

The Relationship between Students' and Parents' Attitudes towards the Tennessee State
Standards on the Ancient Islamic World

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Date: January 4, 2016

From: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Milligan College

Re: The Relationship between Students' and Parents' Attitudes towards Islamic State Standards in a Social Studies Class

Submission type: Resubmission with modification

Dear Andrew Snyder,

On behalf of the Milligan College Institutional Review Board (IRB), we are writing to inform you that your study '*The Relationship between Students' and Parents' Attitudes towards Islamic State Standards in a Social Studies Class.*' has been approved as expedited. This approval also indicates that you have fulfilled the IRB requirements for Milligan College.

All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission, meaning that you will follow the research plan you have outlined here, use approved materials, and follow college policies.

Take special note of the following important aspects of your approval:

- Any changes made to your study require approval from the IRB Committee before they can be implemented as part of your study. Contact the IRB Committee at IRB@milligan.edu with your questions and/or proposed modifications.
- If there are any unanticipated problems or complaints from participants during your data collection, you must notify the Milligan College IRB Office within 24 hours of the data collection problem or complaint.

The Milligan College IRB Committee is pleased to congratulate you on the approval of your research proposal. Best wishes as you conduct your research! If you have any questions about your IRB Approval, please contact the IRB Office and copy your faculty advisor if appropriate on the communication.

Regards,
The IRB Committee

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between students' and parents' attitudes regarding the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world. The sample came from 15 middle school students from a local scout troop and their parents/guardians. The students were taught a unit covering the ancient Islamic world. Data were collected using an attitude survey which was administered to students and their parents or guardians. The students' attitudes and their parents'/guardians' were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results indicated no significant relationship between students' and their parents'/guardians' attitude towards the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world. Similarly, there was no significant difference in attitudes between male and female student respondents. The results suggest that the more the students and parents/guardians are exposed to the ancient Islamic world, the less biased they are in their attitudes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The fight for educating the common man in America has been championed since the founding of our great nation. Education is a crucial tool to the survival of the principles that this nation was founded on long ago. In order to uphold these sacred principles, it is crucial that we instruct students in our history classes on the world around us, so that they may better understand the differences and irregularities that exist between nations and cultures.

In June of 2009, Tennessee became one of the many states to join in the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Tennessee Department of Education, 5), and would begin the path to what would become a very decisive and vigorous debate on the various state standards. Of the subjects in which Tennessee implemented their standards, social studies was not left untouched. These social studies standards were adopted in July of 2013 by a committee of Tennessee educators, but were not implemented until the public had the chance to review them (Rolston, 2015). Although intended to be a worthwhile implementation project, the Tennessee Department of Education has faced serious backlash in terms of these standards, specifically the seventh grade standards dealing with the Islamic world. As many parents, and those not involved with the schools, hear of this practice, they have taken to protesting the implementation of teaching Islamic standards to the students of Tennessee's public schools. Instead of researching the seventh grade standards, in which the Islamic standards apply, parents immediately began to believe that their children are being indoctrinated into the Islamic faith (Boucher, 2015).

On the morning of Friday September 4, 2015, a group protested the teaching of such standards in front of a middle school in Bristol, TN (Childress, 2015, A5). The leader of the

protest pulled her own son from the Bristol Tennessee City Schools claiming Common Core was too offensive , going so far as to say "...one of the most offensive parts is the Islam content..." (Childress, 2015, A5). Has this parent even communicated with the schools on the specific standards dealing with Islam? Has anyone at the school even bothered to instruct parents on just what exactly they are teaching in terms of the standards that cover Islam? Most importantly, does this act by the parent influence the same beliefs and actions of their child?

Furthermore, there is a common misconception that other religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, are being overlooked. For example, there is the issue surrounding the Maury County Public Schools district in Tennessee, where many parents complained that their children were required to learn the five pillars of Islam and continuously write "Allah is the only God" (Boucher, 2015). Yet, the parents' main argument is that other major religions are not taught. However, if one were to review the sixth grade standards or continue to read the seventh grade standards, they would find that Christianity, Judaism, and other religions are all taught as required state standards (Snopes.com, 2015). If the parents were informed of this at the beginning of the Islam unit, would they still harness negative feelings towards the teaching of the Islamic standards? What of their children, would they, too, harness these negative feelings brought on by their parents' beliefs?

This breakdown in communication between schools and parents is causing uproar throughout the state. Due to this uproar, the state legislature has asked that the social studies standards be reviewed within two years, rather than wait for the required six year review process (Rolston, 2015). The standards themselves do not even require the teaching of theological Islamic doctrine. Rather, they require the teaching of the Middle East and its historical Islamic Empires' impact on world history. Geography, history, and political evolution are the main goals

of the seventh grade standards, not making Tennessee students theologians of the Islamic faith. The review process of these standards will begin in January of 2016; therefore something must be done to better understand how we can improve the negative attitudes towards these standards.

Statement of the Problem

The Tennessee State Department of Education is facing serious backlash and protests against the teaching of Islam brought on by the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The standards are easily attainable if one were to search the Tennessee State website; however, they are vague and not clearly understood for those without some background of historical or educational knowledge. These standards, and the teaching methods that follow, are not clearly communicated with parents and students, causing massive amounts of backlash and anger towards the teaching of such standards. Therefore, the problem of this study was to examine the relationship between students' and their parents' attitudes towards the ancient Islamic world state standards.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between students' and their parents' attitudes towards the ancient Islamic world Tennessee state standards.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that no other research material is available on the topic of the Islamic state standards. It is imperative that the American education system teach the historical impact of all nations throughout world history. By doing so, there is the possibility that we can reduce negative assumptions of minority groups in an increasingly globalized world. The data

that comes out of this research can be put to work in our schools to help further communication improvements on controversial topics such as this, especially when dealing with the relationship between students and their parents. If we can minimize the backlash on teaching Islamic history in our schools, then we can make it easier on teachers and school systems to implement instruction.

Limitations

The following limitations were placed on this study:

1. The number of students and parents were limited to a single middle school and cannot be generalized to other schools.
2. The instrument that was used to measure the attitudes of students and parents was not independently tested for reliability and validity.

Definition of Terms

Attitude Survey: A survey that measures the participant's attitudes and perceptions towards a particular subject by agreeing or disagreeing to a certain statement using a chosen scale.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): A set of standards for first through twelfth grades that each state must set up to coincide with national standards. These standards establish what a student should know in order to be labeled proficient in their corresponding grade and/or subject.

Islamic State Standards: Seventh grade Tennessee state standards 7.3 to 7.12.

Parents: Individuals who have not been taught the Islamic State Standards firsthand, but are exposed to them through their children, the students.

Standard 7.3: Identify the physical location and features and the climate of the Arabian Peninsula, its relationship to surrounding bodies of land and water, including Northern Africa, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, Nile River.

Standard 7.4: Describe the expansion of Muslim rule through conquests and the spread of cultural diffusion of Islam and the Arabic language.

Standard 7.5: Trace the origins of Islam and the life and teachings of Muhammad, including Islam's historical connections to Judaism and Christianity.

Standard 7.6: Explain the significance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic beliefs, practice, and law and their influence in Muslims' daily life.

Standard 7.7: Analyze the origins and impact of different sects within Islam, Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Standard 7.8: Examine and summarize the contributions Muslim scholars made to later civilizations in the areas of science, geography, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, art, and literature.

Standard 7.9: Describe the establishment of trade routes among Asia, Africa, and Europe and the role of merchants in Arab society.

Standard 7.10: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources to examine the art and architecture, including the Taj Mahal during the Mughal period.

Standard 7.11: Explain the importance of Mehmed II the Conqueror and Suleiman the Magnificent.

Standard 7.12: Write an explanatory text to describe the Shah Abbas and how his policies of cultural blending led to the Golden Age and the rise of the Safavid Empire.

Students: Those individuals who have been taught, firsthand, the ancient Islamic world state standards in their assigned social studies class.

Parents/Guardians: Those individuals who have been exposed to the ancient Islamic world state standards through their child or assigned ward.

Overview of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one consists of the introduction of the problem, the statement of the problem itself, the purpose of the study, significance, the limitations faced during the study, definitions of key terms, and the overview of the study itself. Chapter two includes the related literature review. Chapter three consists of the methodology and procedures used during the collection of data. Chapter four consists of the analysis of the data collected during the methodology and procedures process. Finally, chapter five contains the findings, recommendations for any future research, and the implications of this study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

As America continues to grow and interact in this world, our culture and ways of life are constantly challenged by growing threats from outside forces. Be they imperial clashes between a growing Russia or the rise in the welfare state brought on by our own government; the people of tomorrow are learning their educational skills in an ever globalized world. Therefore, it is crucial to begin learning about the outside world, its various cultures, and the differences that many people possess. This is one reason that social studies classes are required by school systems, for students to take while enrolled in a public education system.

These social studies classes teach everything from ancient world history, different forms of government, religious differences, to our own nation's history. Within the confines of this content area, students are exposed to the differences between cultures, religions, and governments, so that they may better understand how to live in a more globalized world. In the decades since World War II, world trade has grown by 20 times the normal rate, and with it countries have become tied closer than ever in terms of trade, culture, and beliefs (Globalization 101, 2015). Being the teacher, it is important that we prepare students for this globalized world; and as educators planning the curriculum, it is important that all bases and facts are covered to make students prepared.

One geographic area where America is becoming more involved is in the Middle East, home to some of the largest Islamic populations in the world. As Western values and trade grow, so does our confrontation with Islamic beliefs and attitudes. This has been ever more apparent in our post-9/11 world. Islam is not a violent religion, on the contrary, it is rather peaceful, much

like Christianity; however, hardliner minorities have taken to pervert its beliefs and practices, making it into a widely negative viewed religion in our country, where a recent poll shows that over half of Americans view it unfavorably (Kaleem, 2015). Of course, if one were to turn on the news or watch programming features, it is hard to not see where facts get distorted and the views of Muslims is that of negativity.

The question, however, is how could these attitudes be changed? The answer is simple: in the classroom. By having a more informed populace, we can negate the negative backlash and actually show factual information on the impact Islam has had on our world history, its cultural beliefs, and the similarities that we share with Islamic nations. The best way of doing this is by teaching Islamic standards to our students. In order to better prepare them for a life in this globalized world, it is necessary to keep them informed and present them with factual information on different cultures and attitudes. The standards in place do not actually teach Islamic theology, and that was not the purpose of this research (Tennessee Department of Education, 2015, 1-2). Rather, the purpose was to study the attitudes of students in correlation to their parents' beliefs, so that we may better know how to target the teaching techniques of the ancient Islamic world standards.

What is Common Core?

Before one can truly dive into the controversy surrounding the present day implementation and teaching of social studies standards on Islam, it is crucial to have some form of understanding on just what Common Core is, and what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are intended to do. By definition, an educational standard "defines expectations for students learning by stating what students should know at the conclusion of a course of study"

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2015, 3). This sets up the beginnings of understanding just what Common Core is and how it has been implemented.

Going from the definition of a standard, it is easy to argue that anyone can define just what the standard should be and how it should be taught. Therefore, the national government decided to take up the mantle of public education in this country and create standards that should be clear cut across the board in all fifty states. Since its creation in 2009, the CCSS Initiative has been adopted in “forty-two states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity;” ensuring that students involved in American public education graduate high school on the same page, making them able to succeed in any path they choose after their high school graduation (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015). The CCSS were conceived, not to be a headache for teachers and school administrators, but to allow for American students to compete a more globalized world. By having them graduate on the same page and taught the same sets of standards, educators can ensure that our youth country-wide, have the same knowledge and skill sets needed to survive in a more globalized world.

The standards were conceived by teachers, administrators, and experts from the fields to provide a clear and consistent framework for educators (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015). From these national standards, which focus primarily on math, science, and language arts, it was up to the states to create their own form of standards that would best apply to their state’s individual students and other subject areas. Tennessee decided to adopt the CCSS on July 30, 2010; and slowly implemented the initiative throughout the state’s local school districts throughout the next three years and began assessments by the 2015 school year (Tennessee Department of Education, 2015, 7-8).

Of course, not everyone has been on board with Common Core. Just like any Federal legislation, there has been backlash from both sides of the political aisle. According to the latest poll by PDK/Gallup, which polled how the public views America's public schools, 54% of parents actually support Common Core being used in the school systems while only 24% support the initiatives (PDK/Gallup, 14, 2015). With that staggering of a number disparity in public opinion, it is crucial that state and local school boards target the reasoning behind why this negative opinion is so stagnate. By looking further into the poll, one will find a disparaging number of responders, only 19%, who say they received information on Common Core; the rest cited either teachers, other forms of communication like the media, or social media websites (PDK/Gallup, 14). This alarming number raises the concerns of why CCSS may be facing backlash, and also points to the potential reasoning behind why and how Americans view Islam and Muslim-Americans in our country.

Concerning Islam in America: How do Americans View the Religion?

Much like Common Core and the backlash being seen by the American population towards it, the religion of Islam has begun to receive negative views and ideas. In a recent poll by the Huffington Post and YouGov, over 55 percent of Americans had either a somewhat or very unfavorable view of Islam (Kaleem, 2015). In another poll, conducted by the Pew Research Group, Muslims were viewed just as negatively as Atheists and had a favorability rating at just 27 percent (Siddiqui, 2014). If one were to actually study the religion of Islam, he or she would find a religion that preaches the amount of peace that can be found in books such as the *Holy Bible* or the *Torah*. Yet, Americans are beginning to view Islam as a destructive religion that is only being fueled by what they are seeing on the nightly news broadcasts (Kaleem, 2015).

It is no doubt that the attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 were caused by Islamic extremists; just as it is no doubt that Islamic extremism is on the rise throughout the world, one only need to research ISIS or Al Qaeda on the web to understand their brutality. Yet, this does not make all Muslim-Americans or those who follow Islam but are not Americans, extremists. Rather, it means that, just like Christianity has faced in the past, minorities of the religion have perverted its controversial teachings. The effects that this belief has had on education could not be more apparent. As poll after poll has shown, those who hold negative views towards Muslims and the religion of Islam, are typically less likely to have exposure to either a Muslim or the Islamic religion (Siddiqui, 2014). In one Gallup Poll (2011), “of those saying they had no prejudice towards Muslims, 29 [percent] say they have no knowledge at all about Islam...” (p.5) meaning that a majority, who do not hold negative views, have had education or some exposure to the Islamic religion. In another poll on Islam, only 13 percent had an extremely well understanding of the Islamic religion (Kaleem, 2015).

Again, just like the backlash with Common Core, we are seeing that a populace is harboring negative attitudes and feelings towards something they are not being informed about. As these polls have shown, there is a huge disparity in prejudices towards Muslim-Americans and the Islamic world as a whole, in our nation. Yet, since September 11, the Muslim-American communities in this country have helped prevent “nearly two of every five Al Qaeda terrorists’ plots...and tips from these communities are the largest single source of information [about terrorist activity]” (Gallup, 2011, 1). However, one would not find these statistics being mentioned on the nightly news broadcasts or the 24/7 news stations, because it does not provide for a very exciting news story.

Thus, it is up to educators to help stem the rise of prejudice in this country. By targeting the negative views that many harbor, educators can better inform the populace of just what exactly is going on in the world, and how best to understand our Muslim brothers and sisters. As the world becomes ever more globalized, it is important to understand the differences and target the similarities so that we may work alongside each other, rather than against one another. This is not just something that research shows, even those in predominantly Islamic nations say that education is the best way to resolve our differences and promote healthier interactions. Nearly six in ten say that accurately portraying Muslims in Western media and working with Muslims societies as equal partners on issues of mutual interest would greatly improve our relations (Gallup, 2010). Thus, the best way of doing this is through education and outreach in our public schools.

Public Schools in Tennessee: Islamic Standards and the General Population

As our nation begins to implement Common Core throughout its school districts, the states that have signed on have begun to initiate Common Core standards throughout the different content areas. In Tennessee, the seventh grade social studies standards have taken an infamous center stage in the debate on Common Core. Not because these standards do not inform our children well enough, nor do they put anyone in a clear and present danger. Instead, the seventh grade standards have taken center stage in the debate on Common Core because ten of these standards deal with the Islamic world, more specifically, the Ancient Islamic world from 400 CE to the 1500s.

As was shown in the above sections, polls show that Americans view Islam in a very negative light, holding prejudices that can be debunked as myth with the proper education. Thus

we see why Tennessee has found it necessary to inform our students on the history of the Islamic world and its impact on world history. These standards are not meant to indoctrinate or convert Tennessee students to the Islamic religion; rather they are being used to discuss the significant impact that that part of the world has had on our world history. Yet, in the following sections, it can be shown that Tennessee is much like the general American population in that its populace holds a very negative viewpoint on Islam and we can see this through the population's reaction to these seventh grade standards throughout the state.

The majority of the arguments in Tennessee center around the belief that commonly used textbooks are biased towards Islam while not focusing enough attention on other religions, like Christianity (Leahy, 2015). While another argument, supported by many representatives and parents, centers on the belief that our students are being converted to the Islamic religion by learning these standards (Boucher, 2015). Both sides are arguing against the standards on the premise that, by learning Islam, our students are becoming indoctrinated and following the faith of Mohammed. However, what they fail to see is that these standards do not, in any way, attempt to indoctrinate students and convert them over to the Islamic community.

As the chairman of White County Citizens Against Islamic Indoctrination, Anthony Wright, claims, “[the textbook] does not report 9/11, ISIS. It does not talk about any Islamic group” (Balakit, 2015, 2). Yet, there is no reason for these textbooks to cover that material because the standards are strictly about the ancient world. These events are something these students will cover when they take United States history in high school. Of course this is the same man who will go on to claim that, because a seventh grader learns of the five pillars of Islam, which are not required in the standards, he or she will “then go to a school with a bomb in their backpack and blow up ten kids” (Balakit, 2015). This belief not only goes right along with

Gallup's findings from the polls mentioned above, but it is a complete confirmation in why this particular research study was so crucially needed. If individuals believe that every Muslim student is capable of such a violent act, then is it not crucial to ensure we educate the populace that these events are not a common practice implemented by a majority of the Islam's followers?

Wright is not the only parent out there crying foul. Another individual, Ed Butler, claims that these textbooks provide untrue and misleading information on Islam, citing a page in which the textbook claims that "Mohammad worships the same God as Christians and Jews;" something that Mr. Butler states is untrue because "Allah is not the same God worshipped by Christians and Jews" (Leahy, 2015). However, as historians will note, Islam has ties to the other two major monotheistic religions and Allah is actually the Arabic term for God; and, just like Judaism or Christianity will say of the other two, Islam believes that others have only misinterpreted God's teachings (PBS, 2002). Again the reasoning is clear as to why the standards on Islam are so important. By knowing the truth behind the histories of the religions, our students can better interact peacefully and with understanding towards the Muslim people.

When there is such a high profile and toxic relationship on the teaching of such standards present, it is crucial to lay down a first step in how we as educational administrators and teachers can better communicate standards to parents and students, especially ones that are so controversial. However, it is especially unhelpful when individuals from news organizations espouse such biased and untrue information. For example, according to Bretbair News, ten of seventy-five learning objectives in the seventh grade social studies standards (13%) deal with the tenets and history of Islam, while only one of seventy-two [of the sixth grade standards] address the history of Christianity (Leahy, 2015). For starters, comparing seventh grade standards to sixth grade standards is like comparing apples to oranges. Then, what they fail to report is that

there are actually more seventh grade standards dealing with Christianity (thirteen) than there are standards dealing with Islam (ten) (Tennessee Department of Education, 2015). Would this change the outlook on how parents feel towards the teaching of religious standards in our seventh grade social studies? This is something that this study attempted to help answer.

Of course all this uproar over the standards has not gone unnoticed by our elected politicians. As many exclaim that textbooks and the standards indoctrinate our students, lawmakers are beginning to take notice. According to the Associated Press (2015), “a state Republican lawmaker is proposing legislation that would ban teaching Tennessee public school students “religious doctrine” until they are in high school” (A1). This is one step that could be taken, but it only puts the issue on hold until high school, and it can almost be assured that it would not put an end to the debate on teaching the standards dealing with Islam. There would be some stipulations on the bill, ensuring that “any teaching of “comparative religion” in high school not focus more on one religion than another” (Associated Press, 2015, A3). Again, this could be considered a solution, but it does not hinder or remove the controversy that could easily be fixed if communication were to be increased.

The Backlash to Islamic Standards in the Tri Cities Region

Much like the rest of the state, this implementation of the Common Core State Standards has not left the Tri Cities region of East Tennessee untouched. On the morning of Friday September 4, a group of Bristol residents staged a silent protest in front of the area’s middle school (Childress, 2015, A5). Claiming it as a “Christian protest,” the organizers were hoping to call attention to the teaching of Common Core standards, more specifically, the Islamic standards. Again we see that misinformation is following the implementation of these standards.

As the organizer of the group made clear, she had not actually seen the material being taught at the time of the protest, but was still very concerned by the standards themselves, claiming that students in Kingsport, another East Tennessee city, were required to bring towels to school and practice Islamic prayers (A6). Although it is highly unlikely this event in Kingsport occurred, it is just another example of malicious rumors and attacks on the teaching of standards meant to educate, not indoctrinate, Tennessee students.

Conclusion

In an age when globalization is on the rise and competition fuels an ever growing economy, it is imperative that we have an educated populace that propels our civilization's very survival. Therefore, education is a valuable asset to help prepare future generations of Tennesseans to compete in this globalized world. In order to do this, we must teach our students the differences in beliefs, cultures, and ideologies of countries in which they will compete with. Thus we see the need for social studies classes that help teach the history of these civilizations and focus on the differences to help promote healthy transactions between the two differing ideologies.

In order to promote an educated populace, we saw the creation of Common Core and its implementation throughout the United States, including Tennessee. In keeping with the fight to promote a more educated and prepared populace, standardization has become a common find in our public schools throughout this country. With that growth in standardization, its goal is to get every student on the same teaching level nationwide, especially to prepare them in competition with our trading partners worldwide. With this goal in mind, it is no surprise that we see the

creation of standards that deal with Islamic nations; and an increase in the backlash that follows those standards.

As literature review of the polls show, a majority of Americans nationwide hold negative views towards Islam and its practicing Muslims. This negativity is shed by polling that shows a majority of Americans see Muslims as terrorist-leaning individuals who hold no loyalty to the United States (Gallup, 2011). In order to help diminish this negativity, education must be implemented that shows the inaccuracies and misunderstandings. Therefore, it is imperative that educational standards do not shift away from this goal. In the state of Tennessee, where state standards regarding social studies are beginning to face backlash, it is more important than ever to focus in on improving communication on the standards.

As the literature shows, Tennesseans are beginning to see the negative side effects of misinformation and limited communication with parents. As beliefs spread across the state that these standards are only indoctrinating our students, it is crucial that administrators put a stop to the wildfire of misinformation. The Tri Cities region of East Tennessee is no exception to this spread. The literature shows that many hold misunderstandings about these standards, finding them theologically based rather than culturally and historically based. As groups protest the implementation, our students are the ones who suffer from the lack of teaching. They are the ones, neither the teachers nor parents, who have the most to gain in order to promote a healthier and stronger national belief towards differences held by Muslims and non-Muslims. Therefore, something must be done that helps show how we can improve those communication techniques and what negative thoughts or opinions need to be specifically targeted.

This is what this research paper attempted to reveal. By reviewing the literature and seeing the controversies at hand, it was imperative that something be done to help focus on what issues are concerning our parents the most in terms of these standards. The review of the literature helped show what particular questions needed to be addressed. By performing a correlational study, we saw what particular items from the literature review were removed once instruction on the standards was implemented. If we can then target those controversies by communicating with the parents, then there is the hope that we can remove the anger and backlash facing Tennessee schools in regards to implementing these seventh grade standards.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Procedures

The focus of this study was to examine the relationship between students' and their parents' attitudes on the ancient Islamic world state standards in a Boy Scout troop consisting of seventh through ninth grade students.

Population

The population consisted of a Boy Scout Troop in Bristol, Tennessee. The troop had a total of 24 youth ages eleven to seventeen, and ten adults aged eighteen and up. It was a mostly middle to upper-middle socioeconomic class, and was 94% Caucasian.

Sample

The sample size consisted of 15 students, ages eleven to fourteen and their parents. These students were majority male students, although six were female. All were 100% Caucasian and middle to upper-middle socioeconomic class.

Data Collection Device

The data were collected using a Likert Scale format survey to measure the attitudes of students and one of parents towards the seventh-grade state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world. Accompanying each survey was a consent and assent form for either the parents/guardians and the student. Those individuals who provided consent were administered this survey with a 1 to 5 ranked scale (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). The survey consisted of several statements concerning Islam, Tennessee State Standards concerning the ancient Islamic world, and attitudes towards people with different religious beliefs. These

statements were comprised of information found during the literature review portion of this survey. A copy of the survey and accompanying consent/assent forms can be found in the Appendices section of this study (page 34).

Procedures

The first step in this study was to be granted permission by the selected scout troop's scoutmaster to perform the study. Once permission was granted students participating in the study were given consent letters with the accompanied survey to be sent home to their parents or guardians. Upon receiving the signed letter of consent and completed survey, those students who were given permission by their parents were then administered the same survey with an accompanied letter of assent. Since these students had already been taught the standards in their seventh-grade social studies classes, there was no need to teach the standards again during their scout meeting. Once the two surveys were completed, they were analyzed for correlation.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: Is there a relationship between students' and their parents' or guardians' attitudes towards the Tennessee state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world?

Research Hypothesis #1: There is a relationship between students' attitudes and that of their parents or guardians.

Null Hypothesis #1: There is no relationship between students' attitudes and that of their parents or guardians.

Research Question #2: Is there a difference in attitudes between male and female respondents after they are taught the standards on the ancient Islamic world?

Research Hypothesis #2: There is a difference in attitudes between male and female respondents after being taught the standards on the ancient Islamic world.

Null Hypothesis #2: There is no different in attitudes between male and female respondents after being taught the standards on the ancient Islamic world.

Chapter 4

Results

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not there was a relationship between students' and parents' attitudes regarding the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world. It is important to understand how students and parents react towards certain standards, especially those as controversial as these.

Collection of Data

Data were collected from fifteen students and their parents. The students were exposed to a unit covering the ancient Islamic world in their social studies class at their school. Upon completion of the unit, both students and parents completed a survey created by the researcher, which was in Likert Scale format. The survey measured students' and their parents' attitudes on the state standards dealing with the ancient Islamic world. The results of the survey were then correlated. The demographic profile is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Student Participants		
Gender	Frequency	Percent)
Male	9	60
Female	6	40
Total	15	100

Research Question #1 and Related Hypotheses

Research Question #1: Is there a relationship between students' and their parents' or guardians' attitudes towards the Tennessee state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world?

Research Hypothesis #1: There is a relationship between students' attitudes and that of their parents or guardians towards the state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world.

Null Hypothesis #1: There is no relationship between students' attitudes and that of their parents or guardians towards the state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world.

In order to determine if there was a correlation between students' and parents' attitudes, the researcher computed a Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results indicated that there was a not a significant correlation ($r = -0.162$; $p = 0.563$). The coefficient of determination was ($r^2 = .03$). This indicates that 3% of the variance in attitudes could be explained by state standards, whereas 97% could be explained by other variables. Therefore, since there was no significant correlation, the null hypothesis was retained. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation between Students' and Parents' Attitudes					
Group	M	sd	r	r ²	significance
Students	29.27	4.73	-0.162	0.03	0.563
Parents	30.60	1.99			

Research Question #2 and Related Hypotheses

Research Question #2: Is there a difference in attitudes between male and female respondents after they are taught the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world?

Research Hypothesis #2: There is a difference in attitudes between male and female respondents after being taught the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world.

Null Hypothesis #2: There is no difference in attitudes between male and female respondents after being taught the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world.

In order to determine whether or not there was a difference in responses between male and female respondents, the researcher performed an independent samples t test. The significance of the F value for the Levine's test for Equality of Variances was .001, which is less than the limit of 0.05 and therefore, the variances were not assumed equal. At the 95% confidence level, the results showed that there was not a significant difference between the respondents ($t(13) = .610, p > .05$). The mean for the males ($M = 29.82, sd = 5.183$) was not different than the females ($M = 28.33, sd = 4.227$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Independent t-test for Males and Females on Attitudes towards the Tennessee State Standards on the Ancient Islamic World

Gender	M	sd	df	t-value	significance (2-tailed)
Male	29.89	5.183	13	0.610	0.552
Female	28.33	4.227			

Chapter 5

Summary of the Findings

This chapter contains a summary of the study's findings, a conclusion report of the study, recommendations for future studies, and implications of the research examining the relationships between students' and parents' attitudes on the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world.

Summary of Findings

For research question 1: is there a relationship between students' and their parents' or guardians' attitudes towards the Tennessee state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world? In order to determine if there was a correlation between students' and parents' attitudes, the researcher computed a Pearson simple correlation. The results indicated that there was no significant correlation ($r = -0.162$; $p = 0.563$). A coefficient of determination (r^2) was computed to determine the variance explained by the predictor variable. These results indicated that only 3% of the variance in attitudes could be explained by state standards and 97% could be explained by other variables. The results suggest that parents have no significant influence on their children's attitudes towards the state standards on the ancient Islamic world.

A major factor that may have attributed to this lack of a significant correlation could be the lack of a large sample size. This topic was highly controversial, and many school systems did not wish to participate in the survey. Therefore, the researcher was forced to use a scout troop that embodied the same population and sample needed to complete the study. The sample size may not have been large enough to fully show a significant correlation in attitudes. The parents did have a higher mean size (30.60) compared to the students (29.27). However, it was not a

significant enough difference; and this could be attributed to the fact that students have had further exposure to the standards covering the Islamic world, whereas their parents primarily get it from biased news outlets. Therefore, the parents held a more negative view than their students, although not by a large enough difference to make it significant.

For research question #2: Is there a difference in attitudes between male and female respondents after they are taught the standards on the ancient Islamic world? An independent t-test was performed to determine if boys' means on attitudes were different from girls. The results indicated no significant difference between males and females. ($t(13) = 0.610, p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

There are two reasons that could attribute to this outcome. The first reasoning goes along with research question 1, the fact that there were a very limited number of respondents. The other factor that could attribute to this outcome may stem from the fact that it was a Boy Scout troop that was used in the study. Many of the males and females came from the same household, and held similar beliefs. It could also be assumed that the teaching of these standards affect males and females the same. These standards are meant to inform students, so there is no evidence to suggest that these standards affect males and females in significantly different ways. Upon instruction of these standards, I did not see any personal evidence to suggest that boys reacted differently than girls. Rather, I saw that the students were either engaged in the lesson, interested in the content, or just realizing they need to learn this material and move on. I was never confronted by either males or females in terms of teaching these standards.

As the literature reviewed showed, many people within Tennessee found that these standards indoctrinated our students, and lawmakers are demanding for their removal from the

state curriculum (Boucher, 2015). However, responses to the Likert attitude survey showed that many of the respondents gave answers that would appear to go against those beliefs. For example, question 7 on the survey asked respondents to rate their agreement/disagreement with the statement: “the seventh-grade standards dealing with the ancient Islamic world indoctrinate our students in the Islamic religion.” Many of the respondents disagreed with this statement; suggesting that a wide belief of negativity might not be present. The responses to these questions were also very different amongst the various respondent groups. A majority of students held strong disagreements with this statement; while a majority of parents held either light disagreement or a neutral stance. This helps support the idea that those exposed firsthand to the standards, the students, know more about the actual state standards; whereas the parents, exposed through their child, may not hold an actual understanding.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not there was a relationship between students’ and parents’ attitudes regarding the Tennessee state standards on the ancient Islamic world. For research question 1: is there a relationship between students’ and their parents’ or guardians’ attitudes towards the Tennessee state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world? The study showed that there was not a significantly strong correlation in attitudes, revealing that only 3% of said attitudes could be attributed to the state standards. For research question #2: Is there a difference in attitudes between male and female respondents after they are taught the standards on the ancient Islamic world? The independent t tests revealed that there was not a significant difference between male and female student respondents

Recommendations

- 1.) Future research should be conducted using a larger sample size in order to see if the same results could be reached.
- 2.) Research should be done that incorporates a wide arrange of socioeconomic households and differing religious affiliations in order to see if there is a difference in attitudes between economic status and religious beliefs.
- 3.) Future research should be done that includes a study on communication techniques between schools and parents regarding the teaching of controversial state standards.
- 4.) Research should be done on teacher attitudes towards state standards, to see if there is a bias in teaching techniques used by the teacher.

Implications

- 1.) Communication between school systems and parents on what state standards are meant to instruct must be increased, especially when these state standards are considered controversial.
- 2.) School systems should not be afraid to allow research conducted within one of their schools due to the possibility that parents may protest against the voluntary nature of the research.
- 3.) In order to help reduce backlash that might arise from instruction of certain state standards, brochures, pamphlets, or letters should be sent home by the teacher and/or administrator before instruction takes place that explains the goal of the standard(s) and how they will be taught.
- 4.) In order to effectively decrease or remove biased beliefs, information, and/or hateful actions against particular groups of peoples, teachers must be allowed to properly instruct content that

challenges ideas, goes against general public misunderstandings, and instills accurate knowledge upon our students.

Appendices

Appendix A

Administered Likert Survey with accompanied letter sent to the parents.

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of the relationship between students' and their parents' attitudes towards the state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world. The researcher is inviting all Troop 3 scouts and their parents or guardians to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Andrew Snyder, who is a graduate student at Milligan College. You may already know him as an assistant scoutmaster within the troop, but please understand that this research study is in no way connected to the troop or his role within it.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to to examine the relationship between students' and their parents' attitudes towards the seventh grade state standards concerning the ancient Islamic world.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Answer a short, 11 question attitude survey
- Have your child answer the same 11 question survey

Here are some sample questions:

"The seventh-grade standards on the ancient Islamic world need to be taught in Tennessee public schools."

"I believe that it is important to have a basic understanding of a religion's beliefs before I can fully understand the choices and actions of those who claim it as their faith."

"State standards dealing with the Islamic world have no place in our public schools."

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one within Troop 3 nor Milligan College will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as minimal stress or becoming upset. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

By participating in this study, you are helping our educational system better itself in terms of how to communicate issues dealing with controversial state standards.

Payment:

There will be no payment, thank you gifts, or reimbursement provided to participants.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Milligan College.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have by contacting the researcher via email at ajsnyder@my.milligan.edu or by calling 423-340-1179. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you may contact the Milligan College Institution Review Board at IRB@milligan.edu.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep if you require one for your personal records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By returning a completed survey, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Please read each statement carefully and circle the number that most aligns with your beliefs. 1 being the strongest disagreement and 5 being the strongest agreement

1.) Are you a: **Male** or **Female**

2.) *The seventh-grade standards on the ancient Islamic world need to be taught in Tennessee public schools.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3.) *The seventh-grade standards dealing with the ancient Islamic world better prepare our students for a more globalized world in terms of competition and understanding of cultures.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4.) *Knowing and understanding different cultures and beliefs are important when dealing with someone of another religion, culture, or country.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5.) *I do not have a problem with someone who has a different religious belief than me.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6.) *I believe that it is important to have a basic understanding of a religion's beliefs before I can fully understand the choices and actions of those who claim it as their faith.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7.) *The seventh-grade standards dealing with the ancient Islamic world indoctrinate our students in the Islamic religion.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8.) *I believe that most Muslims, or those who claim to follow the Islamic religion, are violent.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9.) *State standards dealing with the Islamic world have no place in our public schools.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10.) *I find myself uncomfortable around those who have a different religious belief than me, or who are from a different culture or country.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11.) *State standards that deal with religious empires have no place in our public schools.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Appendix B

Administered Likert Survey with accompanied letter sent to the students whose parents had provided consent.

ASSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

Hello, my name is Andrew Snyder and I am doing a research project to learn about the seventh grade educational standards concerning the ancient Islamic world. I am inviting you to join my project. I am inviting all of the boys within Troop 3 and their parent or guardian to be in the study. I am going to read this form with you. I want you to learn about the project before you decide if you want to be in it.

WHO I AM:

I am a student at Milligan College. I am working on my master's degree. You may already know me as an assistant scoutmaster within the troop, but please know that this study has nothing to do with the troop or my role within it.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

If you agree to be in this project, you will be asked to:

- Read the attached survey
- Answer the questions as truthfully as you can
- Return the survey to me upon completion

Here are some sample questions:

"The seventh-grade standards on the ancient Islamic world need to be taught in Tennessee public schools."

"I believe that it is important to have a basic understanding of a religion's beliefs before I can fully understand the choices and actions of those who claim it as their faith."

"State standards dealing with the Islamic world have no place in our public schools."

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:

You do not have to be in this project if you do not want to. If you decide now that you want to join the project, you can still change your mind later. If you want to stop, you can.

Being in this project might make you tired or stressed, just like sitting in a regular social studies class and learning something new. But we are hoping this project might help others by promoting a positive learning experience in your school.

You will not receive anything in the form of a gift or bonus points for participating in this research study.

PRIVACY:

Everything you tell me during this project will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what answers you gave. The only time I have to tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt you or someone else.

ASKING QUESTIONS:

You can ask me any questions you want now. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can reach me at my phone number, 423-340-1179, or my email at ajsnyder@my.milligan.edu. If you or your parents would like to ask my college a question, you may contact the Milligan College Institution Review Board at IRB@milligan.edu.

I will give you a copy of this form.

Please sign your name below if you want to join this project.

Name of Child

Child Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Please read each statement carefully and circle the number that most aligns with your beliefs. 1 being the strongest disagreement and 5 being the strongest agreement

1.) Are you a: **Male** or **Female**

2.) *The seventh-grade standards on the ancient Islamic world need to be taught in Tennessee public schools.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3.) *The seventh-grade standards dealing with the ancient Islamic world better prepare our students for a more globalized world in terms of competition and understanding of cultures.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4.) *Knowing and understanding different cultures and beliefs are important when dealing with someone of another religion, culture, or country.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5.) *I do not have a problem with someone who has a different religious belief than me.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6.) *I believe that it is important to have a basic understanding of a religion's beliefs before I can fully understand the choices and actions of those who claim it as their faith.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7.) *The seventh-grade standards dealing with the ancient Islamic world indoctrinate our students in the Islamic religion.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8.) *I believe that most Muslims, or those who claim to follow the Islamic religion, are violent.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9.) *State standards dealing with the Islamic world have no place in our public schools.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10.) *I find myself uncomfortable around those who have a different religious believe than me, or who are from a different culture or country.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11.) *State standards that deal with religious empires have no place in our public schools.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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