al., 2012; Richey et al., 2018). However, there is no study investigating the relationship between these three variables namely, learning strategies, achievement goal orientations and academic achievement. In addition, it has been determined that the studies conducted with the 3x2 achievement goal orientations model used in this research are limited and focused more on mastery approach, performance approach and performance avoidance orientations. It is anticipated that this study will fill the literature gap in terms of the achievement goal orientations model used. It is expected that the results of the research will contribute to the determination of the students' achievement goal orientations and learning strategies, the structuring of the Social Studies curriculum and instructional materials (e.g. textbooks) according to the determined achievement goal orientations and learning strategies, and to the achievement of the students in Social Studies.

Purpose of the Study

In this study, it was aimed to determine (a) learning strategies used by seventh-grade students in Social Studies, (b) Social Studies-oriented achievement goals of seventh-grade students, (c) seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies, (d) the relationships among learning strategies for Social Studies, Social Studies-oriented achievement goals, and achievement in Social Studies, (e) whether learning strategies for Social Studies predict achievement in Social Studies after controlling for gender, (f) whether Social Studies-oriented achievement goals predict achievement in Social Studies after controlling for gender and learning strategies for Social Studies. Within this scope, answers were sought to the following research questions:

1. What are the learning strategies used by seventh-grade students in Social Studies?

2. What are the Social Studies-oriented achievement goals of seventh-grade students?

3. What is the level of seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies?

4. What is the relationship between seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies and their achievement in Social Studies?

5. What is the relationship between seventh-grade students' Social Studies-oriented achievement goals and their achievement in Social Studies?

6. What is the relationship between seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies and Social Studies-oriented achievement goals?

7. How well is seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies predicted by their learning strategies for Social Studies, after controlling for their gender?

8. How well is seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies predicted by their Social Studies-oriented achievement goals, after controlling for their gender and learning strategies for Social Studies?

METHOD

Research Design

This quantitative research has a correlational design. The correlational research design detecting relationships among variables aims "either to explain important human behaviours or to predict likely outcomes" (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 362). In this research, the correlational research design was used since it aimed to examine the relationships among seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies, Social Studies-oriented achievement goals, and achievement in Social Studies and whether their achievement in Social Studies was significantly predicted by their Social Studies-oriented achievement goals, after controlling for their gender and learning strategies for Social Studies.

Population and Sample

The accessible population of the research comprises the seventh-grade students studying in Afyonkarahisar. The data were collected from nine different public middle schools in the central district of Afyonkarahisar determined by convenience sampling in the spring semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. As underlined by Fraenkel et al. (2012), a convenience sample is a group of individuals that is convenient to the researcher. This method was preferred to select the public middle

schools that could be accessed easily. The sample consisted of 440 seventh-grade students voluntarily participating in the research. The characteristics of the sample are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Participant Seventh-Grade Students

		f	*%*
Gender	Female	227	53.3
	Male	199	46.7
Mother's status of employment	Employed	87	20.6
	Unemployed	288	68.1
	Self-employed	45	10.6
	Retired	3	0.7
Father's status of employment	Employed	286	69.1
	Unemployed	8	1.9
	Self-employed	96	23.2
	Retired	24	5.8
Mother's level of education	Illiterate	11	2.6
	Elementary school	166	39.1
	Middle school	132	31.1
	High school	75	17.6
	University	30	7.1
	Master's degree	8	1.9
	Doctoral degree	3	0.7
Father's level of education	Illiterate	3	0.7
	Elementary school	89	21.1
	Middle school	114	27.1
	High school	134	31.8
	University	50	11.9
	Master's degree	25	5.9
	Doctoral degree	6	1.4

Note: *N* for each item may vary due to missing responses.

According to Table 1, 53.3% of the participant seventh-grade students are female and 46.7% are male. While 68.1% of the students' mothers are not working, 92.3% of the students' fathers are working. While the mothers of 39.1% of the students are elementary school graduates, the mothers of 9.7% are at least university graduates. While the fathers of 31.8% of the students graduate from a high school, the fathers of 0.7% are illiterate.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, Learning Strategies for Social Studies Scale (Didin & Kasapoğlu, 2017), Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals Scale (Gezer & Şahin, 2016) were utilized. In addition to this, in order to collect information about the characteristics of seventh-grade students, the Personal Information Form the researchers developed was utilized.

Learning Strategies for Social Studies Scale

In order to determine seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies, the "Learning Strategies for Social Studies Scale" (Didin & Kasapoğlu, 2017) which consists of 20 items and one factor explaining 52.21% of the total variance was used. The reliability coefficient for one-factor structure of the scale was calculated as 0.95 (Didin & Kasapoğlu, 2017). Didin and Kasapoğlu (2017) conducted exploratory factor analysis during the scale development phase.

In this study, the data collected in the second half of the 2017-2018 academic year were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis with LISREL 8.71 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) to confirm the single-factor structure of the scale. The data entries of the 426 subjects were checked and no errors were detected. Missing value analysis was performed to determine the missing values. It was suggested that the sample size should be at least 200 in order to perform the confirmatory factor analysis (Kline, 2016). In this research, the sample size is larger than 200 (*n*= 426). The confirmatory

factor analysis assumptions, i.e. absence of multivariate outliers, univariate and multivariate normality and absence of multicollinearity were checked. Univariate normality was checked by observing skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness and kurtosis value of zero displays a perfect normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Skewness values greater than 3 and kurtosis values greater than 10 indicate that data are not normally distributed (Kline, 2016). Skewness values between ±2 and kurtosis values between ±4 showed that the univariate normality assumption was met. Multivariate normality was checked by running Mardia's test (Mardia, 1970). The multivariate kurtosis value of 40.78 (p<.05) not more than the critical value of 440, which was calculated for multivariate normality according to the formula developed by Raykov and Marcoulides (2008 cited in Ursavaş, 2015), indicated that the multivariate normality could be assumed (Ursavaş, 2015). There was no multicollinearity between the scale items because the correlation coefficients ranging from .20 and .56 did not exceed .90 (Pallant, 2011). In confirmatory factor analysis, the chi-square/degree of freedom ratio, GFI, CFI, RMSEA, SRMR, AGFI and NNFI values are examined (Çokluk et al., 2014). The goodness of fit values for the modified model are X^2/df = 2.47; RMSEA=0.059; GFI = 0.91; AGFI = 0.89; SRMR = 0.043; NNFI and CFI=0.98. It can be suggested that the model is acceptable according to the following cut-off criteria: $X^2/df \leq 3$ (Kline, 2016); RMSEA $\leq$ .08 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993); SRMR $\leq$ .05 (Brown, 2006); GFI $\geq$ .90, AGFI $\geq$ .90, NNFI $\geq$ .95, CFI $\geq$ .95 (Sümer, 2000). t values greater than 1.96 shows that the scale items significantly load on the factor. Since t values are greater than 2.58, they are significant at the 0.01 level (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). As a result, it can be stated that confirmatory factor analysis supports exploratory factor analysis. Accordingly, "Learning Strategies for Social Studies Scale" consists of 20 items and one dimension. The Cronbach alpha value of the overall scale was 0.92. According to Field (2009), this value indicates that the scale has a high-level internal consistency.

Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals Scale

To determine the Social Studies-oriented achievement goals of seventh-grade students, the "Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals Scale" (Gezer & Şahin, 2016) was used after getting permission. It consists of 29 items and six factors (task-approach, self-approach, other-approach, task-avoidance, self-avoidance, other-avoidance) explaining 50.82% of the total variance. The reliability coefficients for each factor are as follows: .73, .63, .71, .55, .73, and .70 (Gezer & Şahin, 2016). Gezer and Şahin (2016) conducted exploratory factor analysis during the scale development phase as suggested by the literature (Çokluk et al., 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and confirmatory factor analysis during the scale validation phase as mentioned in the literature (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Kline, 2016).

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was done to confirm the six-factor structure. Before conducting confirmatory factor analysis, its assumptions were checked. Univariate normality was examined through skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness values greater than 3 and kurtosis values greater than 10 indicate that data are not normally distributed (Kline, 2016). Skewness values lower than 3 and kurtosis values lower than 10 indicated that the univariate normality was assumed. Multivariate normality was checked through Mardia's test (Mardia, 1970). The multivariate kurtosis value of 61.91 (p<.05) lower than the critical value of 899, which was calculated for multivariate normality according to the formula developed by Raykov and Marcoulides (2008 cited in Ursavaş, 2015), indicated that the assumption of multivariate normality could be satisfied (Ursavaş, 2015). No multicollinearity was found between the scale items because the correlation coefficients ranging from .11 and .65 did not exceed .90 (Pallant, 2011). In confirmatory factor analysis, chi-square/degree of freedom ratio, GFI, RMSEA, SRMR, AGFI and NNFI values are examined (Çokluk et al., 2014). The fit indices for the modified model are as follows: X^2/df = 2.10; RMSEA = 0.051; GFI = 0.89; AGFI = 0.87; SRMR = 0.048; NNFI and CFI = 0.98. It can be suggested that the model is acceptable according to the following cut-off criteria: $X^2/df \leq 3$ (Kline, 2016); RMSEA $\leq$ .08 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993); SRMR $\leq$ .05 (Brown, 2006); GFI $\geq$ .90, AGFI $\geq$ .90, NNFI $\geq$ .95, CFI $\geq$ .95 (Sümer, 2000). t values greater than 1.96 show that the scale items significantly load on the relevant factors. t values are statistically significant at 0.01 level since they are greater than 2.58 (Jöreskog & Sörbom,

1993). Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the six-factor structure of the 29-item "Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals Scale". The Cronbach alpha values for all factors (self-approach, task-approach, other-approach, task-avoidance, other-avoidance and self-avoidance) were 0.83, 0.82, 0.75, 0.77, 0.76 and 0.77, respectively. According to Field (2009), these values indicate that there is an internal consistency among the items loading on the factors.

Data Collection

Permission for data collection was obtained from Afyon Kocatepe University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee and Afyonkarahisar Provincial Directorate of National Education. The scales were administered to 440 volunteer seventh-grade students in 20-25 minutes. Before the scale administration, the students were informed of the purpose of the research and how to fill out the scales. Data were screened to check for incorrect entry, missing values and extreme cases, and no misentry was detected. Little's MCAR test (Little, 1988) was run to analyse missing values, and the MCAR test result (.477) was found to be nonsignificant (p>.05). In other words, missing values were found to be completely at random. Three cases (391st, 395th, and 397th) were removed from the data file because these cases included 65.3% of missing values. Outliers were examined through Mahalonobis Distance values for each case. There were 11 cases, which had Mahalonobis Distance values greater than the critical value. These cases were deleted from the data file. Hence, the data from the remaining 426 seventh-grade students were subjected to further analyses.

Data Analysis

Means and standard deviations as descriptive statistics used for summarizing, organizing and simplifying data (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007) were calculated in order to determine seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies, Social Studies-oriented achievement goals and achievement in Social Studies. The relationships among these three variables were determined through Pearson correlation analysis. Pearson correlation analysis is done to "measure the degree and direction of linear relationship between two variables" (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007, p. 511). Since gender affects achievement in Social Studies (Dania, 2014), hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine (1) how well learning strategies for Social Studies predict achievement in Social Studies after controlling for gender and (2) how well Social Studies-oriented achievement goals predict achievement in Social Studies after controlling for gender and learning strategies for Social Studies. Hierarchical regression is a multiple regression method in which the researcher determines the entry order of the predictors based on earlier research (Field, 2009). The assumptions of the hierarchical regression analysis (sample size, normality, homoscedasticity, independence of errors, linearity, and absence of multicollinearity and outliers) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) were checked and satisfied. The assumption of sample size was met because the data were collected from a sample of 440 seventh-grade students, size of that should be 114 at minimum according to the formula of 50+8m. The histogram and normal P-P plot of residuals displayed that the assumption of normally distributed errors was satisfied. As the scatterplot of the dependent variable and residuals did not show a significant pattern, the homoscedasticity was assumed. The Durbin-Watson test was run for the assumption of independence of errors that was met due to the value of *d* (1.59) which should be between 1.5 and 2.5. The linearity assumption was checked through the scatterplots which displayed linear relationships between the dependent variable and each independent variable. In order to diagnose the absence of multicollinearity, correlations among predictors were checked from the correlation matrix. The correlations between predictors did not exceed the critical value of .90, tolerance values (1.00, .99, .37, . 39, .69, .39, .46, .47) were higher than .20, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) values (1.00, 1.00, 2.71, 2.58, 1.45, 2.56, 2.16, 2.11) did not exceed 10. Cook's distance and leverage values were examined, and it was seen that there were no serious outliers ($p<.001$).

FINDINGS

Seventh-Grade Students' Learning Strategies for Social Studies

Seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Seventh-Grade Students' Learning Strategies for Social Studies

Item	Learning Strategies for Social Studies	M	SD
17	"I try to think through a topic and decide what I am supposed to learn from it rather than just reading it over when studying Social Studies."	5.28	1.76
14	"I try to apply ideas from Social Studies readings in other class activities such as lecture and discussion."	5.26	1.78
18	"When studying for Social Studies, I try to determine which concepts I don't understand well."	5.18	1.90
8	"When I become confused about something I'm reading for Social Studies, I go back and try to figure it out."	5.17	1.86
20	"If I get confused taking notes in Social Studies, I make sure I sort it out afterwards."	5.17	1.83
12	"I try to understand the material in Social Studies by making connections between the readings and the concepts from the lectures."	5.01	1.76
5	"When I study for Social Studies, I go through the readings and my class notes and try to find the most important ideas."	4.90	1.86
6	"When reading for Social Studies, I try to relate the material to what I already know."	4.85	1.83
1	"When I study for Social Studies, I pull together information from different sources, such as lectures, readings, and discussions."	4.80	1.82
19	"When I study for Social Studies, I set goals for myself in order to direct my activities in each study period."	4.79	1.82
16	"I try to change the way I study Social Studies in order to fit the course requirements and instructor's teaching style."	4.74	1.85
3	"When reading for Social Studies, I make up questions to help focus my reading."	4.72	1.93
15	"I ask myself questions to make sure I understand the material I have been studying in Social Studies."	4.70	1.94
13	"Before I study new course material in Social Studies thoroughly, I often skim it to see how it is organized."	4.68	1.86
4	"I try to relate ideas in Social Studies to those in other courses whenever possible."	4.65	1.98
10	"When I study for Social Studies, I go over my class notes and make an outline of important concepts."	4.57	1.96
11	"If course materials in Social Studies are difficult to understand, I change the way I read the material."	4.56	2.01
9	"When I study for Social Studies, I write brief summaries of the main ideas from the readings and the concepts from the lectures."	4.50	1.97
2	"When I study the readings for Social Studies, I outline the material to help me organize my thoughts."	4.46	1.94
7	"I make simple charts, diagrams, or tables to help me organize course material in Social Studies."	4.14	1.99

"I try to think through a topic and decide what I am supposed to learn from it rather than just reading it over when studying Social Studies." ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.76$), "I try to apply ideas from Social Studies readings in other class activities such as lecture and discussion." ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.78$), "When studying for Social Studies, I try to determine which concepts I don't understand well." ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.90$) are the Social Studies learning strategies that reflect seventh-grade students most. It can be said that seventh-grade students mostly use metacognition strategies. The Social Studies learning strategies that reflect seventh-grade students least, on the other hand, are "When I study for Social Studies, I write brief summaries of the main ideas from the readings and the concepts from the lectures." ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.97$), "When I study the readings for Social Studies, I outline the material to help me organize my thoughts." ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.94$), "I make simple charts, diagrams, or tables to help me organize course material in Social Studies." ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.99$). It can be said that organization strategies are used the least.

Seventh-Grade Students' Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals

Seventh-grade students' Social Studies-oriented achievement goals are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Seventh-Grade Students' Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals

Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals	*M*	*SD*
Task-Approach	4.13	.881
Task-Avoidance	4.05	.861
Self-Approach	3.91	.825
Other-Avoidance	3.82	.907
Self-Avoidance	3.73	.919
Other-Approach	3.54	.967

As seen in Table 2, the Social Studies-oriented achievement goals of seventh-grade students are task-approach (*M* = 4.13; *SD* = .88), task-avoidance (*M* = 4.05; *SD* = .86), self-approach (*M* = 3.91; *SD* = .82), other-avoidance (*M* = 3.82; *SD* = .90), self-avoidance (*M* = 3.73; *SD* = .91), and other-approach (*M* = 3.54; *SD* = .96), respectively. Based on this table, it can be inferred that seventh-grade students' Social Studies-oriented achievement goals are task-approach at most, while other-approach at least.

Seventh-Grade Students' Achievement in Social Studies

The grades (over 100 points) seventh-grade students earned in Social Studies in the first semester of the 2017-18 academic year were accepted as their achievement in Social Studies. Descriptive statistics related to the end-of-term report grades of 424 students in Social Studies accessed via e-school system were calculated. It can be suggested that 424 seventh-grade students earned high end-of-term grades from Social Studies (M = 76, SD = 18.04, mode = 95, median = 80). Since the end-of-term scores seventh-grade students gain in Social Studies show a negatively-skewed distribution, it is suggested that the Social Studies teachers might give high scores to the participant seventh-grade students or ask easy questions in the exams.

Relationships between Seventh-Grade Students' Learning Strategies for Social Studies, Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals and Achievement in Social Studies

The relationships between seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies, Social Studies-oriented achievement goals and achievement in Social Studies were determined by computing Pearson's correlation coefficients. The coefficients in Table 3 are interpreted according to the following criteria (Büyüköztürk, 2016): Pearson correlation coefficient of .70-1.00 indicates high; Pearson correlation coefficient of .30-.70 medium; Pearson correlation coefficient of .00-.30 low level of relationship.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Analysis Results

	Sap	TAp	OAp	TAv	OAv	SAv	LS	AS
SAp	1							
TAp	.72**	1						
OAp	.43**	.39**	1					
TAv	.66**	.71**	.41**	1				
OAv	.50**	.51**	.51**	.62**	1			
SAv	.52**	.52**	.49**	.59**	.67**	1		
LS	.62**	.52**	.35**	.52**	.40**	.48**	1	
AS	.30**	.39**	.06	.32**	.13**	.18**	.23**	1

**p<.01; SAp: Self-Approach, SAv: Self-Avoidance, TAp: Task-Approach, TAv: Task-Avoidance, OAp: Other-Approach, OAv: Other-Avoidance, LS: Learning Strategies for Social Studies, AS: Achievement in Social Studies

Moderate-level positive relationships were determined between seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies and Social Studies-oriented achievement goals [self-approach ($r = .62$, $p < .01$), task-approach ($r = .52$, $p < .01$), task-avoidance ($r = .52$, $p < .01$), self-avoidance ($r = .48$, $p < .01$), other-avoidance ($r = .40$, $p < .01$), other-approach ($r = .35$, $p < .01$)]. A low-level positive relationship has been found between seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies and their achievement in Social Studies ($r = .23$, $p < .01$). Moderate and positive relationships were found between seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies and self-approach ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), task-approach ($r = .39$, $p < .01$), and task-avoidance ($r = .32$, $p < .01$). Low-level positive relationships were found between seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies and other-avoidance ($r = .13$, $p < .01$) and self-avoidance ($r = .18$, $p < .01$). Seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies is not significantly correlated with the other-approach ($r = .06$, $p > .01$). As a result, significant positive relationships were found between Social Studies-oriented achievement goals (except the other-approach) and achievement in Social Studies.

Learning Strategies for Social Studies and Social Studies-Oriented Achievement Goals as Predictors of Seventh-Grade Students' Achievements in Social Studies

How well seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies is predicted by learning strategies for Social Studies after controlling for gender and how well seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies is predicted by Social Studies-oriented achievement goals after controlling for gender and learning strategies for Social Studies are determined by the hierarchical regression analysis, results of which are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Variables	B	SE	β	t	Partial r^2	ΔR^2	ΔF
Model 1						.02	9.25*
Gender	5.29	1.74	.14	3.04*	.14		
Model 2						.04	22.39*
Learning strategies	3.35	.70	.22	4.73*	.22		
Model 3						.11	9.67*
Self-approach	1.64	1.61	.074	1.01	.05		
Task-approach	6.31	1.48	.30	4.26*	.20		
Other-approach	-1.86	1.00	-.09	-1.85	-.09		
Task-avoidance	2.95	1.51	.13	1.94	.09		
Other-avoidance	-2.26	1.31	-.11	-1.72	-.08		
Self-avoidance	.38	1.28	.01	.30	.01		

*$p<.05$

In the first stage, it was found that gender significantly predicted achievement in Social Studies and explained 2% of variance ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F = 9.25$; $p<.05$). From the β value (.14) in Table 4, it is understood that girls are more successful than boys in Social Studies. In the second stage of the analysis, learning strategies for Social Studies were added to the model, and after controlling for gender, it was found that learning strategies positively predicted achievement in Social Studies ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F = 22.39$; $p<.05$) and explained 4% of the variance. In the last stage of the analysis, Social Studies-oriented achievement goals were added to the model. Accordingly, it was found that Social studies-oriented achievement goals explained 11% of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = .11$, $\Delta F = 9.67$; $p<.05$) after controlling for gender and learning strategies for Social Studies and that only the task-approach was a positive predictor of achievement in Social Studies after adjusting for gender and learning strategies (β = .30). According to these findings, when gender and learning strategies for Social Studies held constant, the more seventh-grade students aim to get higher exam scores in Social Studies, the more their achievement in Social Studies increases.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to determine seventh-grade students' learning strategies for Social Studies, Social Studies-oriented achievement goals and achievement in Social Studies. In addition, it was

aimed to explore the relationships among learning strategies for Social Studies, Social Studies-oriented achievement goals, and achievement in Social Studies, whether learning strategies for Social Studies predict achievement in Social Studies after controlling for gender and whether Social Studies-oriented achievement goals predict achievement in Social Studies after controlling for gender and learning strategies for Social Studies.

The Social Studies learning strategies that reflect seventh-grade students most are "I try to think through a topic and decide what I am supposed to learn from it rather than just reading it over when studying Social Studies.", "I try to apply ideas from Social Studies readings in other class activities such as lecture and discussion." and "When studying for Social Studies, I try to determine which concepts I don't understand well." On the other hand, "When I study for Social Studies, I write brief summaries of the main ideas from the readings and the concepts from the lectures.", "When I study the readings for Social Studies, I outline the material to help me organize my thoughts." and "I make simple charts, diagrams, or tables to help me organize course material in Social Studies." are the Social Studies learning strategies that reflect seventh-grade students least. Based on these findings, it can be said that learning strategies that reflect seventh-grade students most are metacognitive self-regulation strategies, while learning strategies that reflect least are organization strategies (Kayan Fadlelmula, 2011). In parallel with this finding, Çelikkaya and Kuş (2010) stated that seventh-grade students are very eager in Social Studies to "re-read the course material that they do not understand, pay attention to something written in bold while studying, listen to the course carefully, mark sentences that they do not understand with "?, *, !", revise the notes they take after the course, and review the topics covered at school". The participant seventh-grade students might be mastery-oriented rather than performance-oriented. Mastery-oriented students were found to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Sucuoğlu & Gökdağ Baltaoğlu, 2020). Mastery goal orientation was found to positively predict the use of deep and/or metacognitive learning strategies (Guo & Leung, 2021; Somuncuoğlu & Yıldırım, 1999) and be correlated with the use of self-regulated learning strategies (Kayan Fadlelmula et al., 2015; Ozkal, 2013). According to Sağ and Şit (2020), middle school students using attention and rehearsal strategies rather than metacognitive ones are stated to be performance-oriented. Organization strategies suggest that it is necessary to devote a certain amount of time to learning. Considering that these strategies are the learning strategies that reflect the seventh-grade students least, it can be suggested that students spend little time learning Social Studies. In this, students' prejudices about Social Studies, the effect of which was investigated on the achievement in Social Studies, may be effective (Çelik & Katılmış, 2010). Since students perceive Social Studies as easy or difficult, they may not be interested in this course and may not be studying enough. Supporting this possibility, Çakmak et al. (2008) concluded that primary and secondary school students attach less importance to Turkish and Social Studies than to Mathematics and Science. However, organization strategies that reflect the participant seventh-grade students least can be associated with some competencies in the Social Studies curriculum. Organization strategies can be considered related to mathematical competence in the Social Studies curriculum updated in 2018 that includes the ability to use tables and graphics (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018a: 5). As a matter of fact, Pala and Başıbüyük (2019) found that the sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' skills of reading maps, graphics and tables in Social Studies were predicted by their mathematical competencies. The very low level of graphic design skills of seventh-grade students has been associated with the lack of proper use of learner-centered strategies (Oruç et al., 2016). These strategies might have not been taught or used properly in the classrooms of the participant seventh-grade students. The graphic organizers used in Social Studies, however, facilitate the learning of seventh-grade students (Dönmez et al., 2007). For instance, it is stated that use of mind maps as graphic organizers improves reading comprehension of students (Nopita et al., 2021).

It was found that seventh-graders' Social Studies-oriented achievement goals are task-approach, task-avoidance, self-approach, other-avoidance, self-avoidance and other-approach, respectively. According to these findings, it is determined that seventh-grade students' Social Studies-oriented achievement goals are the task-approach at most and the other-approach at least. This finding can be regarded as expected in the Turkish education system, where test anxiety is felt at an early age,

and success means getting high marks, and students have extrinsic motivation, place emphasis on competition and adopt a performance-approach orientation (Üztemur, 2020). It can be suggested that seventh-grade students with a higher orientation toward task-approach aim to get high exam scores in Social Studies (Gezer & Şahin, 2016). It was stated that students adopt a test-based approach of learning Social Studies, they have test anxiety, and learning Social Studies is not among the main goals of the students anymore (Açıkalın & Gönenç, 2017). Çoban et al. (2017) concluded that students perceive Social Studies as an easy course, memorize the topics they consider important and fail to internalize it. The fact that seventh-grade students with a lower orientation toward other-approach can be explained by the fact that they do not care much about scoring higher and being more successful than their classmates in Social Studies exams (Gezer & Şahin, 2016). The participant seventh-grade students may not compare themselves with their peers, do not see their peers as competitors, or ignore scoring higher in order not to be socially isolated; because, as Köse (2015) suggests, these students in adolescence who have a sense of belonging in a group of friends feel valued.

End-of-term grades seventh-grade students earn in Social Studies ($M = 76$, $SD = 18.04$) can be considered as high. Considering that students have task-approach at most, this result can be regarded as expected; however, it should be interpreted carefully. How achievement is assessed can also be effective in this result. Even though the process- and product-oriented, individually-sensitive and versatile assessment (MoNE, 2018a) are underlined in the Social Studies curriculum updated in 2018, Memişoğlu (2012) found that Social Studies teachers frequently used matching, short-answer and multiple-choice tests and performance tasks, but never used interview and observation forms, written exams, attitude scales, portfolios, self-, peer- and group-evaluation forms. On the other hand, it has been suggested that multiple-choice tests that allow students to make choices restrict them (Schleicher, 2017). High end-of-term grades of seventh-grade students in Social Studies may not mean that they are successful. Social Studies teachers may give seventh-grade students high scores or ask easy questions in exams. Şanlı and Pınar (2017) found that Social Studies teachers mostly administered multiple-choice and true-false tests to their seventh-grade students, most of the questions they asked were at the levels of remembering and understanding, and they measured the factual and conceptual knowledge.

As a result of this research, a positive and low-level significant relation was found between seventh-grade students' learning strategies and their achievement in Social Studies. As seventh-grade students use learning strategies, their achievement in Social Studies increases. Supporting this finding, Çelikkaya and Kuş (2010) also found that learning strategies for Social Studies and academic achievement are positively correlated. Erden and Demirel (1991) found that learning strategies of fifth grade students are correlated with their academic achievement, and that they learn quickly and lastingly as they use learning strategies. Yorulmaz (2001) concluded that the "learning to learn" strategies used by seventh-grade students in Social Studies positively affect their academic achievement.

It has been determined that moderate and positive relationships are found between seventh-grade students' learning strategies and Social Studies-oriented achievement goals. In other words, students use the learning strategies that will make them accomplish their goals according to their achievement goal orientation more. Supporting this finding, Paulino et al. (2016) found significant relationships between self-efficacy expectations, task value, achievement goal orientations and motivational regulation strategies, and Won et al. (2018) between learning orientations, sense of belonging to school, metacognitive strategies, and time management strategies.

The relationships between seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies and Social Studies-oriented achievement goals (except other-approach) were found to be positively significant. It is determined that achievement in Social Studies will increase as it is aimed to learn new knowledge in Social Studies, to understand the issues that lead to thinking ideally, to answer most of the exam questions correctly, and to avoid answering exam questions incorrectly, failing while friends succeed, and failing to learn (Gezer & Şahin, 2016). Zhou et al. (2019), despite no statistically significant

cluster differences in academic achievement, found out that students clustered under high-mastery-approach-low-performance-avoidance get consistently high exam scores whereas those clustered under performance-avoidance-dominant earn the lowest scores. Diseth and Kobbeltvedt (2010) reached the conclusion that academic achievement was positively linked to performance-approach goal and mastery goal, but negatively associated with performance-avoidance goal. Correspondingly, Tuominen et al. (2020) concluded that the sixth- and seventh-grade Finnish students who are mastery-oriented manifest the most positive outcomes in academic achievement and well-being. As indicated by Świątkowski and Dompnier (2020), the impact of achievement goal orientations on achievement depends on the self-regulatory focus orientations namely, promotion and prevention. The participant seventh-grade students might be promotion-oriented. In other words, they might show sensitivity to the presence or absence of desired outcomes of their actions and consider obtaining a positive result (Świątkowski & Dompnier, 2020). That seventh-grade students' achievement in Social Studies is not related to the other-approach can be clarified by the fact that seventh-grade students have the lowest orientation toward other-approach. In other words, aiming to get higher grades and to be more successful than others in Social Studies class (Gezer & Şahin, 2016) neither increases nor decreases achievement of seventh-grade students in Social Studies. Finding out that the relationship between being socially accepted by peers and achievement is significant and positive; Wentzel et al. (2021) highlighted the significant role of peers in supporting students to accomplish achievement goals, though. In fact, as stated by King and Mendoza (2020), one's achievement goals can be influenced by his/her classmates'. For instance, both approach and avoidance goals (except for mastery-avoidance ones) are found to be contagious (King & Mendoza, 2020).

It was also observed that seventh graders' genders positively predicted their Social Studies achievement. Holding gender constant, learning strategies positively predicted their achievement in Social Studies. After adjustment for both their gender and learning strategies for Social Studies, the task-approach as one of the Social Studies-oriented achievement goals positively predicted their achievement in Social Studies. In this study, it was concluded that gender predicted achievement in Social Studies. Supporting this finding, it was found that the academic achievement of the seventh- and eighth-graders is related to their gender, and the fact that girls are more successful than boys is explained by many psychological, physical and social factors (Adatepe, 2014). For example, it has been argued that girls are more successful as a result of undertaking the responsibility given to them at an early age in their classes. Girls might perceive Social Studies as stereotypically compatible with their gender and be more motivated in verbal subjects such as Social Studies as inferred from the results of a study by Wirthwein et al. (2020). Aydıner (2004) also determined that girls aged between 13 and 16 are more successful than boys. In this study, it was found that seventh-grade students who use learning strategies will be more successful in Social Studies holding their gender constant. The findings that the teaching of learning strategies (Tunçer & Güven, 2007) and their use (Dikbaş & Kaf Hasırcı, 2008) increase academic achievement coincide with the results of this research. In this study, after controlling for gender and learning strategies for Social Studies, it is determined that the seventh-grade students with task-approach orientation will be more successful in Social Studies. It is determined that seventh-grade students who aim to get high scores from the exams will be more successful in Social Studies when their gender and learning strategies are held constant. Correspondingly, the related literature (Lüftenegger et al., 2016; Stoeber et al., 2015) also indicates that the task-approach directly and positively predicts achievement as well. The achievement goal orientation of students affects their academic achievement (Berber & Eker, 2018). The fact that the task-approach is a positive predictor of Social Studies achievement after controlling for gender and learning strategies does not comply with the learner-centred approach adopted in the education system of Turkey. Since the learning to learn competence is essential to the learner-centred approach, the self-approach is expected to predict Social Studies achievement, after adjusting for gender and learning strategies. But the reason for this result may be central examinations. Çetin and Ünsal (2019) found that teachers determined examination-oriented goals, content, methods and techniques, and administered multiple-choice tests due to central exams. It has been stated in the "2023 Education Vision" published by the Ministry of National Education that it aims to reduce the pressure of national

transition examinations, to diversify the measurement and assessment techniques, and to develop both a process- and product-oriented approach (MoNE, 2018b).

Depending on the findings, the following recommendations were made for practice and further research: Social Studies teachers can encourage seventh-grade students to use organization strategies (such as making simple charts, diagrams, or tables to organize the course material) more. A more particular space can be left for organization strategies in Social Studies textbooks. According to Tay (2005), learning strategies should be used in Social Studies textbooks. Out-of-school activities can be organized to ensure that seventh-grade students can use what they have learned in Social Studies in daily life. Social Studies teachers can teach seventh-grade students learning strategies to increase their achievement in Social Studies. Pre- and in-service Social Studies teachers can be supported through trainings on teaching of learning strategies. It was stated by Özer (2002) that teachers in primary schools are not prepared enough to teach learning strategies, they mention a few about learning strategies, and that they are willing to participate in in-service trainings. Seventh-grade students can be encouraged to adopt the self-approach. The reasons behind of seventh-graders' learning strategies and achievement goal orientations in Social Studies can be investigated. The predictive power of learning strategies and achievement goal orientations in achievement might be investigated for different courses and grade levels. Social Studies teachers' perceptions about achievement goal orientations can be studied using the qualitative research method. Self-efficacy levels of Social Studies teachers for teaching of learning strategies for Social Studies can also be investigated. The effects of central exams on learning strategies used in Social Studies and achievement goal orientations can be investigated in depth.

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