

Investigation of the Relationship between Middle School Students' Motivation and Attitudes toward Social Studies

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Abstract: The two most important affective skills that influence students' success in a course are motivation and attitude. The desire to achieve a specific goal is related to motivation, while the experiences gained in the pursuit of that goal shape one's attitude. The high motivation of students for a course is also an indicator of their positive attitudes toward that course. This study aims to determine the predictive power of 6th-grade middle school students' attitudes toward the social studies course on their motivation to engage in this course. A correlational survey model was employed for this quantitative research. The participants in the study comprise 306 6th-grade middle school students enrolled in schools affiliated with the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of National Education. The "Social Studies Attitude Scale" and "Social Studies Motivation Scale" were used as data collection tools. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that the correlation between motivation and attitude varies depending on their dimensions. Moreover, it was observed that the predictive power of attitude on motivation differed across dimensions.

Science Insights Education Frontiers 2023; 18(2):2927-2944.

Doi: 10.15354/sief.23.or422

How to Cite: Subasi, Y. (2023). Investigation of the relationship between middle school students' motivation and attitudes toward social studies. Science Insights Education Frontiers, 18(2):2927-2944.

Keywords: Social Studies, Motivation, Attitude, Students

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Conflict of Interests: None

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Introduction

MOTIVATION, originating from the Latin word “movere”, encompasses concepts such as desire, need, and care. Motivation expresses the inner power one needs and includes feelings associated with completing a task and deriving satisfaction from it (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Attitude has its roots in the Latin “Aptus”, which refers to an individual’s positive or negative reaction toward an object, subject, event, phenomenon, or situation. (İnceoğlu, 2010; Korkut, 1994). An analysis of the definitions of motivation and attitude reveals that both concepts are closely linked to one’s feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Initiating and continuing a behavior is associated with motivation (Altun & Yazıcı, 2010; Gürşimşek, 2002). Motivation is a significant stimulus that shapes the emergence and course of behavior. While the stimulus is an essential factor in triggering an individual, internal and extrinsic stimuli are effective in shaping the direction of behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The process of motivation cannot be fully comprehended without revealing the reasons directing an individual toward a particular behavior, the goals they have established, and the circumstances that enable them to maintain that behavior. Therefore, accurately defining the two dimensions of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, will enhance our understanding of this process. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as an internal drive originating solely from the individual, assisting to fulfill their personal needs. It also refers to the individual’s self-motivation to engage in a task - without any influence of external stimuli- and actively participate in the process to achieve their desired goal. The continuity of intrinsic motivation is an energy hidden within the individual. It can be argued that external factors and rewards eliminate the motivational drive, particularly by creating obstacles to intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999; Ergün, 2011; Zengin & Ulaş, 2021). In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation refers to an individual’s mobilization driven by external influences. It is a phenomenon that occurs when activities that are bound to conclude still have meaning for the individual (Vallerand et al., 1997). In this type of motivation, persistence is maintained through the use of punishments and rewards, and individuals exert effort to attain a particular position. Promotion is a commonly used tool at the beginning of such processes. Since an individual’s primary focus is the target reward rather than the action itself, distractions and discouragements can significantly impact this process (Deci et al., 1999; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Zengin & Ulaş, 2021).

While motivation is an important factor in increasing students’ success and interest in a course, it alone is not sufficient to achieve these. The emergence and maintenance of behaviors are related to motivation, as well as attitude. Motivation and attitude are stimulants that are attained later and

cannot be directly observed (Aksoğan & Özdemir, 2022; Zengin & Ulaş, 2021). Learners' motivation to learn is influenced by their attitude toward the subject (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). This is why motivation and attitude are interrelated concepts. For instance, individuals who develop a negative attitude toward an event, phenomenon, or object tend to lack interest in it and exhibit low motivation in this respect (Saracaloğlu et al., 2006). Motivation and attitude are the two most important affective skills influencing students' success in a course (Ceylan et al., 2015). The desire to achieve a specific goal is related to motivation, while the experiences gained in the pursuit of that goal shape one's attitude. The high motivation of students for a course is also an indicator of their positive attitudes toward that course (Fidan, 2012). Motivation facilitates learning, helps students maintain a high level of interest and attention in their lessons, and prevents boredom during the learning process, thereby making learning easier. Accordingly, motivation for learning increases the quality of teaching by positively affecting the learning process and the learning environment (Akbaba, 2006; Kelecioğlu, 1992). Regardless of the educational approach and methodology, it is not feasible for an individual who lacks adequate motivation and has not cultivated a positive attitude toward their study to exhibit desirable behavior. If students do not develop a positive attitude toward the education process and lack motivation for it, even successful students may quickly forget the skills and behaviors they have acquired (Zengin & Ulaş, 2021). Motivation plays an important role in the effective educational process; greater motivation can lead to increased success (Özaydınlık & Aykaç, 2013). Considering the impact of motivation on students' learning psychology, it can also affect students' behavior and academic success in various ways (Başıbüyük & Çıkılı, 2002). Given the diverse factors that influence students' motivations, it is crucial to consider these variables during the learning process. Students' specific attitudes are outcomes of their prior experiences. Students' attitudes toward any object, event, phenomenon, or situation are shaped by their experiences and social environment (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999). Accordingly, it is essential to comprehend the relationship between middle school students' motivation and attitudes. Therefore, determining the predictive power of both variables on each other is of significant importance for enhancing the learning process and learning environment. Consistent with this, other studies have also identified motivation and attitude as significant factors in the learning process and learning environment (Meral, 2013; Tosun & Nalçacı, 2023).

A review of studies related to motivation revealed that motivation facilitates the teaching process and positively affects students' learning aspirations (Arcagök, 2016; Doğan, 2021; Durmaz, 2014; Fırat, 2019; Kulakaç, 2020; Yerlikaya, 2014; Yıldırım, 2013). Many studies reported that attitude has a positive impact on the learning process of students (Akdemir, 2019;

Çağlar, 2020; Çalışkan & Turan, 2010; Çiftçi & Kaya, 2012; Ergin, 2006; Gökkaya & Tural, 2012; Kadioğlu, 2007; Kadioğlu-Ateş & Vatansever-Bayraktar, 2020; Kılınç & Dere, 2015; Meral, 2013; Özkal, 2013; Özkal et al., 2004; Öztürk & Baysal, 1999; Pullu & Gömleksiz, 2020; Tay & Akyürek-Tay, 2006; Tosun, 2011; Tuncer & Yılmaz, 2016; Yalman & Çiftçi, 2019; Yılmaz & Demir, 2014). In a prior study, a significant relationship was identified between students' attitudes toward the social studies course and their academic achievement (Tay, Akyürek-Tay, 2006). Similar results have been reported in studies examining both motivation and attitudes toward the social studies course (Tosun & Nalçacı, 2023).

Furthermore, some studies found that students have low motivation and negative perceptions of the social studies course (İlter & Çiğdem, 2014). The negative attitudes and behaviors that students cultivate toward the social studies course have a significant impact on their academic performance and motivation in this field. In particular, the perception that the social studies course heavily relies on memorization appears to be a significant barrier to students' ability to understand and comprehend the content (Coşkun & Samancı, 2012; Tay, 2004). Several limiting factors, including the heavy content of the social studies curriculum, crowded classrooms, and the passivity of students in the class negatively affect students' attitudes and motivation toward the course (Altınışik, 2001). Academic motivation and attitudes play a crucial role in achieving the goals of the social studies course. Students' academic motivation and favorable attitudes toward the social studies course will likewise have an impact on their academic performance in this field. When students exhibit high motivation and maintain a positive attitude toward a course, it is likely to lead to an increase in their academic achievement (Faiz & Karasu-Avcı). Accordingly, it can be argued that the negative attitudes and behaviors developed by students toward the social studies course affect their success in this course. Therefore, motivation and attitude, which are important factors for success in social studies education and are evaluated within the affective domain, constitute the main variables of this study.

Given the importance of the relationship between motivation and attitude, this study investigates the correlation between the motivation and attitudes of 6th-grade middle school students toward the social studies course as well as the predictive role of attitude on motivation. For this purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought:

1. What are the internal consistency (α) values for middle school students' motivation and attitudes toward the social studies course?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school students' motivation and attitudes toward the social studies course?

3. What is the predictive power of middle school students' attitudes toward the social studies course on their motivation (intrinsic motivation, care, and extrinsic motivation)?

Method

Since this quantitative study examines whether middle school students' motivation and attitude towards social studies courses predict each other, a correlation survey model was used. The correlation survey model is a descriptive statistical research approach used to identify the relationships between two or more variables and to determine the direction and strength of these relationships. This method is used to examine the characteristics and structure of past and existing phenomena (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2012). A correlation survey model seeks to determine a past or current situation in its natural context. In other words, correlation survey is a research approach where the relationship between two or more variables is examined without making any alterations or interventions (Karasar, 2009).

Study Group

The participants in the study comprise 306 6th-grade middle school students enrolled in schools affiliated with the Bilecik (Türkiye) Provincial Directorate of National Education. The participants were selected using convenience sampling. Since the students in this sample are sixth graders, the mean age of the participants was approximately 12 years.

Data Collection Tools

The "Social Studies Course Motivation Scale" and the "Social Studies Course Attitude Scale" were used as the data collection tools.

Social Studies Course Motivation Scale

The "Social Studies Course Motivation Scale", developed by Gümleksiz and Kan (2012) for middle school students, was used to measure students' motivation in the social studies course. This scale comprises 23 items divided into three dimensions namely, 'intrinsic motivation,' 'extrinsic motivation,' and 'care'. Participants responded using a 5-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The Cronbach's Alpha reliability index for the total scale was found to be 0.792. The reliability of the dimensions was calculated as follows: 0.802 for intrinsic motivation; 0.745 for extrinsic motivation, and 0.826 for the care dimensions. The scale explained 41 percent of the total variance.

Social Studies Course Attitude Scale

The “Social Studies Course Attitude Scale” developed by Gümleksiz and Kan (2013) was employed to measure students’ attitudes toward the social studies course. The social studies course attitude scale consists of 29 items divided into five dimensions namely, ‘affection’, ‘benefit’, ‘care’, ‘desire’, and ‘trust’. Participants answered using a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). The Cronbach’s Alpha of the total scale was calculated as 0.61. Additionally, the Guttman Split Half index for the scale was found to be 0.71, while equal-length and non-equal-length Spearman-Brown values were determined as 0.71. The scale explained 55.95 percent of the total variance. The Affection dimension had a reliability index of 0.87 and explained 35.92 percent of the variance. The benefit dimension had a reliability index of 0.88 and explained 8.94 percent of the variance. The reliability index for the care dimension was found to be 0.77, accounting for 4.03 percent of the total explained variation. The reliability index for the desire dimension was calculated as 0.76, accounting for 3.58 percent of the total explained variation. Finally, the trust dimension had a reliability index of 0.74 and explained 3.49 percent of the variance.

Data Analysis

The data collection tools of this study are the “Social Studies Course Motivation Scale” and the “Social Studies Course Attitude Scale”. Prior to the main analyses, preliminary assessments were carried out to assess whether the data were normally distributed. Primarily, it is checked whether the data sets showed normal distribution or not to analyze the data. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) highlight that data are considered normally distributed if skewness and kurtosis values fall within the range of ± 1.50 . For both scales, the skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the range of ± 1.50 , indicating that the data were normally distributed. Assuming that the data obtained from both scales (The social studies course motivation scale and social studies course attitude scale) showed a normal distribution, the data were examined using multiple regression analysis. A series of multiple regression analyses were applied to examine the predictive role of attitude (and its dimensions) toward the social studies course on motivation in this course. For interpreting effect sizes, the thresholds proposed by Cohen (1988) were followed and effect sizes were classified as small (0.01 – 0.059), medium (0.06 – 0.139), or large (≥ 0.14). All analyses were conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 25).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic.

Variables	N	Mean	SS	Skew	Kurtosis	α
Intrinsic M.	306	18.64	6.68	0.869	0.830	0.84
Care	306	32.08	5.61	-0.977	1.200	0.75
Extrinsic M.	306	18.27	5.24	-0.123	-0.372	0.75
Affection	306	26.78	8.73	0.352	-0.183	0.88
Benefit	306	24.20	5.43	-1.247	1.391	0.88
Interest	306	10.51	4.38	1.039	1.099	0.85
Desire	306	14.06	3.74	-0.588	-0.238	0.76
Trust	306	15.01	3.66	-0.718	0.222	0.76

Note: M. = Motivation

Findings

First, descriptive statistics are presented, followed by exploratory analyses to assess scale characteristics, assumptions of normal distribution, and relationships among the variables. These preliminary analyses included examining skewness and kurtosis values as presented in **Table 1**. According to the results, the skewness and kurtosis scores were within the suggested range of ± 1.50 , as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). These results confirmed the assumption of normal distribution. Furthermore, the internal consistency (α) values of the variables ranged from 0.75 to 0.88, indicating that the measures have high reliability.

After examining descriptive statistics, a Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine the correlations between the variables. The results revealed varying degrees of relationships between the variables, ranging from weak to strong. Regarding the motivation dimensions, intrinsic motivation was found to be positively correlated with extrinsic motivation ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) and negatively correlated with care ($r = -0.59$, $p < 0.01$). However, no significant correlation was observed between care and extrinsic motivation ($p > 0.05$). On the other hand, the examination of attitude dimensions indicated that affection positively correlated with interest ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$), while it exhibited negative correlations with the other dimensions: benefit ($r = -0.59$, $p < 0.01$), desire ($r = -0.57$, $p < 0.01$), and trust ($r = -0.44$, $p < 0.01$). Similar to affection, interest also showed negative relationships with other attitude dimensions, namely benefit, desire, and trust. On the contrary, the benefit, desire, and trust dimensions exhibited positive correlations among themselves (**Table 2**). Finally, the relationships between the dimensions of motivation and attitude were examined. Intrinsic motivation had positive

Table 2. Correlation Findings Among the Variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Intrinsic M.	-							
2. Care	-0.59**	-						
3. Extrinsic M.	0.35**	-0.11	-					
4. Affection	0.68**	-0.41**	0.33**	-				
5. Benefit	-0.54**	0.56**	-0.07	-0.59**	-			
6. Interest	0.67**	-0.45**	0.24**	0.81**	-0.65**	-		
7. Desire	-0.47**	0.51**	-0.06	-0.57**	0.72**	-0.62**	-	
8. Trust	-0.42**	0.49**	-0.05	-0.44**	0.65**	-0.43**	0.61**	-

Note: M. = Motivation

correlations with affection ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) and Interest ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$), but negative correlations with benefit ($r = -0.54$, $p < 0.01$), desire ($r = -0.47$, $p < 0.01$) and trust ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$). A similar relationship pattern was observed between extrinsic motivation and attitude dimensions. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation was found to be significantly correlated with affection ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) and interest ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), but exhibited non-significant correlations with other attitude dimensions ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, care motivation displayed positive correlations with benefit ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$), desire ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.01$), and trust ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), but negative correlations with affection ($r = -0.41$, $p < 0.01$) and interest ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$). All correlational findings are listed in **Table 2**.

The Results of the Predictive Analysis

To examine the predictive role of students' attitudes toward the social studies course on their motivation, three separate multiple regression analyses were conducted for each motivation dimension. Along with the correlation values between the variables, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined and no multicollinearity issues were observed. Additionally, the normal distribution of the variables indicated that the assumptions of the regression analysis were confirmed. Initially, the relationships between intrinsic motivation and attitude dimensions were analyzed. The results showed a significant relationship ($F_{(5,300)} = 65.02$, $p = 0.000$) between intrinsic motivation ($R = 0.72$, $R^2 = 0.50$) and attitude dimensions. According to the standardized regression coefficients, while affection ($\beta = 0.37$, $p = 0.000$) and interest ($\beta = 0.30$, $p = 0.000$) emerged as significant predictors of intrinsic motivation, other attitude dimensions did not significantly predict intrinsic motivation ($p > 0.05$). The attitude dimensions collectively accounted for 52%

Table 3. The Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Intrinsic M.	Constant	10.53	2.54	-	4.13	0.000
	Affection	0.28	0.05	0.37	5.24	0.000
	Benefit	-0.12	0.08	-0.10	-1.40	0.160
	Interest	0.46	0.11	0.30	4.20	0.000
	Desire	0.10	0.11	0.05	0.87	0.385
	Trust	-0.19	0.10	-0.10	-1.85	0.065
	R = 0.72, R ² = 0.50, F = 65.02, p = 0.000					
Care	Constant	19.88	2.47	-	8.04	0.000
	Affection	-0.010	0.05	-0.01	-0.17	0.860
	Benefit	0.28	0.08	0.27	3.42	0.001
	Interest	-0.13	0.11	-0.10	-1.14	0.253
	Desire	0.22	0.11	0.15	2.03	0.042
	Trust	0.27	0.10	0.18	2.76	0.006
	R = 0.60, R ² = 0.36, F = 33.69, p = 0.000					
Extrinsic M.	Constant	5.17	2,676	-	1.935	0.054
	Affection	0.27	0.056	0.456	4.879	0.000
	Benefit	0.12	0.087	0.125	1.391	0.165
	Interest	0.03	0.120	0.025	0.246	0.806
	Desire	0.17	0.117	0.128	1,529	0.127
	Trust	0.00	0.105	0.000	-0.002	0.998
	R = 0.37, R ² = 0.14, F = 9.78, p = 0.000					
Note: M. = Motivation						

of the variation in intrinsic motivation. The findings of the multiple regression analysis are given in **Table 3**.

Secondly, the predictive role of attitude dimensions on care motivation was examined. The multiple regression analysis results indicated that attitude dimensions collectively displayed a significant relationship with care motivation ($R = 0.60$, $R^2 = 0.36$) ($F_{(5,300)} = 33.69$, $p = 0.000$). According to the standardized regression coefficients, while benefit ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.001$), desire ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.042$) and trust ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.006$) were identified as significant predictors of care motivation, affection, and interest dimensions did not demonstrate statistical significance as predictors ($p > 0.05$). The attitude dimensions collectively accounted for 36% of the variation in care motivation (**Table 3**).

Finally, extrinsic motivation was included as a dependent variable in the multiple regression analysis. According to the analysis results, attitude dimensions collectively exhibited a significant correlation with extrinsic motivation ($R = 0.37$, $R^2 = 0.14$) ($F_{(5,300)} = 9.78$, $p = 0.000$). The standardized

regression coefficients indicated that only the affection dimension ($\beta = 0.46$, $p = 0.000$) was a significant predictor of extrinsic motivation, while the other attitude dimensions did not exhibit statistical significance as predictors of extrinsic motivation ($p > 0.05$). The attitude dimensions collectively accounted for 14% of the variation in extrinsic motivation (**Table 3**).

Conclusion and Discussion

Motivation is the most vital affective element that can enhance the learning process and create a productive student environment (Narmanlı, 2019). Motivation is needed to achieve desired learning outcomes and academic success for students (Keskin, 2008). Therefore, providing motivation can enhance students' interest in a course and improve the efficiency of the learning process (Aydemir, 2012). Students' success and productivity in courses largely depend on motivation (Tahiroğlu, 2015). The acquisition of desired student behaviors and their subsequent academic success can be explained by motivation (Polat, 2019). The emergence and maintenance of desired behaviors are correlated with both attitude and motivation (Aksoğan & Özdemir, 2022). The key findings of the current study can be summarized as follows.

Among the motivation dimensions, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation displayed a positive relationship. However, intrinsic motivation had a negative relationship with the care motivation dimension. Besides, no significant difference was observed between the care and extrinsic motivation dimensions. On the other hand, a significant positive relationship was identified between the affection and interest dimensions of attitude. Furthermore, the affection dimension showed a negative correlation with other dimensions, namely benefit, desire, and trust. The care dimension also displayed a positive correlation with the affection dimension.

Moreover, the affection and interest dimensions showed positive significant correlations with intrinsic motivation. On the contrary, the benefit, desire, and trust dimensions exhibited negative correlations with intrinsic motivation. Similar results were obtained between extrinsic motivation and the attitude dimensions. Accordingly, the affection and interest dimensions showed significant relationships with extrinsic motivation, whereas other dimensions of attitude did not exhibit a significant correlation with extrinsic motivation. It was observed that while care motivation had a negative relationship with the affection and interest dimensions of attitude, it exhibited positive correlations with the benefit, desire, and trust dimensions.

Significant relationships were identified between attitude dimensions and intrinsic motivation. Additionally, the affection and interest dimensions were significant predictors of intrinsic motivation, whereas other attitude dimensions did not significantly predict intrinsic motivation. Therefore, it

was observed that the attitude dimensions accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, significant relationships were observed between the attitude dimensions and care motivation. The care dimension of motivation predicted benefit, desire, and trust dimensions of attitude. Moreover, the care dimension showed no significant relationships with the affection and interest dimensions, and it did not predict them. In conclusion, the affection and interest dimensions significantly predicted the variance in intrinsic motivation.

The attitude dimensions collectively showed a significant correlation with extrinsic motivation. However, only the affection dimension of attitude significantly predicted extrinsic motivation. Other attitude dimensions did not significantly explain the variance in extrinsic motivation. Overall, it was concluded that the relationship between motivation and attitude varied depending on their respective dimensions, and the predictive power of attitude on motivation also varied according to their dimensions.

A literature survey revealed that only a few studies in the field of social studies share a similar focus with the current study (Çağlar, 2022; Faiz & Karasu-Avcı, 2020; Fırat, 2019). Çağlar (2022) observed a significant relationship between middle school students' attitudes toward the social studies course and their motivation in this course. This significant relationship reported by Çağlar (2022) is consistent with the results of our study. In the current study, on the other hand, it was observed that the significant differences between motivation and attitude dimensions varied depending on their respective dimensions, leading to changes in the observed effect sizes. Furthermore, Fırat (2019) analyzed the relationship between motivation and attitude. He observed a significant relationship between the motivation and attitude levels of middle school students toward the social studies course. This finding further supports the significant difference between certain dimensions of motivation and attitude observed in the present study. However, both Çağlar (2022) and Fırat (2019) examined motivation and attitude separately, without exploring their predictive roles on each other. On the contrary, the current study focused on the relationship between middle school students' motivation and attitudes toward the social studies course and revealed the predictive power of attitude toward the social studies course on motivation. In this regard, the present study differs from Çağlar (2022) and Fırat (2019). In other words, what distinguishes the present study from previous research is the discovery that the relationship between motivation and attitude varies depending on their dimensions, and the predictive role of attitude on motivation differs across these dimensions.

Faiz and Karasu-Avcı (2020) reported a positive correlation between middle school students' attitudes toward the social studies course and their motivation. In their study, a strong positive relationship was identified between certain dimensions of motivation (between intrinsic motivation and

reflected regulation, as well as between reflected regulation and external regulation), whereas weaker correlations were observed between some dimensions (motivation toward knowledge and amotivation). In the present study, intrinsic motivation showed significant positive correlations with the affection and interest dimensions but exhibited negative correlations with benefit, desire, and trust.

In addition to these limited number of studies on social studies, research in other fields has also indicated a relationship between motivation and attitude. For example, Erdem and Gözüküçük (2013) attributed the academic success in the Turkish course to the high motivation and attitudes of the students toward this course. Fidan and Eren (2017) reported that higher intrinsic motivation among students increases the likelihood of positive attitudes, while lower motivation increases the likelihood of negative attitudes. Furthermore, according to Kodaz (2016), attitude has a significant positive impact on intrinsic motivation. The findings reported in Kodaz's (2016) study concerning the correlation between attitude and motivation align with those of the current study. Also, several other studies reported significant moderate positive relationships between motivation and attitudes depending on their dimensions (Akhmadjonov, 2019; İnalöz & Yılmaz, 2023).

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study had several limitations. Factors such as the small sample size and limited variables (e.g., grade level, socioeconomic status, gender) should be taken into account when evaluating the study's results and in future research.

Many studies have examined whether motivation and attitude scores significantly vary by age and gender. However, no significant differences were observed for these variables within the groups examined in the samples of these studies. For example, studies examining the motivation levels of middle school students toward the social studies course reported that there was no significant gender-based difference (Çağlar, 2022; Demir, 2010; Ergin 2006; Fırat, 2019; Özkal, 2013; Tosun & Nalçacı, 2023). Additionally, many studies revealed that students' attitudes toward the social studies course do not differ significantly according to gender (Güven, 2008; Öztürk & Baysal, 1999; Tay & Akyürek-Tay, 2006; Yüce, 2008). In studies examining secondary school students' attitudes and motivation toward the social studies course, the gender variable was found not to significantly affect their scores. In the current study, it was considered that students' motivation and attitudes toward the social studies course do not differ by gender, and the relationship between students' motivation and attitude scores toward the social studies course and the predictive role of these variables were examined.

Studies examining middle school students' attitudes or motivations toward the social studies course based on grade level found that scores varied across grade levels (Çağlar, 2022; Demir, 2010; Doğan 2021; Şimşek & Demir 2012; Yıldırım 2013; Yüce, 2008). These studies suggested that grade-level-related differences in attitudes and motivations could be attributed to variations in lesson content and developmental stages (concrete-abstract periods) (Çağlar, 2022; Yüce, 2008). Many studies on middle school students' attitudes or motivation toward the social studies course focused on a single grade level (Aktepe et al., 2014; Çelikkaya & Ünal 2009; Sarıtepeci & Çakır 2014; Tosun & Nalçacı, 2023; Zengin & Ulaş, 2021). The current study was also limited to a single grade level (6th grade) in accordance with its objectives. These literature findings highlight the need for studies examining factors that may influence grade-level-related results. Therefore, considering the findings reported in the literature related to the grade level highlight the same result, it is recommended to conduct studies that examine the factors contributing to variations in students' attitudes and motivation toward the social studies course across different grade levels. For example, considering that the results may differ by developmental periods (concrete-abstract) (Çağlar, 2022), it is recommended to conduct studies at both the lowest (4th) and highest (7th) grade levels where the social studies course is taught in Türkiye.

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Received: 12 September 2023

Revised: 21 September 2023

Accepted: 24 September 2023