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Social Sciences Education Practices: Cognitive Perceptions of Prospective Classroom Teachers

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ABSTRACT

There are many factors that affect the perceptions of students enrolled in the classroom teaching programs of education faculties concerning the concept of social studies teaching. The most important of these factors are the instructors they observed in the faculty and their previous educational lives. In this context, this study aimed to determine the characteristics of "an ideal social studies instruction" according to the cognitive structures of prospective teachers and to model an ideal social studies instructor according to these qualities. This research was designed as a case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs. The study group was selected by criterion sampling and consisted of 121 prospective teachers in their final year at two state universities located in the Marmara region of Turkey. A word association test, an open-ended questionnaire, and student drawings were used as data collection tools. When the results of the study were examined, the concepts of history, society, culture, people, and geography came to the forefront in the participants' cognitive perceptions toward social studies. It was determined that the characteristics they attributed to an ideal social studies instructor were gathered under the standard of professional responsibility and informed action. The student drawings revealed that the instructor figures were mostly well-groomed and smiling, they were usually shown in museums and historical buildings. Lastly, as future social studies instructors, the prospective teachers felt adequate in terms of the professional responsibility and informed action standard, and inadequate concerning the content knowledge standard.

KEYWORDS

Social science; social science practices; prospective classroom teachers

Introduction

The era in which we live is characterized by both technological developments and a social transformation that occur very rapidly. The changes and developments in this era necessitate a higher-quality education, especially for prospective teachers. Most of the foundations of these qualifications are laid down in the faculties of education that train teachers. Social science is one of the branches in which face-to-face communication is essential. As a whole structure consisting of human-centered branches of science, social sciences examine the relations of human beings with human beings, society, and other institutions, especially the state (Kabapınar, 2016). This scope of social sciences deems it necessary to associate the disciplines contained within with the children's lives, and the problems and needs of the society (Parker, 2009).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the social studies course was defined as simplifying and fuzing social sciences for educational purposes (Wesley, 1937). In Turkey, the social studies course is taught in primary and middle schools as one of the important branches of social sciences that brings individuals face to face with elements from daily life.

Background information about social studies education in Turkey

In Turkey, classroom teachers teach students from the first to the fourth grade in primary school. At the primary school level, three of these courses are directly related to social studies. These courses are given in Table 1 with their weekly course hours according to the grade.

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Table 1. Courses related to social studies.

	First grade	Second grade	Third grade	Fourth grade
Life studies	4 h	4 h	3 h	–
Social studies	–	–	–	3 h
Human rights, citizenship and democracy	–	–	–	2 h

Source: Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (2018a, 2018b, 2018c).

In the Turkish education system, the life studies course is taught in the first 3 years of primary school; the human rights, citizenship and democracy course is given in the fourth grade of primary school; and the social studies course starts in the fourth grade of elementary school and continues until the final (eighth) grade of middle school (Table 1).

The units of the social studies course, which was the focus of this study, are "individual and society, culture and heritage, people, places and environments, science, technology and society, production, distribution and consumption, effective citizenship, and global connections." When the names and content of these units are examined, it is seen that they are consistent with the social studies standards of "culture; time, continuity and change; people, places and environments; individual development and identity; individuals, groups, and governance; production, distribution and consumption; science, technology, and society; global connections; civic ideals and practices," which were specified by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2018) for the related curricula.

The skills that are commonly aimed to be gained in the life studies, social studies, and human rights, citizenship and democracy courses are as follows: "research, using information and communication technologies, nature protection; entrepreneurship, observation, communication, self-protection and knowledge, recognition of national and cultural values and social participation etc." Furthermore, with the realization of the fourth industrial revolution, the World Economic Forum (2016) identified the 10 most important skills as "complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision making, service orientation, negotiation and cognitive flexibility." Similarly, according to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2008), some of the skills that individuals need to acquire in the twenty-first century, such as life and career skills, global awareness, and citizenship literacy are associated with social studies.

In addition to the key competencies and skills defined in the education programs in Turkey, each curriculum has both common-root and specific values. When the values that are aimed to be gained in the curricula of the three courses are examined, the common-root values are identified as "justice, friendship, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, patriotism, and benevolence." In addition to the root values mentioned above, development of the following specific values is targeted: "family unity, independence, peace, being scientific, solidarity, sensitivity, esthetics, equality, freedom and economizing etc." in the social studies course and "respecting human rights and freedoms; fulfilling responsibilities toward self, other citizens, society and the state; behaving in a fair, equitable and protective manner to them; solving problems in a compromising and nonviolent manner; and adopting and contributing to the culture of living together" in the human rights, citizenship and democracy course (MoNE, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c).

In Turkey, prospective classroom teachers are required to undertake 4 years of undergraduate education. Education faculties of all universities located throughout Turkey offer undergraduate courses determined by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). In terms of the content of the courses, they cover all the subjects that prospective teachers will be responsible for teaching and include many different disciplines. Examples of the courses taken by prospective classroom teachers in relation to social studies are Ataturk's principles and history of Turkish revolution I, II, Turkish history and culture; geography and geopolitics of Turkey, life studies teaching and social studies teaching. In addition, there are courses that relate education with social studies, such as "philosophy of education, educational psychology, and sociology of education" (CoHE, 2018). For

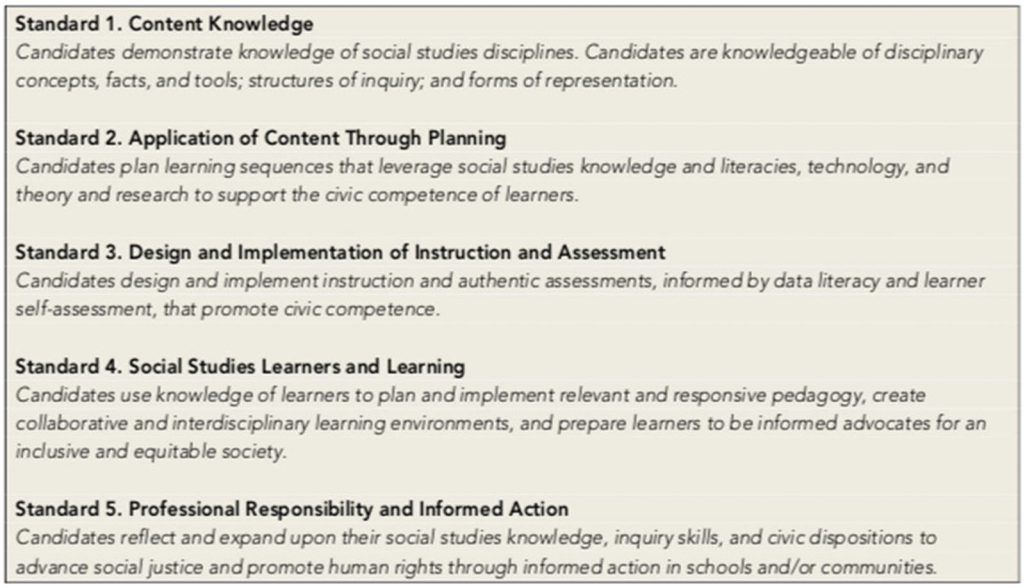


Figure 1. Five core competencies for social studies instructors.

the founder of the Republic of Turkey, "Ataturk" poses a significant place in social studies and history classes.

In Turkey, the foundations of social studies are laid in primary school. Since social studies courses are taught by classroom teachers in the fourth grade of primary school, their competencies are expected to comply with those determined by internationally recognized institutions. The first step in raising citizens of the world that can meet the requirements of the era and keep pace with the rapid developments is to ensure that teachers have a high level of competence. Figure 1 shows the competencies determined by NCSS (2018) for social studies instructors (p. 10).

According to Figure 1, the competencies that social studies instructors should possess are summarized under the following five standards: "content knowledge," "application of content through planning," "design and implementation of instruction and assessment," "social studies learners and learning," and "professional responsibility and informed action."

Significance of the research and research questions

At the primary education level, the significance of social studies, as a course that can help students meet the requirements of becoming social individuals in the society, gaining effective citizenship skills, and being equipped with life skills, cannot be denied. This further increases the importance of investigating the meaning attributed to this course by prospective classroom teachers that will be obliged to implement this course in their future career and eliciting their ideas about an ideal social studies instructor.

There are many studies in the literature on the relationship between social studies and education (Açikalin, 2010; Alazzi, 2008; Beldağ & Geçit, 2016; Bulut & Koca, 2017; Çelikten, 2006; Durmuş & Baş, 2016; Gömleksiz et al., 2012; Geçit & Gençer, 2011; Karaşahinoğlu & İlhan, 2019; Laboskey, 1994; Lucey et al., 2014; Ocak et al., 2017; Tural, 2018; Sharbain & Tan, 2012). Many studies on teacher education have revealed that prospective teachers' perspectives, assumptions and beliefs are reflected in their practices (Adler, 1984; Angell, 1998; Goodman & Adler, 1985; Richardson, 2003; Ross et al., 1992). However, no such study with prospective classroom teachers has been found, which signifies a gap in the literature. Therefore, this study is important in determining the views of prospective classroom teachers on social studies and ideal social studies teaching. This research was designed based on the core competencies for social studies teacher education specified by

NCSS (2018) to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What are prospective classroom teachers' conceptions of social studies?
2. According to the prospective classroom teachers, what competencies should a social studies instructor have to implement effective social studies practices?
3. What are the common characteristics of an ideal social studies instructor in the drawings of the prospective teachers?
4. How do the prospective teachers evaluate themselves in relation to social studies practices?

Method

Research design

This research aimed to determine the cognitive structures of prospective teachers concerning the concept of an ideal social studies instructor using a case study among qualitative research designs. A case study is frequently used in a wide range of areas, particularly assessment processes in order to conduct an in-depth analysis of a situation, often a program, event, action, process or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the cognitive structures of prospective classroom teachers related to social studies instructors were determined in depth, and therefore a case study was considered suitable for the research design.

Participants

The participants of the study were selected using the criterion sampling method. Criteria-based or purposive sampling should be performed by taking into consideration the research problems, theoretical framework, methodological framework, and target population (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Palys, 2008; Patton, 2002). In this study, the criterion that formed the basis of the sampling technique was determined as studying at one of the two state universities located in Marmara region of Turkey and having taken the life studies and social studies teaching courses. Another criterion was that the lecturers who taught these courses were academicians with a doctoral degree in the related field. The research was conducted with 121 prospective teachers that met these two criteria and volunteered to participate in the study. In addition, necessary ethical permission was obtained from the prospective teachers regarding the study.

Data collection tools

In the study, first, the word association test (WAT) was used to reveal the cognitive structures of the prospective teachers concerning the concept of social studies. WAT allows to determine which words/phrases first come to the respondents' minds in relation to a concept and how they make associations between different concepts (Bahar et al., 1999). In this study, the prospective teachers were given 30 s to write down 10 concepts they associated with social studies. Then, they were asked to produce words for the concept of social studies using an open-ended questionnaire prepared by the researchers.

The same questionnaire was used to reveal the views of the prospective classroom teachers on an ideal social studies instructor. The participants were asked to specify the characteristics that a social studies instructor should possess both in writing and drawings. Finally, they were asked to state whether they thought they would become a good social studies instructor and provide explanations. Expert opinions about the questionnaire were obtained from six professors that were specialized in their fields.

Analyses of data

The data were collected in May in the 2018–2019 academic year. The research data were analyzed using multiple methods. First, the words obtained by WAT, were ordered based on their frequencies, and a concept network was constructed for those that were repeated 20 or more times. Then, the data obtained from the questionnaire consisting of two open-ended questions were analyzed using categorical analysis, which is a type of content analysis. The categorical analysis process consisted of the following steps: (a) coding the data, (b) creating themes (categories), (c) arranging the themes, and (d) defining and interpreting

the findings (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Second, the drawings of the participants were evaluated according to the visual elements without any attempt to make a psychological interpretation. The drawings were examined by two researchers separately and collected under the following five themes:

1. Gender
2. Facial expressions (friendly, serious, etc.)
3. Physical properties (well groomed, bald, etc.)
4. Surrounding elements (garden, nature, school, class, etc.)

Real names of the participants were not used when quoting, and therefore, the participants were encoded as PT1, PT2, PT3, … After the data were separately coded by the two researchers, their coding was compared and reliability studies were conducted. The analyzed data were digitized using frequency and percentages and presented in tables and graphs. The inter-coder reliability formula provided by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to check and ensure reliability. The inter-rater reliability was found to be 0.91 for the analysis of the open-ended questionnaire and 0.89 for the drawings. Since both values were above 0.80, the analyses to be conducted with the data collection tools used in the study were considered reliable. In addition, the data obtained using different data collection tools were compared with each other to increase the validity and reliability of the research.

Results

Prospective classroom teachers' conceptions of social studies

A frequency table was prepared to demonstrate the frequency of the words that the prospective classroom teachers presented for the concept of social studies. In the preparation of this table, the responses obtained from the prospective teachers were examined in detail, and expressions that could not be considered as keywords (bicycle, ruler, etc.) were excluded from the study. In addition, different words with the same meaning were collected under a single concept and included in the table as a single item. For example, the words "tradition," "custom," and "convention" were gathered under the title of "traditions"; the words "life," "living," and "real life" under the category of "life"; and "internet," "social media," and "media" under the heading of "media." The words presented by the prospective teachers are given in Table 2.

The participants presented 119 words for the concept of social studies, and there were a total of 1093 repetitions (Table 2). The words that were most used by the participants were "history," "society," "culture," "people," "geography," "citizenship," "Mustafa Kemal Ataturk," and "life" while the least frequency of use was observed in "social roles," "love," "choice," and "patience." The concept network of the words with a frequency of 20 or more repetitions is shown in Figure 2.

The words repeated by the prospective classroom teachers 20 or more times for the concept of social studies were: "history," "society," "culture," "human," "geography," "citizenship," "Mustafa Kemal Ataturk," and "child rights" (Figure 2).

Opinions about what competencies a social studies instructor have to implement effective social studies practices

The prospective classroom teachers were asked to list the characteristics of an ideal social studies instructor in writing. The written responses of the 121 participants are given in Table 3 based on the standards expected of a social studies teacher according to NCSS (2018).

The prospective teachers most mentioned the competencies that corresponded to Standard 5 (professional responsibility and informed action) and least referred to those related to Standard 3 (design and implementation of instruction and assessment) (Table 3). When the responses of the participants were examined in relation to Standard 1, it was seen that the most stated competency was "having knowledge of science, arts, and cultural issues." "Reflecting real life in class" and "identifying the causes of problems and providing solution" were the most emphasized competencies in Standards 2 and 3, respectively. Finally, the competencies that were most

Table 2. Words presented by the prospective teachers in association with the social studies concept (*f*).

History (93)	Time (9)	Social skills (4)	Hospitality (2)
Society (56)	Freedom (9)	Turkey (4)	Literacy (2)
Culture (53)	Life studies (9)	Action (4)	Interview (2)
Human (51)	Geographical structure (9)	Future (4)	Problem/solution (2)
Geography (50)	Sustainability (8)	Family (4)	Agriculture (2)
Citizenship (37)	Economy (8)	Course/course book (3)	International relations (2)
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (30)	Rules (8)	State (3)	Belief (2)
Life (30)	Ottoman sultans (8)	Discipline (3)	Exam (2)
Environment (29)	Sociology (7)	Sensitivity (3)	Documentary (2)
Communication (29)	Cooperate (7)	Climate (3)	Archeology (1)
Innovation (29)	Idea (7)	Media (3)	Assurance (1)
Kids Rights (26)	Education (6)	Identity (3)	Demographic structure (1)
Science (26)	Resources (6)	Flag (3)	Activities (1)
War (23)	Justice (6)	National Struggle (3)	Election (1)
Value (21)	4–7. Class (5)	Socialization (3)	Exhibition (1)
Nature (19)	Tour/observation (5)	Conscious consumer (3)	Experience (1)
Responsibility (17)	Revolutions (5)	Cooperation (3)	Friend (1)
Empathy (16)	Heritage (5)	Exposure (3)	Hardworking (1)
Historical structure (16)	Psychology (5)	Visual arts (3)	Homework (1)
Map (15)	Production (5)	Approaches (3)	Love (1)
Local/oral history (15)	Agreement (5)	Criticizing (3)	Order (1)
Evidence (14)	Museum (5)	Universality (3)	Patience (1)
Research (14)	Theme (5)	Anthropology (2)	Planets (1)
Republic (13)	Peace (5)	Festivals (2)	Philosophy (1)
Chronology (12)	Traditions (5)	Front (2)	Presentation (1)
Respect (12)	Democracy (4)	Multiple intelligence (2)	Scale (1)
Teacher (12)	Memorizing (4)	Drama (2)	Soldier (1)
Diversity (11)	Self-expression (4)	Equality (2)	Traffic (1)
Earth (11)	Civilization (4)	Efficiency (2)	Triumph (1)
Ethic (10)	School (4)	Law (2)	Disaster (1)

Number of words the participants associated with the social studies concept: 119
Frequency of the repetition of the presented words: 1093



Figure 2. Concept network of the words with a high repetition frequency.

mentioned by the participants in relation to Standards 4 and 5 were "communicating effectively" and "being open to different perspectives," respectively.

Common characteristics of an ideal social studies instructor in the drawings of the prospective teachers

The prospective classroom teachers were asked to model the characteristics of an ideal social studies instructor through drawing. The drawings of 121 prospective teachers were examined under the categories of "gender," "facial expression," "physical characteristics" and "surrounding elements." Figure 3 shows the analysis of gender-related elements in the drawings.

The prospective teachers mostly drew a female instructor, with male figures being less frequently pictured. In addition, 15 participants did not specify gender in their drawings and only portrayed trees, globe, books, etc. using metaphors. Figure 4 shows the facial expressions that the prospective teachers included in their drawings.

The participants drew an ideal social studies instructor as mostly smiling (Figure 4). This was followed by faces with no expression at a lower frequency and serious faces at the least level. Figure 5 shows the physical properties of an ideal social studies instructor according to the participant drawings.

Figure 5 reveals that the prospective teachers' drawings mostly depicted an ideal social studies instructor as well-groomed. The remaining physical properties included in the drawings in order of frequency were wearing glasses, being bald, and having a mustache. Table 4 shows the

Table 3. Competencies that the participants expected of a social studies instructor according to the NCSS categories.

Main categories	Theme	*f*	*f*
Standard 1. Content knowledge	Having knowledge of science, arts, and cultural issues	35	111
	Having knowledge of history	28	
	Being multifaceted and knowledgeable	16	
	Following global developments and current issues	12	
	Being an active citizen	9	
	Having comprehensive knowledge of the geography in which s/he lives	6	
	Knowing social values	5	
Standard 2. Application of content through planning	Reflecting real life in class	31	56
	Including trips and observations in class	14	
	Making learning enjoyable	11	
Standard 3. Design and implementation of instruction and assessment	Identifying the causes of problems and providing solutions	15	38
	Preparing students for life	13	
	Considering students' interests and needs	10	
Standard 4. Social studies learners and learning	Communicating effectively	35	147
	Preparing different types of activities	30	
	Empathizing	29	
	Being a role model for students	24	
	Avoiding teaching by rote	13	
	Using evidence	4	
	Utilizing different sources	4	
	Concretizing abstract concepts	4	
	Teaching values and developing students' skills	4	
Standard 5. Professional responsibility and informed action	Being open to different perspectives	74	345
	Being open to criticism	44	
	Being respectful, tolerant and patient	34	
	Being open to innovation and change	32	
	Being fair and honest	29	
	Being kind and friendly	20	
	Being objective	16	
	Being creative	15	
	Being sensitive to and protective of the surrounding	14	
	Being a patriot, loving her/his nation and people	13	
	Exchanging ideas with colleagues	11	
	Knowing her/his duties and responsibilities	11	
	Being self-confident and consistent	7	
	Having comprehensive knowledge of teaching	7	
	Being a pacifist	5	
	Guiding students	4	
	Approaching events without bias	4	
	Raising independent individuals	3	
	Being clean and organized	2	
Total		697	697

elements surrounding the instructor portrayed in the drawings.

When the elements surrounding an ideal social studies instructor in the drawings were examined, it was determined that places and objects, such as "museum and historical site," "nature/environment," "globe," and "map" were predominant (Table 4). There were also other elements that were only used once; e.g., "fossil," "wheelchair," and "scales." Below are two examples of the prospective teachers' drawings of an ideal social studies instructor (Figure 6).

How prospective teachers evaluate themselves in relation to social studies practices

The prospective classroom teachers were asked to comment on whether they could become an ideal social studies instructor in future and explain their reasons. The responses of the prospective teachers were analyzed based on the NCSS standards expected of a social studies instructor, and the results are given in Table 5.

When Table 5 is examined, it is observed that many prospective classroom teachers felt most adequate in relation to the competencies included in the professional responsibility and informed action standard (Standard 5), followed by the implementation of instruction and assessment standard (Standard 3) while the competencies that the participants did not consider themselves to be adequate mostly concerned the content knowledge standard (Standard 1) and Standard 5. More specifically, in Standard 5, the prospective teachers felt more adequate after taking the social studies teaching course and they stated that they

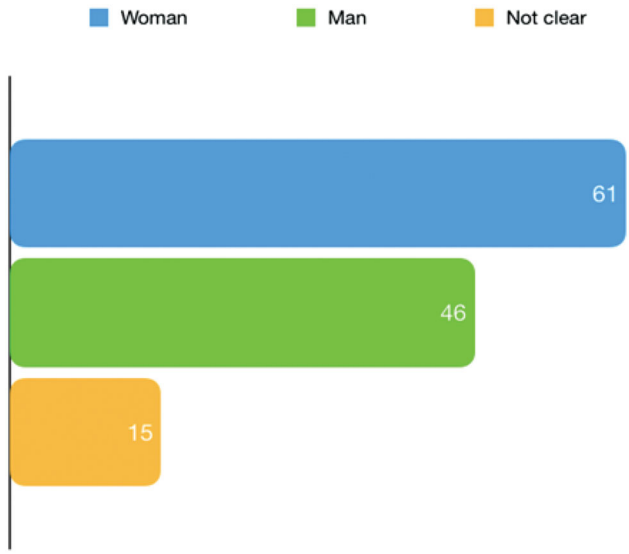


Figure 3. Gender.

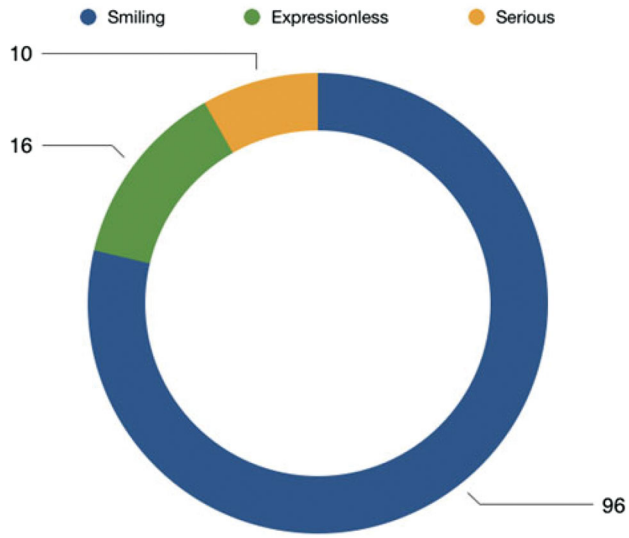


Figure 4. Facial expressions.

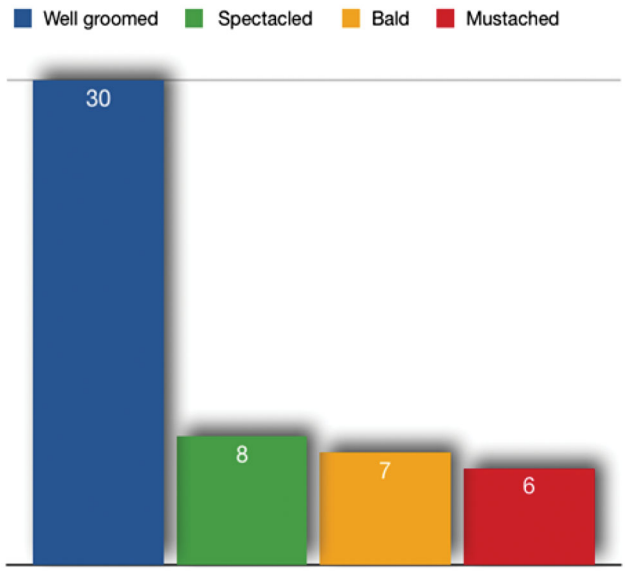


Figure 5. Physical properties.

Table 4. Surrounding elements of social studies instructors.

Elements	*f*	Elements	*f*
Museum and historical site	24	Date banner	3
Nature/environment	23	Mosque	3
Globe	17	Illustrated children's book	3
Map	14	Computer	3
Pencil	13	Notebook	3
Book/bookshelves	13	Panel	2
Children who make drama	13	Park	2
Kids	12	Desk	2
Ataturk's picture	10	Wing	2
Board	10	Scales	1
Library	10	Fossil	1
Flag	7	Wheelchair	1
Teacher's desk	5	Mirror	1
Cannon/rifle	4	Material box	1
Airplane	4	Necklace	1
Ruler	4		
Total			214

respected different perspectives and cultures. In relation to Standard 3, the participants considered that they would use different methods and techniques effectively. For example, one of the prospective teachers (PT32) said, *"As a result of what we have learned in the social studies teaching course, I feel sufficient for this course. When I become a teacher, I will pay particular attention to respect for different perspectives and cultures in this course."* Another prospective teacher (PT3) said, *"I think it is very effective to use different methods and techniques in classes. Also it is very important to make the students active in the classroom."*

In addition, there are opinions about making the course more enjoyable, which is one of the most stated adequate in Standard 2. In this regard PT13 said, *"Since my childhood, I liked to make the courses fun. Therefore, I want to pay particular attention to this when I become a teacher."* Regarding the adequate of doing research in Standard 3, the opinion of PT20 stated is as follows. *"I think teachers should do a lot of research. Because children are intertwined with development in the contemporary world. We have to know more than them to be taught."*

Concerning the areas they felt inadequate, having an insufficient level of knowledge and feeling the need to gain more experience were most mentioned under the categories of Standard 1 and Standard 5, respectively. In this regard PT49,

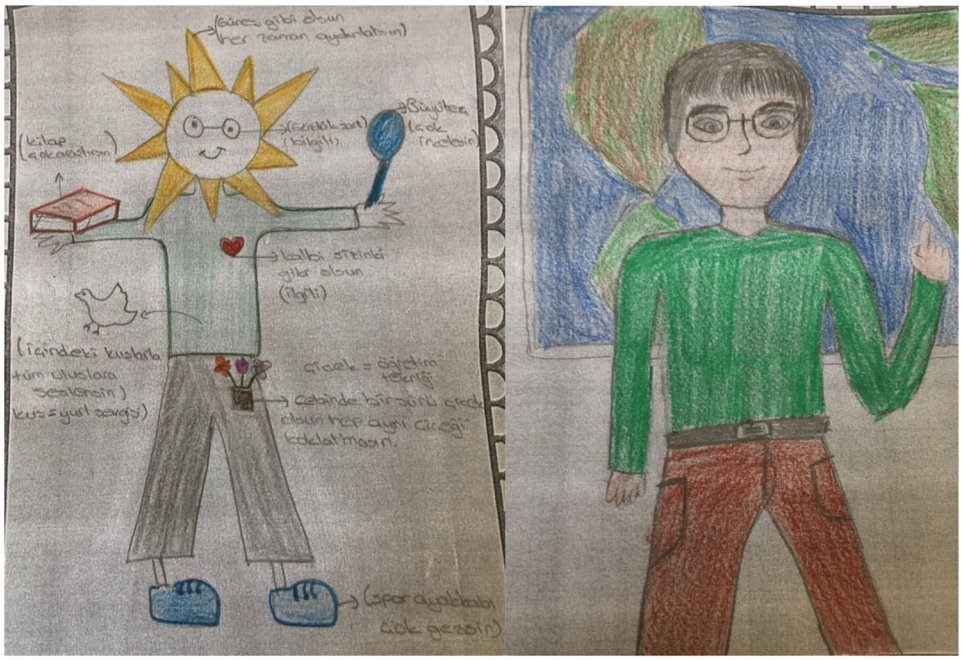


Figure 6. Example drawings.

one of the prospective teachers, said; "*I do not yet feel full knowledge. I think that I can overcome my deficiency in the future.*" In addition PT61, said; "*I think we have a lack of experience. But as experience increases, we can more effectively handle social studies courses.*" Regarding not being able to engage students' attention in Standard 2, PT4 said: "*It is very difficult to engage the attention of young children in the social studies lesson. Because this lesson is based on memorization, it distracts easily.*"

To summarize the important data, history, society, culture, people, and geography had the highest repetition rate in the cognitive structures of the prospective classroom teachers. When the participants' views on an ideal social studies instructor were examined, it was seen that they mostly emphasized the importance of complying with the professional responsibility and informed action standard. In the drawings of the prospective teachers, an ideal social studies instructor was usually a woman that was smiling, well dressed, and wearing glasses. The most frequent elements around the teacher figures were museums and historical sites. In their self-evaluation, the participants stated that they mostly felt adequate in relation to the standards of professional responsibility and informed action and design and implementation of instruction assessment while they did not feel as confident about content knowledge and professional responsibility and informed action standards.

Discussion and recommendations

Teacher education researchers found that prospective teachers' perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching and learning theories mediate the process of teaching learning in students (Adler, 1984; Angell, 1998; Goodman & Adler, 1985; Richardson, 2003; Ross et al., 1992). In this context, it can be stated that the meanings that prospective teachers attribute to the social studies course and their views about the competencies of an ideal instructor will have an effect on their future professional lives.

Similar to our research, in the literature, there are studies that examined the students' (Gömleksiz et al., 2012) and social studies instructors' (Beldağ & Geçit, 2016) metaphors related to the concept of social studies. In addition, in research undertaken with prospective classroom and social studies teachers, metaphors related to the concepts of geography (Durmuş & Baş, 2016; Geçit & Gençer, 2011), peace (Bulut & Koca, 2017), culture and identity (Ocak et al., 2017; Çelikten, 2006), and democracy (Tural, 2018) were analyzed.

Table 5. Participants' comments on whether they could become an ideal social studies instructor.

Main categories	Themes	Sub-themes	*f*	*f*
Standard 1. Content knowledge	Positive	Will reflect love of nature and animals in class	12	17
		Will research history and past events	3	
		Has sufficient knowledge	2	
	Negative	Inadequate about knowledge level	21	23
		May be inadequate if s/he only relies on textbooks	1	
		May have difficulty adopting universal values	1	
Standard 2. Application of content through planning	Positive	Will make the social studies course more enjoyable	21	41
		Will organize trips to museums, exhibitions, historical sites, and nature	9	
		Will teach topics according to the level of students	5	
		Will associate topics with life	5	
		Will encourage students to be active in class	1	
	Negative	May not be able to engage students' attention	5	7
		May have difficulty adjusting her/his teaching according to the students' level	1	
		May not be able to actively organize out-of-class activities	1	
Standard 3. Design and implementation of instruction and assessment	Positive	Will use methods and techniques effectively	32	63
		Will do research	20	
		Will integrate technology into the class	8	
		Will organize activities related to social topics	2	
		Will teach topics using cause and effect relationships	1	
	Negative	Inadequate about technology use	3	4
		May have difficulty creating discussion platforms	1	
Standard 4. Social studies learners and learning	Positive	Will have good communication with students	15	27
		Will use different sources	8	
		Will be a role model for students	4	
	Negative	May have difficulty avoiding teaching by rote	7	8
		May have difficulty communicating with foreign students	1	
Standard 5. Professional responsibility and informed action	Positive	Feels more adequate after taking the social studies teaching course	42	197
		Respects different perspectives and cultures	34	
		Patient and tolerant	21	
		Aware of the importance of raising individuals	20	
		Loves her/his country, nation and culture	15	
		Develops self	14	
		Open to new ideas	8	
		Loves children	7	
		Empathizes	7	
		Knows her/his responsibilities to students	5	
		Knows the value of human rights and freedom	5	
		Smiling and patient	5	
		Good observant	4	
		Sensitive to social events	4	
		Objective	3	
		Fair	2	
		Liked the instructor of the social studies teaching course	1	
	Negative	Needs more experience	7	20
		May fail to be objective to students	3	
		Did not like the instructor of the social studies teaching course	2	
		Not open to innovations	2	
		Not creative	2	
		Not open to all opinions	1	
		May not be able to control her/his anxiety	1	
		May have difficulty cooperating with students' parents	1	
Total			*406*	*406*

In this research, it was determined that the concepts that first came to the prospective classroom teachers' minds in relation to social studies were "history," "society," "culture," "people," "geography," "citizenship," "Mustafa Kemal Ataturk" and "life." In a metaphor study of the social studies concept, it was stated that the most frequent associations were "life," "a historical discipline," and "a discipline open to innovation" (Beldağ & Geçit, 2016). This can be attributed to the predominance of history and geography disciplines in the content of the social studies course curriculum in Turkey.

In support of the current study, Wunder (2003), who examined the prospective teachers' views on the concept of social studies, reported that the participants considered social studies to have emerged with the intertwining of history, citizenship, geography, and other disciplines.

In this study, the prospective teachers mostly emphasized the competencies in the professional responsibility and informed action standard and

least referred to those in the standard of design and implementation of instruction and assessment. In a study conducted by Brown et al. (2008), when the prospective teachers' responses related to their perceptions of a teacher were examined, they were grouped under the categories of professionalism, student-centered learning, knowledge, classroom management, personal qualifications, and teaching skills. The authors reported that the highest percentage of views were gathered under the personal qualities category. In contrast, in the current study, professionalism was predominant. This may be because teachers in the Turkish society focus more on professional responsibility in their education than other societies. Furthermore, the prospective teachers feeling adequate about professional responsibility before beginning their professional lives is consistent with the finding reported by Haverback and Parault (2011) that most of the pre-service teachers felt that they had more competence in teaching than their instructors.

The prospective teachers in the current study generally stated that an ideal social studies instructor should be open to criticism, which corresponds to the competencies in the professional responsibility and informed action standard. This is in agreement with the results of Alazzi (2008), who also found that the participants often underlined the importance of developing critical thinking skills in social studies teaching. The prospective teachers being open to criticism and developing critical thinking skills in social studies education is an important findings since the developing and changing world requires individuals that can make constructive criticism, rather than simply accepting what is being said or encouraging rote learning.

In this study, the prospective teachers' drawings of an ideal social studies instructor mostly portrayed a female figure. In addition to the participants that drew female and male teachers, there were also some that did not specify gender in their drawings. This can be attributed to the higher number of female social studies instructors in Turkey. Concerning the facial expressions used, they mostly indicated a friendly teacher with a smiling face. In a study by Karaşahinoğlu and İlhan (2019), the expression that was most frequently observed in the participants' drawings on physical education teachers was frowning. This dissimilarity between the portrayal of social studies and physical education teachers may stem from the interdisciplinary differences.

The reason that prospective teachers often drew well-groomed and spectacled figures may be that their image of an ideal social studies instructor was that they were intelligent and well-dressed, and read a lot. This is consistent with the findings reported by Brown et al. (2008), who mostly observed people with glasses in drawings. In contrast, Sahlberg and Berry (2003) concluded that the clothing of mathematics teachers was unappealing, indicating poor taste, and their foreheads were wrinkled probably due to overthinking. In the current study, concerning the elements surrounding an ideal social studies instructor, museums and historical sites or nature/environment were the most repeated. This is probably because social studies instructors are often expected to be interested in history and nature due to the nature of their specialty.

When the prospective teachers were asked to comment on whether they could become an ideal social studies instructor, it was seen that they mostly considered themselves to be adequate regarding the competencies related to the professional responsibility and informed action standard while they felt some inadequacies in relation to the content knowledge standard. This may be because they were still in the pre-service stage and had not yet practiced the teaching profession. This finding is supported by Laboskey (1994) and Wunder (2003), who referred to the importance and effect of mostly personal experimental factors on the development of the teaching profession. The authors also noted that the prospective teachers felt more adequate in their profession after receiving the necessary education. Similarly, Sharbain and Tan (2012) reported a significant relationship between the pre-service teachers' professional competence level and their attitudes toward the teaching profession.

The results of this study should be interpreted within the boundaries of the specified context. The importance of raising individuals that are, consistent with the nature of social studies, at peace with themselves, society and nature; that

solve problems they face in daily life; that welcome and respect different perspectives; and that have a high level of empathetic skills is undeniable. This is only possible by presenting opportunities for children at an early age to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and values, which is mostly dependent on the devotion and persistence of primary school teachers.

In future studies, similar methods can be used to obtain data from university students in different countries. Furthermore, further studies can be conducted to examine the meanings that prospective teachers attribute to instructors in various fields, such as science, art, and mathematics. As an alternative to this study, in which qualitative data collection tools were preferred, quantitative or mixed methods can be employed to acquire more in-depth data from larger groups. Finally, in-service teachers' perceptions of an ideal social studies instructor and their self-assessment can be investigated to determine whether their professional experience has an effect on the results.

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