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Modern Suffah: Quranic and Scientific Circles of al-Masjid an-Nabawi Today

Modern Suffe: Günümüzde Mescid-i Nebevî Kur'an ve İlim Halkaları

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Abstract

The aim of this article, which is a qualitative research based on the document analysis, is to reveal the educational activities conducted in al-Masjid an-Nabawi. Educational activities carried out in al-Masjid an-Nabawi can be handled basically in three separate groups: The Institute of al-Masjid an-Nabawi, lectures delivered by scholars, and course circles. On the other hand, this study was limited to the study of course circles. Thousands of students participate in this educational activity which is carried out in two main groups, namely Quranic and scientific circles. 112,243 students from 102 countries participated in the Quranic circles, which aimed to read and memorize the Quran correctly between 1-29 April 2014. This corresponds to an average of 5,353 participants per day. Between 15-27 May 2014, a total of 8,750 students participated in the science circles based on the memorization of classical texts. This corresponds to an average of 972 participants per day. It can be consequently said that al-Masjid an-Nabawi, which is the first model of the lecturing tradition at masjids, continues as the most graceful model for masjids which have been moving away from fulfilling their educational roles every passing day.

Keywords: al-Masjid an-Nabawi, Suffah, Circles of Quran (Halaqa Quran), Science circles.

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Öz

Doküman analizine dayalı nitel bir çalışma olan bu makalenin amacı, günümüzde Mescid-i Nebevî'de yürütülen eğitim çalışmalarını ortaya koymaktır. Mescid-i Nebevî'de hâlihazırda eğitim faaliyetleri Mescid-i Nebevî Enstitüsü, âlimlerin verdiği dersler ve ders halkaları olmak üzere üç kategoride yürütülmektedir. Bununla birlikte bu çalışma, ders halkalarının incelenmesiyle sınırlandırılmıştır. Kur'an ve ilim halkaları olmak üzere iki ana grupta yürütülen bu eğitim faaliyetine her gün binlerce öğrenci katılmaktadır. Kur'an-ı Kerim'in doğru şekilde okunması ve ezberlenmesini amaçlayan Kur'an halkalarına 1-29 Nisan 2014 tarihleri arasında 102 ülkeden günlük ortalama 5,353, toplam 112,243 öğrenci katılmıştır. Klasik metinlerin ezberlenmesine dayanan ilim halkalarına ise 15-27 Mayıs 2014 tarihleri arasında günlük ortalama 972, toplam 8,750 öğrenci katılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler ışığında, mescidlerdeki ders geleneğinin ilk modeli olan Mescid-i Nebevî'nin, her geçen gün eğitim rollerini yerine getirmekten uzaklaşan mescidlere hala en güzel model olmaya devam ettiği söylenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Mescid-i Nebevî, Suffe, Kur'an halkaları, İlim halkaları.

Introduction

The Masjid (mosque), the first institution of Islam, has been the main school for Muslims for many years. In this respect, the al-Masjid an-Nabawi has a remarkable place both in the institutionalization of Islam and in the initiation of the history of education with Suffah.² al-Masjid an-Nabawi, which is important as the first structure in the process of formation of the Islamic civilization, has assumed a lot of responsibilities in addition to being a temple. It became the center of both administration and science with the functions it undertook.

Suffah, which we can accept as an indication of how much significance Islam attaches to science, is the oldest model in the history of Islamic education. The science circles shaped around the Prophet set an example for the next generations and turned into a literacy and education mobilization that grew in circles. When the Prophet was still alive, nine masjids were established in Madina (al-Daraqutni, 2011: 422) and all of them assumed educational roles in accordance with the first model (Dağ&Öymen, 1974: 73). Parallel to the spread of Islam, masjids which were built in each new city also served as training centers. The science circles shaped around the Prophet set an example during the period of four caliphs and the subsequent caliphs (Söylemez, 2011: 91-92). The masjids of Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Istanbul continued their mission of being a school as well as being a temple for centuries (Baltacı, 2005: 27-28; Çelebî, 1998: 71-80).

Until the madrasas were established, the masjids undertook the school role (Baltacı, 2005: 26). However, the establishment of the madrasas did not eliminate the educational role of masjids (Gözütok, 2012: 70). In the light of Quran³ and initial practices of Prophet Muhammad and Sahabah, it is possible to say that education was an integral part of the masjids. Because, while planned education practices were carried out in madrasas, religious and non-religious lessons continued to be given in the masjids outside the prayer times (Dağ & Öymen, 1974: 78).

² Suffah: Place that has become an educational institution for the poor refugees' shelter at the end of the al-Masjid an-Nabawi.

³ Tafsir authors such as al-Zamakhshari, al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Abu al-Su'ud, al-Baydawi and Hamdi Yazır understand from the 18th verse from the Surah at-Tawbah spiritual construction of the masjids besides the material construction of them and they show educational activities as one of the ways of spiritual construction. For more information, see (Gündoğdu, 2016).

Problem, Objective, And Significance

Despite the fact that education in masjids is the oldest tradition of Islamic education history, it is observed that the education function of masjids both in Turkey and in other Islamic countries is gradually weakening. All the emphasis (al-Ghamedi, 2015; al-Sadlan, 2017; al-Qarni, 2017) on the educational function of the masjids in the literature can be regarded as a sign that this function has lost its significance today (Baghdad, 1984). While this strong education tradition that started with Suffah and then turned all the masjids into schools gradually weakened in Islamic countries, "Was al-Masjid an-Nabawi affected by this too?", "What is the current situation in al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the first example, the model and inspiration source of the education in the masjids?", "Can al-Masjid an-Nabawi sustain the same model today?", "Can the Suffah of al-Masjid an-Nabawi praised rightly in the Islamic history continue its role as a modern Suffah today?" In the light of these questions, the current situation of al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the first example of the education in the masjids will be examined in the study. In this framework, the study aims to reveal the educational studies carried out on al-Masjid an-Nabawi in today's Madina. It makes the study significant in that it will determine whether the masjids whose educational performances are quite low in the modern period, unlike the tradition, can take inspiration from al-Masjid an-Nabawi.

Method and the Data Provision

This study is a qualitative study based on document analysis in the screening model. Document analysis is a method used to reach the resources and to determine the data to be obtained appropriate for the purpose of the study. This method involves the analysis of written and printed documents related to the subjects to be examined (Karasar, 2009: 183-184).

The data of the study was obtained from three sources. The first of these is the interviews conducted with the officials of the educational activities carried out in al-Masjid an-Nabawi and the written documents obtained from these interviews. Some of them are printed books and some are computer output with statistical data. The second data source is the one provided from the official internet sites. The last source of the data is the observations made by the researcher in 2010-2014.

In the light of the observations made and the obtained data, it is possible to collect the educational activities carried out in al-Masjid an-Nabawi under three main headings. These are the al-Masjid an-Nabawi Institute, courses in which scholars (sheikh) follow certain books and the Quran and science circles. Courses by sheikhs and the Institute have been excluded from the scope of the study since they would cross the borders of the study. This study examines only the Quran and science circles.

Quran and Science Circles in al-Masjid an-Nabawi

The administration of al-Masjid al-Haram and al-Masjid an-Nabawi in Saudi Arabia is being carried out by General Directorate of Masjid al-Haram and Al-Masjid an-Nabawi. The administration of the al-Masjid al-Nabawi section of the presidency established by the Order of the Royal Authority dated 1977 and numbered 265 is carried out by a deputy affiliated to the Presidency (<http://wmn.gov.sa/section/37/>, 2017).

The unit responsible for educational services of the department, which consists of many administrations within, is The Department of Guidance and Irshad (<http://wmn.gov.sa/section/39/>, 2017). The Quran and science circles are one of the important educational activities under the responsibility of this administration.

Quran Circles:

Quran circles are an educational activity aimed at teaching Quran to people of all ages with classical education methods. These circles are intended to place the love of the Quran in the hearts of the young people and to make them conscious of it, memorize it and read and behave with it. Within the scope of

this mission, the goals of the Quran circles are determined as follows (<http://wmn.gov.sa/section/22/>, 2017):

1. To ensure that the Quran is read and memorized in the best way according to the Tajwid (elocution) rules.
2. To ensure that the Quran is easily memorized and repeated by means of classical education methods.
3. To raise generations who read, memorize and reflect the Quran in their lives.
4. To make the role of masjids more effective in the service of the Quran.
5. To disseminate the culture of memorizing the Quran and to promote it in the world of Islam.
6. To instill the love of the Quran in the heart of young people, to teach them the greatness of the Quran and to give them the consciousness to live by the morals and teachings of the Quran.
7. To educate teachers qualified in the education of the Quran.

Training times and age groups: There are two groups of training in the Quran circles, morning and evening. The training continue from Sunday to Thursday. However, some of the Quran circles teach on Fridays and Saturdays. The training hours are as follows (<http://wmn.gov.sa/section/22/>, 2017):

Facr: For two hours after the morning prayer

Duha: From eight to eleven o'clock

Noon: From eleven to the noon prayer

Mid-afternoon: From noon prayer to the mid-afternoon prayer

Evening: From the mid-afternoon prayer to the Isha prayer

Isha: For two hours after the Isha prayer

Classes performed in six different time periods are basically divided into the morning (sabahiyyah) and evening (mesaiyyah). *Facr*, *duha* and afternoon class hours refer to the morning classes and the mid-afternoon, evening and *isha* refer to the evening classes. If you look at the class times, you will see that there is no lesson between noon prayer and mid-afternoon prayer. This time interval is accepted as a resting period for teachers and students.

In the Quran circles, education is given in three age groups. These are the younger children group (5-12 years), the middle age group (13-18 years) and the older age group (19 years and over).

Types of circles and the responsible persons: Correction of recitation: At this stage, the correct reading of the letters is taught from the book titled *al-Qaeda al-Noorania*.^{*} In addition to this booklet, which is prepared in the form of Alif Juz', students also try to memorize small short texts from the Quran.

Memorization: At this stage, students memorize the Quran surahs in classical ways.

Repetition: Listening to the Quran memorizers again with the aim of strengthening and improving the memorization of the Quran.

^{*} This alif juz was prepared by Nour Mohamed Haqqani, who died in 1925, to teach the Arabic alphabet and tajwid. For more information, see Nour Mohamed Haqqani, *al-Halaqat al-Quraniyyah*.

Ratification: Reading the Quran by heart to a specialist instructor to get the ratification (ijazah) of a chain linked to the Prophet

Visitors: It is the lesson of correct reading of al-Fatiha Surah and other short surahs given to the people visiting al-Masjid an-Nabawi for Hajj and Umrah or other reasons

Distance education: The Quran teaching given with the use of modern tools, which enable distance education.⁴

Education for the disabled: The Quran teaching given to the hearing and visually impaired and speech handicapped people.

Rasm-i Othmani: This course aims to teach the writing and preservation of Mus'haf and to give calligraphy training to the students.

The officials of some of the circles given above are Ibrahim al-Akhdar Ali al-Qayyim, Head of the Ijazah Department Dr. Ali bin Abdulrahman al-Huzayfe, Head of the Memorizing The Quran Department Ahmed bin Taleb Hamid, Head of the Repetition Department Abdulrahman Radwan al-Sharqawi, Head of the Correction of recitation Ahmed bin Ali al-Sudais (<http://wmn.gov.sa/section/22/>, 2017).

Numerical Data on the Quran Circles: The data obtained about the Quran circles are given in the following table:

Table 1. The Data on Quran Circles Regarding the Dates of 1-29 April 2014 (Jumaada al-Akhir 1435)*

Day	Instructing	Recitation	Memorizing The Quran			Repetition	Ijazah	Females	Seasonal	Daily Total
			Younger age	Middle-age	Older age					
1 Tuesday	798	575	1088	531	615	126	562	793	442	5530
2 Wednesday	780	572	1003	594	557	134	615	773	427	5455
3 Thursday	756	525	940	511	536	117	558	796	377	5116
6 Sunday	796	528	938	577	566	135	598	899	365	5402
7 Monday	817	612	1026	578	605	131	539	820	373	5501
8 Tuesday	842	520	1000	552	576	138	627	906	399	5560
9 Wednesday	856	541	1011	586	556	123	571	833	420	5497
10 Thursday	732	485	870	547	507	126	552	758	411	4988

⁴ For registration information, visit <https://quran-mn.com/ar/index.php>.

* All the data regarding the Quran and science circles have been obtained from the Director of the Quran and Science Circles, Ayman al-Jerishi.

13	Sunday	818	398	990	729	451	123	713	836	389	5447
14	Monday	810	553	916	540	548	117	675	803	408	5370
15	Tuesday	854	458	989	528	559	122	592	681	422	5205
16	Wednesday	839	592	1013	599	650	133	622	785	408	5641
17	Thursday	793	497	876	521	524	111	560	640	390	4912
20	Sunday	773	775	1011	585	579	117	610	749	396	5595
21	Monday	866	561	1040	557	640	104	568	799	412	5547
22	Tuesday	858	574	967	539	585	120	568	849	416	5476
23	Wednesday	848	570	996	574	570	96	562	770	408	5394
24	Thursday	751	499	896	517	476	108	562	692	428	4929
27	Sunday	824	503	1005	573	558	127	626	-	369	4585
28	Monday	978	602	930	642	562	113	583	895	404	5709
29	Tuesday	870	545	978	537	553	105	603	1004	369	5564
Total		17259	11485	20483	11917	11773	2526	12466	16081	8433	112423
Daily average		822	547	975	567	561	120	594	804	402	5353
Number of circles		51	58	63	43	55	23	179	88	51	524

Source: The Department of Guidance and Irshad (Quran Circles section)

According to Table 1, a total of 112,423 students were educated in 524 Quran circles in al-Masjid an-Nabawi in April 2014. This means that an average of 5,353 students a day benefited from the Quran circles. The number of female students participating in the training activity is 16,081. This number corresponds to approximately 15% of the total number of students. The most students are in the memorizing The Quran groups with 2,103 students. There is a total of 822 students in instructing groups, 547 students in recitation groups, 594 in ijazah groups and 120 students in repetition groups. The average of seasonal students in this date range is 402.

After examining the monthly statistics on the Quran circles in the al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the following table was prepared in order to look more closely at the distribution of the students during the day. Circle and student distribution according to the class hours of the Quran circles as of May 18, 2014, are given below.

Table 2. Numerical Data on Quran Circles Dated May 18, 2014

Group/Time	Instructing		Correction of recitation		Memorization						Control		Ijazah		Seasonal		Females		Total	
					Younger age		Middle age		Older age											
Period	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student
Facr	2	16	5	55	1	12	2	13	4	18	1	8	27	74	14	119	10	200	66	515
Duha	4	51	1	12	2	24	4	26	2	10	-	-	7	24	-	-	10	200	30	347
Noon	-	-	1	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	4	37	-	-	6	54
Morning	6	67	7	82	3	36	6	39	6	28	1	8	35	100	18	156	20	400	102	916
Mid-afternoon	22	482	8	103	29	518	16	268	17	113	8	23	25	102	4	74	24	200	123	1883
Evening	24	260	23	230	29	298	18	152	23	157	10	34	62	182	10	79	24	194	233	1586
Isha	-	-	20	117	3	30	3	16	10	85	4	9	61	176	10	61	-	38	111	532
Evening Part	46	742	51	450	61	846	37	436	50	355	22	66	148	460	24	214	68	432	507	4001
Total	52	809	58	532	64	882	43	475	56	383	23	74	183	560	42	370	88	832	609	4917

Source: The Department of Guidance and Irshad (Quran Circles section)

As seen in Table 2, a total of 916 students participated in a total of 102 circles in the morning part, covering facr, duha and noon hours while a total of 4,001 students participated in 507 circles in the evening part including mid-afternoon, evening and isha hours. When the two parts are evaluated together, it is understood that a total of 4,917 students were trained in 609 circles. The obtained data revealed that about 20% of the students preferred the morning part and 80% preferred the evening part. The highest number of students was in the mid-afternoon group with 1,883, while the least number was in the noon with 54.

According to the table, a total of 832 female students attend lessons in 88 Quran circles. The ratio of girls to boys is 17%. The number of students who participated in the Quran circles during their visit to the al-Masjid an-Nabawi was 370. This shows us that more than 90% of the students who participated in the Quran circles are regular students.

The Quran circles in the al-Masjid an-Nabawi are notable for their high student averages as well as for teaching students from many different nations. According to the obtained data, it is understood that in April 2014, students from a total of 102 countries were trained in the Quran circles. The largest student group by nationalities is the Saudis with 900 students. This is followed by Pakistani people with 551 students, Egyptians with 533 students and Afghans with 434 students. It was found that 42 Turkish students were trained in April 2014 in the Quran circles where many people from many nations including American, British, French, Russian and Chinese were trained.

Science Circles:

The al-Masjid an-Nabawi science circles have been put into practice since 2009 with a program prepared by Dr. Abdul Mohsin al-Qasim.⁵ A training program consisting of five levels was prepared by al-Qasim in order to train science students in the direction of the determined targets. The diversity of the field, comprehensiveness, and benefits for the students were taken into consideration in the preparation of the program (al-Qasim, 2014: 6). The texts are animated to prevent reading incorrectly. Selected works were

⁵ Scientific texts official Youtube page (بعد عن التعليم - العلمية المتون), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PrY2HGldr4>, Access: 08/06/2017.

included in the program after a total of 120 manuscripts were searched (al-Qasim, 2014: 7). Each text entry contains manuscripts based on and the libraries of the manuscripts.

Science circles are the course circles that students participate to memorize selected texts. This part which aims to memorize the texts that take their sources from the Quran and Sunnah and to go from the path of the scholars experts in their fields, moves with the vision to follow the path of al-salaf al-ṣāliḥīn (pious predecessors) in the way of science and to enable that Muslims around the world benefit from this science. In the direction of this vision and mission, the aims of the scientific circles are determined as follows (<http://wmn.gov.sa/section/55/>, 2017):

1. The dissemination of correct information and the elimination of ignorance,
2. To support the memorization of scientific texts and to facilitate this for everyone who wants to do so,
3. To connect the students' hearts with the science and masjids and to create a positive competitive spirit among the students.

The degrees and diversity of the texts memorized by the students, supporting the permanence of memorization through measurement and evaluation, encouraging successful students with prizes, giving success documents (shahadah) for each level and the flexibility to accept students from outside the al-Masjid an-Nabawi can be counted among the outstanding features of scientific circles.

Circle Types: It is seen that the al-Masjid an-Nabawi has five different science circles. While four of these are conducted as face-to-face training, one is distance education groups formed by students from various countries.

*Instructing circles:*⁶ Circles containing scientific texts for beginners to memorize

Memorization circles: Circles aimed at enabling students to memorize the scientific texts in the most accurate and best way

Control circles: Circles where the memorized texts are listened again and controlled

Genius circles: Circles aimed at enabling the students with special abilities to achieve the highest levels of education

Distance Education Circles: Science circles where students can do listening activities at <https://quran-mn.com/v2/index.php/ar/> website.

Class hours and age groups: In order to allow more students to benefit, science circles provide education in six different periods. These are facr, duha, mid-afternoon, evening and isha. As in the Quran circles, facr, duha and noon classes are grouped as sabahiyyah (morning) and mid-afternoon, evening and isha are grouped as mesaiyyah.

In the Quran circles, education is given in three age groups. These are the minor (sighar), the middle age (mutavassitin) and the older (kibar).

⁶ Instructing aims to enable the student to read correctly and understand the text to be memorized. For this, the text to be memorized is first read by the teacher and listened by the student and then read by the student and listened by the teacher. And any errors that may arise are corrected by the teacher (al-Ghabban, 2009: 78).

Curriculum: Books identified at five different levels in line with the objectives of the program and the authors of the books are given in the table below.

Table 3. Works Used as Textbooks in al-Masjid an-Nabawi Science Circles and Their Authors

No	Level	Text	Author	Field
1	1	Nawaaqid al-Islam	Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1206/1792)	Faith
2		al-Qawaa'id al-Arbaa'	Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1206/1792)	Faith
3		al-Usool ath-Thalaatha	Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1206/1792)	Faith
4		Forty Hadith	al-Nawawi (d. 676/1277)	Hadith
5	2	Tuhfah al-Atfaal	Sulaiman Jamzuri (d. 1198/1784)	Tajwid
6		Shurut al-Salat	Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1206/1792)	Fiqh
7		Kitab at-Tawheed	Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1206/1792)	Faith
8	3	Manzumat al-Baykuni	Umar al-Baykuni (d. 1080/1669)	Usul al-Hadith
9		Manzumat Abu Ishaq	Abu Ishaq al-Elbari (d. 460/1067)	Morality
10		al-Muqaddimah al-Ajurrumiyah	Ibn Ajarrum (d. 723/1323)	Grammar
11		al-Aqeedat al-Wasitiyah	Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328)	Faith
12	4	al-Waraqat	Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni (d. 478/1085)	Usul al-Fiqh
13		Unwan al-Hikam	Shaykh Abu al-Fath al-Busti (d. 400/1010)	Morality
14		Bughyat al-Bahith	Muhammad b. Ali ar-Rahbi al-Shafii (d.577/1182)	Fiqh
15		Al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyah	Abu Jafar Ahmad at-Tahawi (d. 321/933)	Faith
16	5	Bulugh al-Maram	Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852/1449)	Hadith
17		Zad al-Mustaqni'	Musa al-Hajjawi (d. 968/1560)	Fiqh
18		Alfiyatu Ibnu Maalik	Ibn Maalik al-Tai (d. 672/1274)	Grammar

Source: Abdul Muhsin al-Qasim, *Mutun al-taalib al-eilm* (I-IV), Riyadh, 2014.

When Table 3 is examined, it will be seen that all of the works used as textbooks in the science circles are classical works. None of the works are books prepared for the program or books written later. When the date of death of the authors is taken into account, it will be seen that the oldest work belongs to Abu al-Fath al-Busti, who died in Hijri 400 (gr. 1010), and the newest work belongs to Abd al-Wahhab who died in Hijri 1206 (gr. 1792). This suggests that the works included in the program are at least two hundred years old. It is remarkable that five of the works in the list belong to Abd al-Wahhab. As it is known, Abd al-Wahhab is one of the two founders of Saudi Arabia besides being the founder of Wahhabism. In addition

to the al-Saud family, who manage political affairs, al-Sheikh family, responsible for religious affairs, are the two main rooted families in the country (Büyükkara, 2017; Cook, 2005). Considering these, it can be regarded natural that the most books in the program belong to Abd al-Wahhab, who can be accepted as the spiritual founder of the country.

It is seen that the works cover different fields such as particularly akidah, hadith, fiqh, language, tajwid, science, and morality. In the program, there are 4 works in the field of akidah, 4 in the field of fiqh, fiqh method and faraid, 3 in the field of hadith and method, 2 in the field of science and morality, 2 in the field of nahv (grammar) and 1 in the field of tajwid. In addition to the books used as textbooks in the program, explication books have also been proposed for each lesson in order to allow a better understanding of the lesson (al-Qasim, 2014: 21). There are also books on the list that we can regard as advanced reading.

Method of memorization and preservation of memorization: In the prepared program, besides the selection of the memorized texts, there is also a method proposal for the memorization of the text and the period after the memorization. Emphasizing that memorization is the method of scholars, it is suggested that in the case that the text to be memorized is a hadith, 3 hadiths a day should be memorized; in the case that the text to be memorized is a prose, one sentence no longer than 5 lines a day should be memorized and in the case that the text to be memorized is poetic, three couplets a day should be memorized. It is stated that the text to be memorized must be repeated twenty times and the right time to memorize is after morning prayer. It is also suggested to repeat the text memorized in the morning after the mid-afternoon and evening prayers (al-Qasim, 2014: 11-12). The program, which also makes a recommendation on the repetition the memorized texts, encourages learners to repeat two pages every day and recite twenty times (al-Qasim, 2014: 15).

Numerical Data on Science Circles: The numerical data for the dates of 16-28 Rajab 1435 (May 15-27, 2014) in science circles are given in the below table:

Table 4. Numerical Data on Science Circles Dated May 15-27, 2014

No	Date	Number of daily students	Number of circles
1	15 May 2014/16 Rajab 1435	1070	103
2	18 May 2014/19 Rajab 1435	1066	
3	19 May 2014/20 Rajab 1435	1049	
4	20 May 2014/21 Rajab 1435	989	
5	21 May 2014/22 Rajab 1435	925	

6	22 May 2014/23 Rajab 1435	951
7	25 May 2014/26 Rajab 1435	948
8	26 May 2014/27 Rajab 1435	930
9	27 May 2014/28Rajab 1435	822
Total		8750
Daily average		972

Source: The Department of Guidance and Irshad (Science circles section)

According to Table 4, a total of 8.750 students benefited from the training provided in 103 circles between 15 and 27 May 2014. This means that an average of 972 students per day was educated in science circles. To further examine this statistic, which includes face-to-face and distance education of male and female students, the statistic dated Rajab 21, 1435 (May 20, 2014) is given in the following table.

Table 5. Numerical Data Dated May 20, 2014, According to Class Hours

Group	Older Age Group		Middle Age Group		Younger Age Group		Females		Distance Education Males			Distance Education Females			Total	
	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Circle	Student	Room	Student	Nationality	Room	Student	Nationality	Circle/Room	Student
Facr	2	16	1	4	1	8	1	32	1	19	11	1	37	13	7	116
Mid-morning	2	10	1	6	2	26	2	36	1	11	-	1	34	13	9	123
Noon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Morning	4	26	2	10	3	34	3	68	2	30	11	2	71	13	16	239
Mid-afternoon	11	24	7	87	13	182	3	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	348
Evening	10	27	7	44	15	129	9	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	300
Isha	6	71	2	11	4	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	102
Evening Part	27	122	16	142	32	331	12	155	-	-	-	-	-	-	87	750
Total	31	148	18	152	35	365	15	223	2	30	11	2	71	13	103	989

Source: The Department of Guidance and Irshad (Science circles section)

As seen in Table 5, a total of 239 students participated in 16 science circles in the morning part consisting of facr, duha and noon hours while a total of 750 students attended 87 circles in the evening part consisting of mid-afternoon, evening and isha. When both groups are evaluated together, it is seen that a total of 989

students attended 103 circles. According to numerical data, about one-third of the students prefer the morning part, while two-thirds attend classes in the evening part. While most students are in the group of mid-afternoon with 348, it can be seen that as of May 20, 2014, no students attended noon circles.

The number of female students in science circles is 226. The proportion of girls to boys is 30%. If we look at distance education students, we can see that 71 girls and 30 boys benefit from distance education. It is understood that female students participated in the classes from 13 countries while male students from 11 countries. The proportion of distance education students to all students is 10%.

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite being the most rooted tradition of Islamic education history, it is observed that the educational functions of the masjids gradually decrease generally in the Islamic countries and particularly in Turkey. This situation, also reflected in the literature, pulls attention towards the al-Masjid an-Nabawi again. The question "Is the al-Masjid an-Nabawi, which is constantly referred to as the first model, able to sustain its existence as a modern Suffah today?" Comes to mind. The study conducted by the qualitative research method has searched for the answer to this question.

Information obtained, and on-site observations show that basically three separate educational activities are carried out in the al-Masjid an-Nabawi. These are al-Masjid an-Nabawi Institute, the course taught by the scholars and course circles. This work is limited to examining course circles.

In the al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the course circles consist of the Quran and science circles. Lessons are given in younger-age, middle-age, and older-age groups during *fajr*, *duha*, noon, mid-afternoon, evening and *isha*. In the Quranic circles aimed at enabling students to read and memorize the Quran in the correct way, the students attend correction of recitation, memorization, repetition, *ijazah*, visitors, distance education, disabled and *rasm-i Othmani* classes in the direction of their educational levels, interests, and needs.

The scientific circles based on the memorization of selected classical texts have instructing, memorization, control, geniuses and distance education groups. Classical works are being taught in these circles, with the aim of spreading the true information and eliminating ignorance. Texts from different fields such as *akidah*, *fiqh*, *hadith*, *tajwid*, Arabic and morality were selected in the science circles where a total of 18 books are used as textbooks in five different levels. The most inclusive and beneficial ones were chosen for the students when choosing these works, which are mainly in the fields of *akidah* and *fiqh*.

The obtained data showed that a total of 112,243 students were educated in the Quran circles between April 1 and 29, 2014. In these circles where 5,353 learners per day were trained, it is understood that students from 102 countries attended classes. On the other hand, a total of 8,750 students participated in the science circles on 9 lesson days covering May 15-27, 2014. This corresponds to a daily average of 972 students. The proportion of female students to male students is 30% in the scientific circles. 10% of the students who participate in science circles receive distance education.

In the light of the data obtained from the research, we can say that the al-Masjid an-Nabawi, the first model and inspiration source of the education tradition in the masjids, continues to be the most beautiful model for all the masjids which forget or leave their educational roles day by day. The Quran and science circles, which are attended by more than six thousand students every day, turn the al-Masjid an-Nabawi into a school that starts early in the day and continues till late at night. The al-Masjid an-Nabawi, where the hours outside of prayer are almost entirely devoted to educational activities, continues its role as a modern Suffah today as well.

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