



Opinions of Social Studies Teachers regarding Teaching History Topics in Social Studies Lessons ¹

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Abstract

One of the most prominent subjects in the social studies course is without a doubt, teaching of history subjects. The teaching of history topics has different features than the teaching of other subjects of the social studies course due to their characteristics. That is why the opinions of teachers regarding teaching of history topics in social studies course and the methods they use in teaching such topics are very significant. That is why the opinions of teachers regarding teaching of history topics in social studies course and the methods they use in teaching such topics are very significant. In the study, it was aimed to determine the opinions of social studies teachers regarding the teaching of history topics in the social studies course, the methods they use while teaching these topics and their opinions on such methods. Qualitative research method was used in the study. Participants were recruited using the criteria sampling method. As a criterion, being a social studies teacher for at least 5 years, being active in social studies and gender were taken into account. Interviews were performed with 10 social studies teachers, 5 of whom were male and 5 were female. The interview form was developed by the researchers through applying to opinions of experts. Descriptive analysis method was used in the analysis of the interviews. In the study, it was determined that opinions of teachers regarding the sufficiency of history topics in social studies courses were different. While some teachers emphasized that history topics were sufficient, some teachers defined them as insufficient. Most of the teachers mentioned problems with the order and sequence of history topics in the social studies curriculum. In the study, while half of the participant teachers found the removal of Atatürk Principles and Revolutions from the fifth grade appropriate, the other half did not. It is concluded that teachers prefer different methods and techniques in teaching history topics. Moreover, it has been determined that most of them prefer direct instruction method and question-answer method. Teachers declared that the methods and techniques which allowed active participation of students to the lessons were effective in learning the subjects, increasing interest in historical events, and also learning by having fun. As the most basic problem they faced during teaching history topics, teachers defined low level of students, irregularity of the subjects, crowd of classes, abstraction of the subjects, complexity of the topics, prejudices of students towards history subjects, their indifference, insufficient course hours, financial problems and rote learning. Most of the teachers stated that the methods and techniques they use in teaching history topics differ from the methods and techniques they use while teaching other subjects. Teachers indicated that content and characteristics of the subjects, age level of students, their needs, interest, experiences, point of views were effective for determining methods and techniques they applied in the courses. In addition, it was determined in the study that most of the social studies teachers did not take undergraduate or graduate courses on teaching history subjects and did not read the books published in this field.

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Introduction

Social sciences is defined as the process to establish a connection based on proving with the facts in human life and to obtain functional knowledge at the end of such process. Disciplines like history, geography, law, sociology, psychology, anthropology, education, economics, archeology are social sciences. On the other hand, social studies is a field in which these courses are evaluated together (Sönmez, 2010). Although the history of school in the West dates back to Ancient Greece, the lessons that fall within the scope of social studies started to be taught in schools mostly in the 19th century. However, these courses were structured as single disciplined like history and geography until the beginning of the 20th century. In parallel to the developments in the West, social studies courses were added in the education / training curriculum in the Ottoman Empire as well (Öztürk, 2015). The period where handling social studies subjects at elementary level came to the agenda in Ottoman Empire for the first time was Tanzimat Period. In this period, Short Ottoman History, Basic Geography and Knowledge on Public Works were taught regarding social studies. In the period of Abdülhamit II, which is also named as absolutism, there were courses of Ethics, Intensive ottoman History and Brief Ottoman Geography. During the 2nd Constitutional Monarchy period, courses such as Ottoman History, Ottoman Geography, Information on Civilization and Ethics and Economics were taught. In the Republican period, the 1924 program of social studies in elementary schools included Knowledge of Ethics and Information of Homeland courses, these courses were named civics in 1926. Besides, history and geography lessons were given in elementary schools (Akyüz, 2010; Üstel, 2004; Gökdemir and Polat, 2019).

Social studies concept came into use as a lesson in the USA at the beginning of the 20th century. In our country, this concept came into the agenda at the 4th Education Council in 1949 (Aslan, 2016). After this date, in the elementary school curriculum prepared in 1962, instead of History, Geography and Citizenship, "Society and Country Studies" was included. The course has been included in elementary and secondary school programs under the name of social studies since 1968. In the years following the coup of September 12, 1980, the social studies course was given as "National History" and "National Geography", in 1998, this understanding was abandoned and it continued to be taught as a social studies course in grades 4-7 (Öztürk, 2005). Although the name of social studies course was used for the first time since 1968, the content of social studies in previous programs was given together with History, Geography, Country Studies, Citizenship Knowledge, and Turkish Civics (Safran, 2008). With the 1968 program, independent teaching of subjects in the teaching of history topics at elementary education level was abandoned (Sakaoğlu, 1995). Although it was started to be taught independently under the name of "National History" after the 1980 coup, since 1998 it has been handled with an interdisciplinary approach together with other social sciences subjects under the name of "social studies". When the program approaches applied by different countries towards social studies course are evaluated, it is seen that most countries deal with social studies subjects with an interdisciplinary approach. Within this context, while Norway, Sweden apply multi-disciplinary approach, Czech Republic, Ireland and England apply single-disciplinary approach (Öztürk & Deveci, 2011). The definition, objectives, content and teaching methods of social studies course have changed both in the world and in our country since the period when social studies courses emerged and will continue to experience changes in the future (Aslan, 2016).

In addition to the changes and transformations in the teaching of social sciences in the world and in our country, the most prominent discipline in social studies teaching has always been history. At this point, it won't be wrong to say that it is the discipline that gives the basic meaning of social studies teaching (Kabapınar, 2012). The teaching of history subjects, which started to have significant place in social studies curriculum in the 20th century, has preserved its significance in UK, where single-disciplinary approach still continues and also in the USA, where the interdisciplinary social studies has emerged (Öztürk, 2005). In our country, the teaching of history subjects at elementary education level took place in Country and Society Studies in 1968, National History in 1980s, and later in social studies lessons in 1998, mostly with multi-disciplinary basis. This situation caused history subjects to be non-functional at the elementary education level and thus students could not connect with daily life (Şimşek, 2017). Thus, it seems difficult for primary school students to learn social sciences subjects as separate courses (Safran, 2008). Thus, it is obvious that teaching of history subjects, which will be

handled with an interdisciplinary approach, will be more effective, despite difficulties that emerge during history teaching that is without a doubt very important in social sciences (Turan and Ulusoy 2018). In our country, the teaching of history subjects at elementary education level is handled with an interdisciplinary approach within the social studies course at the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades (Keskin 2012).

When the elementary and secondary school social studies curriculum is examined, it is seen that there are history subjects at 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grade levels. In the 4th grade social studies curriculum, the whole Culture and Heritage learning area consists of history subjects. In this learning area, learning outcomes on family history, national culture elements in and around the family, traditional children games and national struggle are targeted. Furthermore, in the Science, Technology and Society learning area, outcomes on previous state of technology and inventors have taken place as historical topics. In the 5th grade social studies curriculum, the learning area of Culture and Heritage involves history subjects. In this learning area, outcomes relevant to Anatolian and Mesopotamian civilizations, historical assets and cultural characteristics in our country, historical development of cultural elements are included. In the cultural heritage learning area of 6th grade social studies curriculum, outcomes are targeted on first Turkish states established in Central Asia, the emergence of Islam, the acceptance of Islam by the Turks, the Turkification of Anatolia, and trade routes. In social studies curriculum, 7th grade has the most intense history subjects. In the Seventh Grade Social Studies Curriculum, the outcomes relevant to the Ottoman State, developments in Europe, changes in the Ottoman Empire in the culture and heritage area are expected. In the science and technology learning area, there are outcomes related to Turkish-Islamic scientists and inventions in Europe, in the production, distribution and consumption learning area, there are outcomes related to importance of the soil from past to present, and professions in Turks throughout history, in the effective citizenship learning area, the outcomes such as adventure of democracy and Atatürk's contributions to democracy are included (MEB, 2018).

Many studies have been made on teaching history subjects in the context of social studies course at elementary education level. In this context, Topçu (2016) concluded that the history subjects in the social studies course should be studied in depth and thus a separate history course should be included instead of social studies. Both teachers and students defined history subjects as boring. Doğan (2016) determined that the social studies course hour was insufficient in terms of transferring the history contents as a duration, there was a disconnection between the 7th grade history subjects and the content was prepared without considering the chronological order. Kavak (2006), on the other hand, found that there was no integrity between the history subjects in social studies books, and this situation, which made it difficult to cover the subjects, also prevented meaningfully learning for students. These studies point out that the teaching of history subjects in social studies course shall be examined. In addition, in the effective citizenship learning area, the outcomes related to the social status of women are included with examples from Turkish history. Studies have been conducted indicating that the main problem in teaching history subjects in social studies course was about not using active teaching methods. Accordingly, Köstüklü (2004) concludes that active learning techniques used in the history teaching of countries such as England and the USA are not applied in our country, and it is important to organize the teaching of history subjects in such a way that students take an active part. Yeşilbursa (2008) determined that the problems experienced for years regarding the teaching of History subjects in social studies could be solved through expending student-oriented understanding and the introduction of active learning methods. Again, within this context, Canlı (2016) found it was necessary to prepare an environment in which rich teaching methods and techniques suitable for different models were being used rather than using a single method and technique in teaching history subjects. Regarding the effectiveness of active learning methods, Dolmaz (2012) found that students were interested in active learning techniques and were more motivated towards history issues when used.

Similarly, Çiviler (2019) reached the conclusion that the history subjects taught on an activity-based basis made the course more interesting, and improved historical thinking skills of the students. Doğan (2007), on the other hand, found that the level of evidence-based learning was high in the classroom where active learning-based methods were implemented, and that students' historical understanding

skills and historical analysis and interpretation skills improved. On the other hand, it has been determined that the level of gaining historical empathy and questioning perspective is low in classrooms where traditional methods are implemented. These researches revealed that the teaching of history subjects in social studies course should be performed with methods and techniques in which students were active.

Many studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of the lessons taught by using different methods and techniques in teaching history subjects in social studies course. Accordingly, in his study on the use of historical places and museums in the teaching of history subjects in the social studies course, Şentürk (2019) found that social studies teachers found the museum visits for the teaching of historical subjects positive and museum visits increased the awareness of students. Similarly, Bilicioğlu (2017) concluded that students mostly wanted visits to historical sites, historical areas and museums in their social studies course. Regarding the use of historical stories in the teaching of history subjects in the social studies course, Şimşek (2006) found that students' attitudes towards the use of historical stories in teaching history subjects were positive. Similarly, Koçak (2004) pointed out the use of historical stories as a material in the teaching of history subjects in the social studies course enabled children to reach the outcomes more easily. Özkan (2014), on the other hand, found that the story and teaching method used in social studies teaching had a positive effect on students' academic success. It is emphasized that this method improves student perception regarding social studies course. Regarding the use of drama during teaching of history subjects in the social studies course, Kartal (2009) found that teaching history subjects together with the drama method was effective in increasing the success of the students, helped them to involve in the learning environment actively and brought the opportunity to develop their creativity. Similarly, Pektezel (2017) found that social studies performed with the drama technique enabled students to learn more meaningfully and permanently, increased success of students and changed the atmosphere in the classroom in positive manner. Concerning the use of oral history and local history in the teaching of history subjects in the social studies course, Dere and Dinç (2018) found that the oral history study increased students' interest and awareness of history topics and found that students achieved many cognitive and affective outcomes. Similarly, Sarı (2007) determined that the oral history study improved the ability of students to gather information from first-hand sources and developed individual views on historical experiences. Regarding the use of evidence-based teaching methods in the teaching of history subjects in social studies course, Şener (2019) found that the use of evidence in the teaching of history topics triggered cooperative learning, transformed students into active participants and saved time. Similarly, Çıdaçı (2015) found that the subjects studied by implementing evidence-based teaching methods were more effective in achieving cognitive and affective gains through learning the content in more detail. Kıcı (2006), on the other hand, indicated that the students who were implemented traditional teaching methods accepted the contents they read without any questioning filter, and that the students did not have full command of the resource inquiry ability and therefore evidence-based teaching was necessary. Concerning the use of historical empathy in teaching history subjects in social studies course Careless (2019) found that in-class activities aimed at developing historical empathy both made social studies more enjoyable and increased students' interest and curiosity towards the lesson. Again, in this direction, Çorapçı (2019) concluded that activities related to historical empathy, which made historical topics in social studies more understandable and easier, also made the lesson more enjoyable and interesting. Addition to these, Öner (2007) stated that the cooperative learning method was more effective in increasing cognitive success scores in teaching history subjects in social studies course, Korcu (2019) pointed out that teaching with games contributed positively to the academic success of the student and increased the interest in the lesson, Ulusoy and Gülüm (2009) determined that the materials used in the teaching of the course increased interest of students in learning history subjects, Özkan and Gevenç (2017) stated that anecdotes played significant role in achieving the outcomes in the 7th grade social studies unit "Journey in Turkish History", Özel (2013) indicated that use of technological tools was supported by students, Dönmez (2019) determined that the scenario implementations used in the processing of the outcomes of the social studies 6th grade "Culture and Heritage" learning area positively affected the academic success of students. These studies conducted indicate that, more effective teaching is achieved by performing the teaching of history subjects in social studies course through methods and techniques.

During the teaching of history subjects in the social studies course, besides the teaching methods and techniques, different materials and applications in which students are active, also the situation of teachers to perform these methods and techniques, materials and applications is also important. Regarding the methods used by teachers during teaching history subjects in social studies course, Çelikkaya and Kuş (2009) found that teachers did not use student-centered methods in teaching history subjects, social studies teachers did not make much attempt to revive historical characters and mostly benefited from narration and question-answer techniques. Similarly, Ünal (2012) reached the conclusion that social studies teachers used a predominantly teacher-centered method in teaching history subjects at all grade levels. In addition, teachers stated that crowded classes, financial inadequacies, short lecture hours in comparison with the expected outcomes, limit the implementation of student-centered methods and techniques. However, in the studies, it was determined that the in-service and pre-service training was effective in teachers' preference of traditional methods in teaching history subjects in social studies course. In this regard, Er (2015) found that the perceptions of teachers who did not take in-service training relevant to the teaching of history subjects are weak and that these social studies teachers assessed themselves insufficient in teaching history subjects with active methods. Similarly, Tahiroğlu (2006) determined that insufficient training of teachers in methods and techniques in their pre-service education, reflected negatively on their professional practices. Again, in this direction, Er and Bayındır (2015) found that social studies teachers felt insufficient in teaching history subjects and Binder concluded that insufficient pre-service and in-service training as the reason of this situation.

When the social studies curriculum and the studies conducted have been examined, it is seen that the subjects of history have an important place in the social studies course. Studies indicate that teaching of history subjects in the social studies course has different features, teachers encounter various challenges while teaching history subjects, and it is important to use methods and techniques in which students are actively involved in teaching history subjects. This study is important in terms of determining the opinions of social studies teachers regarding the teaching of history subjects in social studies course and to improve their perspectives on teaching history topics. In this direction, the objective of the study is to determine the opinions of social studies teachers regarding the teaching of history subjects in the social studies course, the methods they use in teaching these subjects and their opinions on these methods. The study questions prepared in this direction are as follows;

How do social studies teachers evaluate the history subjects in social studies course?

What are the opinions of social studies teachers regarding teaching history subjects?

Which methods and techniques do social studies teachers prefer in teaching history subjects and why?

What are the challenges faced by social studies teachers while teaching history subjects in social studies course?

Method

Qualitative research method was used in the study. It is defined as “A study in which data collection methods such as qualitative research, observation, interview and document analysis are used, and a qualitative process is followed to reveal perceptions and events in a realistic and holistic manner in the natural environment” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The study was performed through using the interview method, which is one of the qualitative data collection methods.

Working Group

Social studies teachers constitute the participants of the study. Participants were recruited to study on voluntary basis. Criterion sampling method was used in the selection of the participants. As a criterion, having worked as a social studies teacher for at least 5 years, actively teaching social studies at 5-6-7th grades and gender are taken into account. In this direction, 5 male and 5 females, total of 10 teachers were interviewed, Participants have been given nicknames to cover their identities. Details of the participants are given in table 1.

Table 1. Social Studies Teachers Participating in the Study

Participants	Gender	Professional Seniority	Branch
Participant 1	Male	7	Social studies teacher
Participant 2	Male	20	Social studies teacher
Participant 3	Male	5	Social studies teacher
Participant 4	Male	20	Social studies teacher
Participant 5	Male	8	Social studies teacher
Participant 6	Female	13	Social studies teacher
Participant 7	Female	10	Social studies teacher
Participant 8	Female	14	Social studies teacher
Participant 9	Female	20	Social studies teacher
Participant 10	Female	9	Social studies teacher

Data collection tool

In the study, a data collection tool, semi-structured interview form which was developed by the researchers in consultation with the opinions of the experts was used. A pre-application was made with two teachers through using the developed interview form. Following this pre-application, considering opinions of experts, repeats were detected in some questions and thus such questions were removed from the interview form. The interview form was finalized after the pre-application and taking the opinions of the experts.

Analysis of data

The data collected from the interviews during the research process were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. The records obtained from the interviews were written into the text, and then the texts were read and encoded. The codes were determined according to the concepts and words that best expressed the opinions of the participants. Then, the categories were composed by considering the similarities and differences of the determined codes. The opinions of the participants were described by emphasizing their similarities and differences, and supported by direct quotations.

Findings

General Assessment of Teachers Regarding History Topics in Social Studies Curriculum

The general assessments of the social studies teachers who participated in the study regarding history topics in the social studies curriculum have been different. Among the teachers, Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 9 stated that they considered history topics in the social studies curriculum as sufficient. Among the teachers, Participant 2 and Participant 5 stated that they considered history topics in the social studies curriculum as insufficient. It is determined some teachers evaluate the situation in the curriculum of history topics differently on the basis of classes. Accordingly, while Participant 6, Participant 4 and Participant 8 emphasized especially the history topics subjects in the seventh grade were insufficient, Participant 7 on the other hand defined sixth grade topics as heavy and detailed. Teachers emphasized the problems and deficiencies regarding the history topics in the social studies curriculum. In this context, Participant 1, Participant 5, Participant 7 defined abstract topics, Participant 2 defined narrow scoped topics, Participant 4 and Participant 5 defined the lack of connection between the topics, Participant 1 defined the intense content of the topics and Participant 3 defined the existence of many topics in single unit as the cause of the problem. The teachers made various suggestions for the regulation of history subjects in the social studies curriculum. In this context, Participant 2 said more content should be given on pre-Islamic Turkish history subjects, Participant 6 emphasized life styles of the first constructions and the management and justice issues of the Ottoman Empire subjects should be given in more detail, while Participant 5, 7 stated that class topics should be given more consistently and regularly. Participant 4 stated that attention should be paid to the chronological and historical integrity of the Ottoman state. Participant 9 and Participant 10 declared that recent historical topics should be included more.

The description of assessment of teachers regarding history subjects in the social studies curriculum was supported by direct quotations. In this context, Participant 1 said, *“Within the scope of the social studies course, in fact history subjects area as they should be on the basis of the subject, but the main problem is in density and abstractness”* and thus he stated that the subjects of history were sufficient and the main problem was that the subjects were intense and abstract. Similarly, Participant 7 used the phrase *“History topics are given in chronological order. I think history lesson subjects are very heavy in 6th grade. We’re drowning children in too much detail. It can seem abstract to students. In the 7th grade, it is seen that history subjects are very memorized. Words are being used which students find difficult to perceive”* she emphasized that the subjects were given in chronological order, however, the sixth-grade subjects were heavy and detailed, and the seventh-grade subjects were based on rote learning. Similarly, Participant 6 said *“I find history subjects sufficient for 6th grade. Life styles and economic activities of the first people in 5th grade can be given in more detail. For the 7th grade, more subjects should be given to the management and administration issues in the Ottoman Empire”* she underlined that she considered the subjects of history as sufficient in the sixth grade, however, the lives of the first people in the fifth grade and the management and administration issues of the Ottoman Empire in the seventh grade should be taught with more detail. Participant 8 on the other hand, used the expression, *“I think that there is very little history in the 7th grade curriculum. For example, I think the conquest of Istanbul is handled superficial and simple. I think that more in-depth topics related to Ottoman history shall be added”*. While saying, *“I think it is sufficient. A little more emphasis should be placed on history issues. Ottoman history is also handled boring, but 1950 and later can be added. Because it is necessary to evaluate contemporary world”*, Participant 9 stated that recent history topics should be weighted. Similarly, Participant 10 said, *“I think that history subjects give the student the opportunity to predict the future and update his knowledge. The Korean war of recent history, the Adnan Menderes period, the gulf war and the present should be added.”* Unlike these, Participant 2 emphasized that history subjects are not sufficient and should be more comprehensive by saying *“history subjects are not enough. It could be more comprehensive. More general topics should be given without going into detail. Especially, pre-Islamic Turkish history should also be concentrated on.”* Similarly, Participant 5 stated that the subjects are not enough and not dealt with in depth, by saying *“very inadequate. The topics are only named but not discussed in depth. It also remains abstract and detached in students' minds. I think at 7th grade, it is necessary to give the Ottoman history more consistently and regularly. How the Ottoman Empire was founded and how it was destroyed should be given in a holistic manner.”*

Teachers' Opinions on the Order of the History Subjects in the Social Studies Course

The opinions of social studies teachers about the order and sequence of history subjects in the social studies curriculum were detected in the study. In this sense, Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 7 stated that there were problems in the order and sequence of the subjects. However, one of the teachers stated that the order and sequence of the subjects were suitable. regarding the order and gradation of the subjects, among the teachers, Participant 1 stated that there were problems in accordance with the age level of the student, Participant 3 that subjects were intense, Participant 7 that subjects were intense and detailed, Participant 5 that there were problems in the chronological order, Participant 8 and Participant 9 that the subjects were memorizing. Among the teachers, Participant 1 made suggestions to embody the subjects, Participant 2 to teach a short Turkish history and Atatürk to the fifth graders, Participant 3 to allocate more time to the Ottoman Empire. It is observed that the opinions of teachers about Atatürk's principles and reforms, which were derived from fifth grade subjects in the renewed curriculum, differ. Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 7, Participant 9 stated that it was appropriate to exclude Atatürk's principles and reforms from the 5th grade subjects. Teachers stated that the reason for this was that these subjects remain abstract and are difficult to learn. Among the teachers, Participant 2, Participant 4, Participant 6, Participant 8, Participant 10 stated that it was not appropriate to remove Atatürk's principles and reforms. Teachers who think that it is not suitable to remove these subjects explained the reason as providing the students' readiness for the 8th grade and the necessity of learning about Atatürk.

The description made by teachers regarding the order and sequence of history subjects in the social studies curriculum was supported by direct quotations. Accordingly, Participant 1 emphasized that there are problems with the order of the subjects, the abstractness of the subjects and the limitations of the methods used by saying *“there are serious problems in the order of history subjects. The inclusion of abstract concepts according to age levels and the necessity of presenting in schools where history teaching is not possible, create difficulties.”* Similarly, Participant 5 stated, *“I think it lacks a chronological order. The content and order of the topics are not suitable at all.”* Again accordingly, Participant 7 stated that there are limitations in the order of the subjects, by saying *“there is a disconnection in the order of the historical subjects in the social studies course. In the 7th grade, Ottoman history became completely complex. 5-6-7 history subjects are given in a holistic spiral. However, it is not enough.”* Unlike these, Participant 8 stated that the order of the topics is appropriate, but it is necessary to handle the topics in a more interpretative manner rather than memorization, by saying *“I think it's fine. The order of the topics is nice. However, a more interpretive structure should be given instead of memorization.”* Similarly, Participant 9 stated, *“I think it is nice but has a rote understanding. The order can be arranged a little more.”* Participant 6 emphasized that the content and order of the topics are appropriate, but there are problems in considering the developmental characteristics of the students, by saying *“the contents and order of the subjects are given properly. I think the developmental characteristics of the students are not taken into account because the subjects remain abstract and are a bit heavy.”* Teachers stated different opinions about the abolition of Atatürk's principles and reforms at the 5th grade with the new curriculum. Accordingly, Participant 2 emphasized that the subjects should not be removed and it is important for students to know Atatürk by saying *“Kemalism subjects should not have been removed from 5. I do not find this right. After all, it passes on to other classes without recognizing Atatürk, who is the core value of the republic.”* Similarly, Participant 8 stated that Kemalism issues should not be removed in order to provide readiness to the 8th grade, by saying *“I think the issue of Kemalism should not have been removed. At least the principles had to be given. The subjects of Kemalism should have been given in a simpler way in order to lay a solid foundation in terms of the lesson of the student who will come to 8th grade.”* Unlike these, Participant 9 stated that it is appropriate to exclude the subjects because it remains abstract for students by saying *“I think the issues should have been removed. Principles and Kemalism remained very abstract. It was good. I had a hard time explaining these topics. I could not grasp the subject to students because it was heavy.”* Similarly, Participant 5 stated; *“it is very correct to remove the Kemalism subjects. Because the children did not understand the subject at all. The subject was progressing entirely through rote learning. It was very suitable to remove Kemalism because it was abstract and remote.”*

Teaching Methods Preferred by Teachers in Teaching History Subjects and Reasons for Preferring

In the study, it was determined that social studies teachers preferred different methods and techniques in teaching history subjects in social studies course. Among the teachers, Participant 2, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 7, Participant 8, Participant 9 stated that they used direct instruction method; Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 7, Participant 9 question-answer method, Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6 drama method; Participant 2, Participant 8, Participant 10 discussion methods; Participant 4, Participant 10 brainstorming method; Participant 4, Participant 10 research and analysis methods; Participant 1 educational game method; Participant 10 fishbone and six thinking hats technique. Teachers stated that they preferred these methods and techniques because of concretizing the subjects, activating the student, saving time, being suitable for crowded classes and low student level. Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7 stated that the methods and techniques used in teaching history subjects in social studies course differ according to the methods and techniques used in other subjects. However, Participant 8, Participant 9 and Participant 10 stated that the methods and techniques they use did not differ from other subjects.

The description made about the teachers' views on the methods used in teaching history subjects in the social studies curriculum was supported by direct quotations. Majority of the teachers stated that they generally used lecture, question-answer and discussion method. Accordingly,

Participant 7 emphasized that she used the question-answer method and that the crowded classes and low student level were effective in his use of these methods, by saying *"I use the lecture and question-answer technique. Sorry, I can't use other methods. Large classes and low levels of students are also effective in this."* Similarly, Participant 8 stated that she used the method of lecture, discussion and question-answer, she used visual and audio materials, it was effective to save time in using these methods, and that she used similar methods while teaching other subjects, by saying *"I generally use the method of narration and discussion and question-answer technique. I also transfer videos and images through EBA. I save time. Permanent learning is provided with videos. No. I use the same technique when explaining other subjects."* Again accordingly, Participant 9 stated that she used the method of question-answer and that this did not differ in other subjects by saying *"I use question and answer. Sometimes I give cardboard and homework. I usually use the same method. My methods do not change much when I move on to other subjects."* In the teaching of history subjects in the social studies curriculum, it was determined that there are teachers who use different methods and techniques in addition to lecture, question-answer and discussion. Accordingly, Participant 3 stated that he used the drama method alongside various visual and audio materials, because he used the method of concretizing the subjects and used different methods from other subjects, by saying *"I use short videos of historical events visually, short stories, as a drama technique by involving the student in the process while teaching history subjects. Since there are abstract subjects, it is necessary to concretize for the student to understand better. Of course, I explain it differently from other subjects of social studies."* Similarly, Participant 6 stated that she used the drama method in teaching history subjects, this was effective and she used different methods from other subjects, by saying *"I use the drama method more in my lessons. I make the children do the Who Am activity and the role cards activity. Because I want them to evaluate historical events according to their conditions and times. I think many things are more effective with animation. Yes, it is becoming different."* Again, in this direction, Participant 10 stated that she used brainstorming, research-analysis methods and benefited from concept maps, by saying *"I focus on mind maps, brain storming, and research-analysis techniques in teaching history subjects in the social studies course. While establishing a cause-effect relationship, I use the fishbone technique and the six thinking hats technique. Thus, I try to raise an individual who thinks, researches and questions."*

Teachers' Opinions on the Methods that They Think are Effective in Teaching History Subjects and Their Effects on Students

Social studies teachers stated that the methods and techniques they thought were effective in teaching history subjects in the social studies curriculum revealed different results on students in the study. Teachers stated that the methods and techniques that students actively participated in were effective in learning the subjects, increasing interest in historical events, and edutaining. Accordingly, Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 8 stated that the drama and animation method, Participant 2, Participant 4, Participant 6 the travel-observation method, Participant 6 the use of historical novels, and the participant 10 the question-answer method was effective.

The description made for the effects of the methods used by teachers in teaching history subjects in social studies course on students was supported by direct quotations. Accordingly, Participant 1 stated that activities such as drama enable students to learn by having fun, by saying *"especially activities such as animation and drama affect children's comprehension level very much. It shows very positive results to be involved in understanding. Of course, besides this, transferring it to children with games makes it both fun and understandable."* Similarly, Participant 5 stated that the students identified themselves with historical people by saying *"when you involve the student, a very impressive learning environment is created. When my students act out and learn the lesson, they identify themselves with historical personalities."* Again accordingly, Participant 6 stated that the use of drama, travel observation method and historical novels were effective by saying *"the students are incredibly excited about the theatrical activities in drama. They also enjoy the technique of sightseeing observation. I also use historical novels. This also varies in the student's behavior."* And Participant 4 stated that the trip-observation method was effective by saying *"I took my 7th. grade students to Rumelia Fortress Tour. While talking about the conquest of Istanbul, I observed that the method of learning by visiting the city walls, military architecture and war cannons increased the motivation for*

the students and learning became permanent." Similarly, Participant 2 stated that student-centered activities and museum visits were effective by saying *"I can say that the student-centered activities I use affected the students. I can say that after a student I took to the museum, his interest in the museum increased."* Participant 10 stated that the question-answer method was effective in ensuring students' participation in the lesson by saying *"attendance goes to the top. Students learn the subject faster and more effectively. The trend of active participation is rising. The techniques I follow through question and answer connect the child to the lesson."*

The Difficulties Teachers Encounter in Teaching History Subjects

In the study, he stated that social studies teachers encountered many problems in teaching history subjects. Among the teachers, Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 7 stated the level of the students, Participant 3, Participant 6 and Participant 8 the irregularity of subjects, Participant 5, Participant 7 and Participant 10 the crowdedness of the classes, Participant 1, Participant 5 and Participant 8 the intensity and complexity of the subjects, Participant 1, Participant 6, Participant 10, Participant 4, Participant 9 the prejudices of students towards history subjects, Participant 9 and Participant 10 the lack of interest of students, Participant 2 and Participant 7 the insufficient course hours, Participant 2 the financial difficulties, Participant 8 the rote learning approach, as the difficulties they encountered in teaching history subjects.

The description of the difficulties teachers encounter in teaching history subjects in the social studies curriculum is supported by direct quotations. Accordingly, Participant 3 emphasized that the student level is not sufficient and the irregularity of the subjects are a problem by saying *"I am facing difficulties due to factors such as individual differences, the level of the student, and irregular presentation of the subjects. The reasons such as the 5 grade students' level not being able to perceive elementary school yet, history subjects being challenging."* And Participant 7 stated that crowded classes, low class hours and low student level were among the difficulties they faced in teaching history subjects by saying *"crowded classes, the subjects not being able to be completed due to the shortage of hours, the students' capacity of understanding and perception being low."* Similarly, Participant 10 stated that the density of the subjects, the crowd of the classes and the students' indifference to the lesson were the difficulties they encountered in teaching history subjects by saying *"I think there is an excessive density on history subjects. This directs the child to rote and keeps them away from questioning. Crowded classroom environment, students' lack of interest to the lesson."* Again, accordingly, Participant 5 stated that the subjects were abstract, the classes were crowded, and the students' developmental characteristics were not taken into account as the difficulties they encountered in teaching history subjects by saying *"not paying attention to the developmental characteristics of students, keeping the subjects abstract, crowded classroom environment."*

The Effective Factors in Teachers' Competencies for Teaching History Subjects and Choosing the Methods They Use

Majority of the social studies teachers stated that they did not take undergraduate or graduate courses related to the teaching of history subjects and they did not read the books published in this field in the study. Accordingly, Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 7, Participant 8 stated that they did not take a course on the teaching of history subjects at the undergraduate level, Participant 2, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 8, Participant 9, Participant 10 stated that they did not read any method and technical book related to the teaching of history subjects. However, Participant 3 stated that he inspected the book "How to Teach History" of Mustafa Safran, Participant 6 stated that she took a drama lesson on teaching history subjects. Teachers stated that different reasons were effective in choosing the methods and techniques they applied in the lesson. Accordingly, Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 7 stated that the characteristics and age levels of the subjects, Participant 5 that students' needs, Participant 6 that students' interest, Participant 8, Participant 9 that their experiences, Participant 10 that the content of the subjects and the students' perspectives were effective in choosing methods and techniques.

The description of the factors that affect the ability of social studies teachers to teach history subjects and the methods they use was supported by direct quotations. Accordingly, Participant 1 stated that he did not receive any education related to the teaching of history subjects, and that he

determined his methods and techniques according to the characteristics of the subjects and the level of the students by saying *"I did not take any training. For the methods I use, I first compare the subject-age level to be told. I try to explain it by making it more permanent and more concrete."* Similarly, Participant 5 stated that he did not take any courses on the teaching of history subjects, did not read the method technical book, and determined his methods and techniques according to the needs and grade level of the students by saying, *"No, I did not. I consider myself a little bit sufficient. There is no method technical book that I have reviewed or read. However, I read historical novels and stories. I think these contributed a little more to me. Students' needs are the level of classes. In addition, I use the stories in the books I read."* Again accordingly, Participant 7 stated that *"I did not. There is no history teaching method book I have studied or read. The content of the subjects and the level of the students are effective in determining the methods I use. It varies from class to class."* Participant 8 stated that she did not take any courses on teaching history subjects, did not read the method technical book, and chose his methods and techniques based on his experiences by saying *"No, I didn't. I did not read a book about method technique. I think experience is more important. I believe that through experience, the teacher will improve himself more."* Differently from these, Participant 6 stated that she took a drama lesson on the teaching of history subjects, however, she did not read any method book and that the students' interest in the course was decisive in choosing method techniques by saying *"I took a drama lesson on teaching history subjects in undergraduate program. However, I read novels and stories about history. I haven't read a book that includes methods and techniques. The interest and excitement of the children in the lesson most impressed me when choosing methods and techniques."*

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

In the study, teachers' opinions differed about the adequacy of history subjects in the social studies curriculum. In this sense, it was concluded that some teachers found the history subjects in the social studies lesson sufficient, and some teachers did not find it sufficient. In the study, it was determined that the history subjects in the social studies curriculum were abstract, narrow and intense, there was no connection between the subjects, and the subjects were squeezed into one unit. In the research, it was extrapolated that it is necessary to give more place to pre-Islamic Turkish history subjects, the life styles of the first constructions, the administration and justice subjects of the Ottoman Empire, to give more consistent and regular subjects of the 7th grade, to pay attention to the chronological and historical integrity of the Ottoman State, to give more place its late history. In the study, most of the teachers stated that there were problems with the order and order of history subjects in the social studies curriculum. However, some teachers stated that the order and gradation of their subjects were appropriate. In the study, it was determined that there are problems in social studies curriculum such as compliance with the student age level, subject density, disconnection between the subjects, the detail of the subjects, the chronological order not being appropriate, and the subjects being rote-oriented. In the research, the teachers suggested that the subjects should be concretized, to teach a short Turkish history and Atatürk to the fifth graders, and more time should be allocated to the Ottoman Empire. These results show that there are problems in the adequacy of history subjects, subject contents, subject order and ordering in the social studies curriculum. Similar to the results obtained in the study, Doğan (2016) determined that the social studies course hour was insufficient in transferring the history contents as duration, there was a disconnection between the 7th grade history subjects and the content was prepared without considering the chronological order. Similarly, Kavak (2006) found that there is no unity between history subjects in social studies books, and this situation, which makes it difficult for the subjects to be covered, makes it difficult for students to learn meaningfully. Topçu (2016) precipitated that history subjects in the social studies course should be studied in depth and a separate history course should be included instead of social studies. When the results obtained in the research and the researches are evaluated together, it is observed that it is necessary to review the history subjects in the social studies curriculum. Herein, history subjects in the social studies curriculum should be addressed at the point of adequacy, density, content, class level, and student level.

In the study, it is observed that the opinions of the teachers about Atatürk's principles and reforms, which were taken from 5th grade subjects in the renewed curriculum, differ. Half of the

teachers stated that it was appropriate to exclude Atatürk's principles and reforms from fifth grade subjects. The teachers stated that the reason for this was that these subjects remained abstract and were difficult to learn. Half of the teachers stated that it was not appropriate to remove Atatürk's principles and reforms. Teachers who think that it is not appropriate to exclude these subjects explained this reason as the readiness of the students for the 8th grade and the necessity of learning Atatürk. Accordingly, Dursun (2019) stated in his study that most of the social studies teachers stated that it was appropriate to shift the subject of History of Revolution and Kemalism to the 8th grade in the new curriculum, and that the History of Revolution and Kemalism subject is heavier than the 5th grade and is not suitable for the student level. Again similarly, Akmeşe (2019) stated in his research that some of the teachers stated that the subjects related to Kemalism, which were not included in the old curriculum but were not included in the new curriculum, were not suitable for the development level of the students and that it was appropriate to exclude these subjects from the 5th grade, while some teachers evaluated the fact that the subject to be removed from the program completely as a wrong step. Accordingly, it can be stated that it is necessary to evaluate whether Atatürk's Principles and Revolutions are included at the 5th grade level. It should not be ignored that the teaching style is also important rather than whether or not these subjects exist at the 5th grade level. Yet, these subjects, which are taught with the logic of memorization, make it difficult for 5th grade students to understand the subject.

It was determined that social studies teachers preferred different methods and techniques in teaching history subjects in social studies course in the study. It was determined that most of the teachers preferred the direct instruction method and the question-answer method. It was determined that half of the teachers used the method of drama and brainstorming, some teachers used the method of research-analysis, educational game, fishbone and the de bono hats system technique. Teachers stated that they preferred the methods and techniques they used in the teaching of the lesson because of concretizing the subjects, activating the student, saving time, being suitable for crowded classes and low student level. Similar to the results obtained in the study, Çelikkaya and Kuş (2009) determined that teachers did not use student-centered methods in teaching history subjects, but rather used narration and question-answer techniques. Again, in this sense, Ünal (2012) found that social studies teachers used a predominantly teacher-centered method in teaching history subjects at all grade levels, crowded classes, financial inadequacies, and shortage of lesson hours based on gains limit the application of student-centered methods and techniques. When the results obtained in the study and the researches are evaluated together, it is seen that teachers mainly use traditional teaching methods and techniques in teaching history subjects in social studies course, especially the crowded classes, low student level and insufficient time limit their use of student-centered methods and techniques. Accordingly, the elements that limit teachers' use of student-centered method techniques should be eliminated. In the researches, there are researches that determine that the main problem in teaching history subjects in social studies course is not to use active teaching methods. Accordingly, Köstüklü (2004) stated that active learning techniques used in the history teaching of countries such as England and the USA were not applied in our country, and it is important to organize the teaching of history subjects in such a way that students take an active part. Yeşilbursa (2008) determined that the problems experienced for years regarding the teaching of history subjects in social studies can be solved by the spread of student-centered understanding and the introduction of active learning methods. Again, in this direction, Canlı (2016) determined that it is necessary to prepare an environment in which rich teaching methods and techniques suitable for different models are used rather than using a single method and technique in teaching history subjects. As a result, it is seen that teachers should prefer student-centered methods and techniques in teaching history subjects.

In the study, social studies teachers stated that the methods and techniques that they thought were effective in teaching history subjects in the social studies curriculum, revealed different results on students. Teachers stated that the methods and techniques that students actively participated in were effective in learning the subjects, in increasing interest in historical events, and in edutain. The conclusion that student-centered methods-techniques are effective in teaching history subjects obtained in the study show similarity with results of Dolmaz (2012)'s finding that students are interested in active learning techniques and that they are more motivated towards history subjects when used, Çiviler's (2019) results that the history subjects taught on the basis of activity made the

course more interesting and that the students' historical thinking skills improved and Doğan's (2007) finding that the level of evidence-based learning is high in the classroom where active learning-based methods are applied, and that students' historical understanding skills and historical analysis and interpretation skills have improved. In the study, teachers emphasized that drama and animation method, travel-observation method, historical novels and question-answer method were effective. The result obtained in the study regarding the effectiveness of the travel-observation method in teaching history subjects, determination of Şentürk (2019) that social studies teachers approve the museum visits for the teaching of historical subjects and that the museum visits increased the awareness of the students, Bilicioğlu's (2017) conclusion that students mostly wanted visits to historical sites, archaeological sites and museums in the information course, show similarities. The conclusion that the drama and animation method was effective in the study, determination of Kartal (2009) that teaching history subjects together with the drama method was effective in increasing the success of the students, including them in the learning environment actively and providing the opportunity to develop their creativity, determination of Pektezel (2017) that social studies, which are studied with the drama technique, enable students to learn more meaningful and permanent history, increase students' success and change the classroom atmosphere positively, show similarities. The conclusion obtained in the study that historical novels are effective, determination of Şimşek (2006) that students' attitudes towards the use of historical stories in teaching history subjects were positive, determination of Koçak (2004) that use of historical stories as a material in teaching history subjects in social studies lesson helps children to reach the achievements more easily, determination of Özkan (2014) that the story used in social studies teaching and the teaching method positively affected the academic achievement of the students, show similarities. Besides all these, Dere and Dinç (2018) and Sarı (2007) determined that verbal history studies, Şener (2019), Çıdaçı (2015) and Kıcıır (2006) that different methods and techniques, Kaygısız (2019) and Çorapçı (2019) that historical empathy, Öner (2007) that collaborative learning method, Korcu (2019) that play-based teaching, Ulusoy and Gülüm (2009) that material use, Özkan and Gevenç (2017) that jokes, Özel (2013) that technological tools, Dönmez (2019) that scenario applications are effective in teaching history subjects in social studies course. When the results obtained in the study and the results of the research are evaluated together, it shows that the use of student-centered methods and techniques in teaching history subjects in social studies course will be effective. In this context, it is seen that it is necessary to ensure the use of student-centered methods and techniques in teaching history subjects in social studies course.

In the study, he stated that social studies teachers encountered many problems in teaching history subjects. He stated that the most basic problems faced by teachers in teaching history subjects were the low level of students, the irregularity of the subjects, the crowd of the classes, the incorporeity of the subjects, the complexity of the subjects, the students' prejudices towards the subjects of history, the lack of student relevance, the inadequacy of the course time, the material problems and the rote learning approach. Similar to these results, Ünal (2012) found that teachers mainly used a teacher-centered method in teaching history subjects, crowded classes, financial inadequacies, and shortage of course hours with respect to the acquisitions limited the application of student-centered methods and techniques. The results obtained in the study showed that teachers experienced basic problems such as the inadequacy of the course time, crowded classes, as well as the abstraction and complexity of the subjects specific to the teaching of history subjects, students' prejudices and irrelevance towards history subjects.

In the study, it was determined that the methods and techniques used by majority of the teachers in teaching history subjects in the social studies course differ in accordance with the methods and techniques used in other subjects in the social studies course. This shows that teaching history subjects in social studies course requires different knowledge and skills. In the study, it was determined that the characteristics of the subjects and age level, needs, interests, experiences of the students, content of the subjects and perspectives of the students were effective in choosing the methods and techniques applied in the course. Likewise, it was determined that most of the Social Studies teachers do not take undergraduate or graduate courses related to the teaching of history subjects in the study and that they do not read the books published regarding this field. According to the results obtained in the study, Er (2015) found that the perceptions of teachers who did not receive in-service training related to the teaching of history subjects were weak and that the said social studies

teachers felt themselves incompetent in processing history subjects with active methods, which is similar to the Tahiroğlu's finding (2006) that the lack of sufficient training in methods and techniques reflected negatively on their professional practices in the pre-service training of teachers. Again, accordingly, Er and Bayındır (2015) found that social studies teachers felt incompetent in teaching history subjects, and concluded that pre-service and in-service trainings were effective in this. At this point, it is seen that social studies teachers should take training on the teaching of history subjects from pre-service and in-service training processes.

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