

## Opinions of Social Studies Teachers on Authentic Learning and Authentic Learning Practices<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This study aims to reveal Social Studies Teachers' opinions on Authentic Learning experiences. A semi-structured interview form consisting of 8 questions was used throughout the study. The obtained data were transcribed and analysed by the researchers using the thematic analysis method. According to the results of the study, it is seen that teachers predominantly define the Authentic Learning Approach with the expressions of "learning by doing and experiencing", "learning in everyday life" and "applied education". All of the participant teachers are of the opinion that the implementation of the Authentic Learning Approach contributes to the success of the students in terms of providing "active learning", "increasing interest in classes" and "learning by doing and experiencing" opportunities, as well as improving students' "self-confidence" and "self-expression". Participant teachers rated the Authentic Learning Approach positively in terms of providing "permanent" and "active" learning and negatively in terms of being "time-consuming" and "needing a special environment". Participant teachers advise teachers, who are going to employ the Authentic Learning Approach in their teaching classes, to prepare a "good plan" where the teacher will be the "guide" and the student will be the "active" and they also associate the success of the approach to "teamwork".

**Keywords:** Authentic Learning, Out-Of-School Learning Environments, Opinions of Social Studies Teachers

### Introduction

Education is a process that begins with the birth of individuals and continues until the end of their lives. During this process, an individual learns many things in his/her daily life. Because his/her innate sense of curiosity encourages him/her to acquire new knowledge in order to recognise and make sense of his/her environment (Üredi, 2023). Moreover, by having the opportunity to apply, develop and reinforce some of the information he/she learns at school in out-of-school environments (Çalışkan & Yıldırım, 2022), he/she makes this information permanent. This has brought out-of-school education and training activities to the fore. Preferring out-of-school learning environments during the educational and training process is of great importance as it offers students the opportunity to directly experience events and phenomena that are limited to be seen in school (Bakioğlu & Karamustafaoğlu, 2020). Therefore, out-of-school education and training activities constitute a significant part of the educational process.

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Out-of-school environments have a particular role because they create an interesting and fun environment for students and contribute to social interaction among children (Çiçek & Saraç, 2017). Also, in addition to economic-based structures, out-of-school environments such as neighbourhood markets are places that host the culture, daily life practices, traditions and customs of the society to which they belong (Uzgören, 2021). In order for the information learnt at school to be meaningful, it should be associated with real life, it should be known where, how and why the obtained information can be used in real life, and individuals must be able to internalise it according to their own needs (Erten, 2020).

Out-of-school education and training activities are closely related to real life. The fact that education is carried out in real or near-real environments (Koçyiğit, 2011) contributes to achieving the determined goals and realising a successful process. It bears similarities with Authentic Learning processes as it includes applications in real or near-real environments. Moreover, out-of-school educational activities and Authentic Learning benefit from the constructivist education approach. Accordingly, out-of-school educational activities and Authentic Learning are similar in terms of being student-centred, experience-based, problem-solving oriented, enabling learning by doing and experiencing, and allowing students to construct knowledge. Therefore, Authentic Learning Activities should be carried out in out-of-school environments.

In situations that require collaboration, problem-solving, research and communication skills, Authentic Learning requires students to demonstrate complex abilities and prepares real-life purposes and conditions for learning (Erten, 2020). Since the goal of Authentic Learning is to address a real-life problem, it improves individuals' problem-solving skills (Risko et al. 2002). As a matter of fact, Aydın Aşk (2016) states that the main goal of Authentic Learning is not to ensure that an individual learns the subjects directly, but to produce solutions to real-life problems that the individual may encounter in daily life. Since they are interested in real-life problems during the Authentic Learning process, students are expected to be motivated. Authentic Learning frees students from being passive listeners and enables them to learn through experiences.

Since Authentic Learning is closely related to real life, it is in line with the Social Studies Classes. Authentic Learning is defined as a learning approach that brings together reality in the outside world and the classroom (Horzum & Bektaş, 2012). Yalçınkaya and Azrak (2016) emphasised that students are prepared for social life through real-life practices in Social Studies Classes. Since Social Studies Classes are related to society, Authentic Learning Activities give students the opportunity to acquire real-life skills in society. Authentic tasks give students the opportunity to use what they have learned at school to solve real-life problems (Rule, 2006); therefore, it is one of the approaches that can be applied to Social Studies Classes. In support of this situation, İneç and Akpınar (2017) suggested that Authentic Learning, authentic assessment and authentic materials can be directly related to Social Studies Classes. Within the scope of Authentic Learning, it is aimed that students focus on real-life problems by establishing a connection with society, make sense of these problems, and produce realistic solutions to problems with the knowledge, skills and values they have learnt during the Social Studies Classes.

Authentic Learning provides the opportunity to apply the skills acquired during the Social Studies Classes in real life. Authentic Learning allows students to practice skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and synthesising information in real life (Şekerci, 2021). Furthermore, it also enables students to

develop skills such as using evidence, analytical thinking and perception of space. In addition, during the Authentic Learning process, students are encouraged by the teacher to explore, research, synthesise and question (İneç & Akpınar, 2017), and students' skills within the scope of the social studies course are improved.

Authentic Learning allows transferring the values taught under the roof of Social Studies Classes to daily life. The Authentic Learning process is expected to include real-world problems, to address research and thinking skills, to engage students in the social learning process (Rule, 2006), and to produce solutions by using their values. For example, in the Authentic Learning process oriented towards environmental problems, values such as love of nature, responsibility, patriotism, and sensitivity to natural heritage are developed, reinforced and transferred to real life within the scope of Social Studies Classes. In fact, both social studies and Authentic Learning focus on real life; one aims to acquire values related to real life, while the other aims to develop, reinforce and transfer values to life by making use of real-life environments. Moreover, authentic materials arouse students' curiosity and enable them to realise the social values, beliefs and lifestyles of their ancestors (Bektaş, 2006).

Different Authentic Learning Activities can be conducted under the roof of Social Studies Classes. The contents of the Social Studies Classes can be processed by assigning authentic tasks in line with out-of-school education and training activities. Authentic tasks are assigned for learning, practice and assessment, which any learner is expected to do, or otherwise to respond to programme content (Brophy & Alleman, 1991). Schneider (1994) described the tasks that can be assigned under the roof of social studies as a variety of student activities such as interviews, oral history, case studies, questionnaires, surveys, research, participation, forums, essays and debates. Bektaş and Horzum (2014) reported that methods and techniques such as problem-solving, project, cognitive apprenticeship techniques, and collaborative learning can be used in the Authentic Learning process. İneç and Akpınar (2017) suggested that problem-based learning, project-based learning, event-based learning, collaborative learning, situational learning, cognitive apprenticeship, scenario-based learning, research-based learning and evidence-based learning activities can be used within the scope of Authentic Learning. The main research topic of this study is to learn their thoughts or opinions Social Studies Teachers' ability to employ Authentic Learning Activities and to determine which methods and techniques they use.

There are different studies in the literature on Authentic Learning. In the field of social studies, studies with the following titles are found: Karakuş (2012) "The effect of constructivist learning and authentic assessment approaches on students' academic performance and retention in social studies teaching"; İneç and Akpınar (2017) "New approaches in authentic teaching of social studies"; Baştürk (2019) "The effect of Authentic Learning practices on students' critical thinking skills and attitudes towards social studies course"; Önger (2019) "Authentic Learning Approach in social studies teaching"; Erten (2020) "Authentic Learning"; Şekerci (2021) "The implementation of evidence-based activities within the scope of Authentic Learning Approach in primary school Social Studies Classes"; Yıldırım (2020) "Application of Authentic Learning Approach in Social Studies Classes"; Yıldırım and Ortak (2021) "The effect of Authentic Learning Approach on the development of 21st century learning and renewal skills in Social Studies Classes"; Bozkurt and İneç (2022) "Investigation of the effect of an authentic distance learning environment on learning"; Ciolan & Ciolan (2014) "Examined student and teacher opinions about authentic learning"; Stein and all (2004) "Incorporating authentic learning experiences within a university course"; Hursen, C. (2016) "The impact of curriculum developed in line with authentic

learning on the teacher candidates' success, attitude and self-directed learning skills"; Svärd, Schönborn and Hallström (2017) "Design of an authentic innovation project in Swedish upper secondary technology education". The fact that there are not any studies that examine Social Studies Teachers' activities and views on Authentic Learning in detail makes this study unique. It is believed that bringing suggestions regarding Authentic Learning Activities during the Social Studies Classes based on the views of Social Studies Teachers in this study may contribute to the field. Therefore, the purpose of the study is determined as revealing the views of Social Studies Teachers on Authentic Learning experiences. Within the scope of this purpose, answers to the following questions are sought.

- What are Social Studies Teachers' perceptions of Authentic Learning?
- What are the methods used by Social Studies Teachers in the Authentic Learning process?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of Authentic Learning?
- What are the difficulties you experienced during the Authentic Learning process?
- What are their views on the contribution of Authentic Learning to students' performance?
- What are the contributions of Authentic Learning to students' progress?
- What are their suggestions for teachers who are going to implement Authentic Learning?

### **Method**

In this study, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research models, is used. The phenomenon emphasised in this research is to determine the perceptions of Social Studies Teachers towards the Authentic Learning process. In addition, the study also focused on identifying the Authentic Learning methods used by teachers in the course process, the positive and negative aspects of Authentic Learning, the difficulties teachers experienced while implementing Authentic Learning, the contribution of Authentic Learning to students, and suggestions for the Authentic Learning process.

### **Study Group**

In the research, a study group was created by using the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The most important thing in the criterion sampling method is that the sample provides detailed information about the determined situations (Marshall, 1996). In this sampling method, the criterion for the study group has to be determined in advance. While selecting the teachers, it was taken as a basic criterion that they had been involved in Authentic Learning studies and that they agreed to make face-to-face interviews. The study group of this research consists of 13 Social Studies Teachers, 10 male and 3 female, working in 7 different schools in Sakarya and Bursa. Information regarding the study group is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Information Regarding the Study Group*

| Factor                                   | Category | <i>f</i> |
|--|----------|----------|
| Age                                      | 20-30    | 3        |
|  | 30-40    | 7        |
|  | 40+      | 3        |
| Gender                                   | Female   | 3        |
|  | Male     | 10       |
| Term Of Office                           | 5-10     | 3        |
|  | 10-20    | 9        |
|  | 20+      | 1        |
| Authentic Learning Implementation Status | YES      | 13       |
|  | NO       | 0        |

### **Collection of Data**

After the topic of the research was chosen, the focus was placed on determining the teachers' views on Authentic Learning and Authentic Learning processes within the scope of Social Studies Classes. The approval of the ethics committee for this study was obtained from Sakarya University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Decision No: E-61923333-050.99-29166, 34/25). During the research process, Social Studies Teachers who were engaged in Authentic Learning practices and who volunteered to be interviewed were contacted. During the research, data were collected through a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers.

### **Data Collection Tools**

During the research, "semi-structured interview forms" prepared by the researchers were used as data collection tools. In the interview form studies, it is aimed to obtain similar information from different individuals by focusing on common issues (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). While preparing the interview form, a literature review was conducted in line with the purpose of the research and draft questions were prepared. Prepared questions were analysed by experts in the field. The opinions of the experts regarding the draft form were collected from the experts in the fields of social studies, scale development and Authentic Learning, and appropriate changes were made to the form. Thus, the interview form was finalised as "the semi-structured teacher interview form". The semi-structured interview form includes a total of twelve questions, four of which are descriptive and eight of which are open-ended questions.

### Data Analysis Process

The data collected through semi-structured interview forms in this qualitative study were analysed using the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is a method used by researchers in order to obtain summary information about different phenomena and events (Büyüköztürk et al. 2008). After the data collected through semi-structured interview forms were transcribed, they were subjected to thematic analysis. The analysed data were examined by two experts specializing in the field. According to the feedback received, corrections were made at the point of coding the data. Collected data were summarised by creating codes and themes. Then, the data were interpreted by taking these codes and themes into consideration. Thus, the findings obtained during the research process were presented to the readers and researchers after being organised and interpreted.

### Validity-Reliability Studies

Validity and reliability studies are conducted in accordance with qualitative research. Validity and reliability studies are conducted in line with qualitative research. The procedures performed to ensure validity and reliability in the study are discussed below.

- *Trustworthiness*: Trustworthiness is one of the most important elements in qualitative studies. Trustworthiness is defined as the research results' being clear, consistent, and verifiable by other researchers (Ordin et al. 2018). Merriam (2013) stated that there should be trustworthiness rather than reliability in qualitative research. On the other hand, Başkale (2016) stated that the trustworthiness of the results is accepted as one of the most important criteria of scientific research. Hence, it can be said that trustworthiness is one of the main pillars for qualitative studies to be valid and reliable. In order to ensure trustworthiness in this research, the data were collected and preserved in the form of audio recordings during face-to-face interviews with the participants. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of this research, first of all, depth-oriented data was collected and all documents were analysed in detail. Also, the data were analysed by two researchers. Thus, researcher diversification was made. Then, the data were presented to a group of experts, who were specialised in the field and interested in the subject. Within the scope of the feedback received from the group of experts, adjustments were made to the findings. Thanks to this process, expert review, which is one of the credibility methods, was also performed.
- *Member Checking*: It can also be referred to as control of the participants. Based on the data obtained during the interview, it can be explained as asking the participants whether the findings of the study accurately reflect their thoughts or not (Başkale, 2016). However, in order to ensure member checking during the research process, questions were directed to the participants during the interview and their statements were checked. After the audio recordings obtained during the interview process were transcribed, they were forwarded to the participants, who could be contacted, for confirmation.
- *Transferability*: It refers to the fact that the results of the research cannot be generalised, but the results can be adapted in similar circumstances and hypotheses need to be established (Ordin et al. 2018). In order to ensure trustworthiness in this research, the data obtained during the interviews were analysed in detail. In the process of analysis and interpretation of the findings, direct quotations from the participants were used to exemplify the findings. While making

direct quotations, teachers were coded as T1, T2, T3, T4, .... However, during the research process, detailed descriptions were made within the scope of thematic analysis. Thus, the raw data were organised according to the codes and themes formed during the analysis and they were transferred to the readers/researchers without adding comments and preserving the originality of the data.

### Findings

Since the focus of the research was to determine the views of Social Studies Teachers on Authentic Learning, the first question asked to the teachers was to determine their interpretations of Authentic Learning. The opinions of the teachers are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*The Opinions of Social Studies Teachers on Authentic Learning*

| Category             | Code                                   | <i>f</i> |
|----------------------|--|----------|
| Learning Process     | Learning By Doing and Experiencing     | 9        |
|                      | Experience-Based Learning              | 4        |
|                      | Learner-Centered Learning              | 4        |
|                      | Activity-Based Learning                | 2        |
|                      | Task-Oriented Learning                 | 1        |
| Learning Environment | Learning in Real Life                  | 5        |
|                      | Learning in a Suitable Environment     | 4        |
|                      | Out-Of-School Educational Environments | 3        |

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that teachers' definitions of Authentic Learning are divided into two categories: learning process and learning environment. Within these categories, learning processes consist of learning by doing and experiencing ( $f= 9$ ), experience-based learning ( $f= 5$ ), learner-centred learning ( $f= 4$ ), activity-based learning ( $f= 2$ ) and task-oriented learning ( $f= 2$ ). On the other hand, the learning environments category consists of learning in daily life ( $f= 4$ ), learning in suitable environments ( $f= 4$ ) and learning in out-of-school educational environments ( $f= 3$ ). Example direct quotations for the categories are as follows.

- Direct quotations for the learning process category: "Learning on the spot by doing and experiencing, you know, creating a sense of curiosity in children" (T8). "So that children can learn by doing and experiencing and be involved in the process" (T2). "When we say Authentic Learning, what comes to the mind is task and activity-orientated practices in which students participate in the learning-teaching process by doing and experiencing" (T11).
- Direct quotations for the learning environment category; "Learning based on the information in the current environment, learning according to the environment you are in" (T4). "I think learning on the spot is learning by doing and experiencing life by entering into life personally"

(T5). "Authentic Learning is learning by doing and experiencing related to the subject in the natural environment of children in accordance with the speciality of the subject outside the school" (T2). "The child leaves the classroom environment and becomes intertwined with life" (T1).

In the second question of the research, it was aimed to determine the topics in which the teachers carried out Authentic Learning Activities and the methods and techniques they used in the process of Authentic Learning. Within the scope of this purpose, teachers were asked to give examples of Authentic Learning.

**Table 3**

*Implementation Status of Social Studies Teachers Towards Authentic Learning*

| Topics                              | Environments  | Methods                   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| The Subject of Social Sciences      | Public Buildings  | Education At the Museum   |
| Cultural Heritage                   | Social Spaces   | Collaborative Learning    |
| Production Distribution Consumption | Museums   | Verbal History            |
| Scientists                          | Natural Environment   | Observation               |
| Turkish Islamic Scholars            | Environment   | Simulation                |
| Silkworm Breeding                   | Factory   | Experience-Based Learning |
| Factory Production Processes        | Simulation Centre (AFAD - Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) | Local History             |
| Natural Disasters                   | Archaeological Site   | Research - Review         |
| Education At the Museum             |   |                           |
| Environmental Awareness             |   |                           |
| Active Citizenship                  |   |                           |
| Economic Activities                 |   |                           |
| Professions                         |   |                           |

According to Table 3, it can be seen that teachers benefit from Authentic Learning in the following areas: "Social Sciences", "Production Distribution Consumption", "Scientists", "Turkish Islamic Scholars", "Silkworm Breeding", "Factory Production Processes", "Natural Disasters", "Environmental Awareness", "Active Citizenship", "Economic Activities", "Professions", and especially "Cultural Heritage". The environments they benefited from within the scope of Authentic Learning were expressed as "Public Buildings", "Social Spaces", "Museums", "Natural Environment", "Environment", "Factory", "Simulation Centres (AFAD - Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency)" and "Archaeological Sites". The methods and techniques they used were "Education in the Museum", "Collaborative Learning", " Verbal History", "Observation", "Simulation", "Experience-Based Learning" and "Local History". Example direct quotations for the categories are as follows.

- Direct quotations for the topic category: "Career Preferences" (T7). "We implemented it in a class on environmental awareness" (T1). "Especially about our cultural elements" (T9). "It was done in the field of Silkworm Breeding" (T5). "I can say that I implemented it very easily in the unit titled "Production, Distribution and Consumption" (T8)." This Active Citizenship Lesson was taught in the fifth grade" (T2).
- Direct quotations for the environment category: "We applied it in a class focused on environmental awareness. Children identified environmental problems through observation in their environment" (T1). "... We performed a drama in the museum" (T13). "A group of my students had a visit to the factory and they were accompanied by their elders" (T4). - "In order to teach the 6th graders what archaeology is, I took them to an excavation site" (T10).
- Direct quotations for the method-technique category: "We conducted a verbal history study with the support of a lecturer from the university. We researched what primary schools were like in the 1960s. We created interview questions. My students conducted interviews, took audio recordings and transcribed them. We summarised the findings of the research together and presented them as a poster together with visual evidence. A group of my students had a visit to the factory and they were accompanied by their elders. There, they made observations, took photographs and interviewed the employees. They presented the visuals and results in the form of a poster. I also had students researching the spoken culture. They talked to elders and picked up examples of lullabies and idioms. We presented it in the same way" (T11).

One of the questions asked to Social Studies Teachers was about the contribution of Authentic Learning Activities to the development of students. All of the participant teachers ( $f= 13$ ) expressed that Authentic Learning Activities contributed to the development of students. T3 expressed the importance of this situation as "*Yes, life is not only about academic achievements*". The reason for this situation was asked to the teachers. Their answers are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*The Opinions of Social Studies Teachers on The Contributions of Authentic Learning to Students*

| Category              | Code  | f |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Affective Development | Development of Self-Confidence                        | 6 |
|                       | Ability to Express Yourself                           | 4 |
|                       | Socialization   | 4 |
|                       | Collaboration   | 3 |
|                       | Sense of Responsibility                               | 2 |
|                       | Developing a Positive Attitude towards Social Studies | 1 |
| Cognitive Development | Interest in Learning                                  | 3 |
|                       | An Investigative Personality                          | 2 |
|                       | Permanent Learning                                    | 2 |

|                          |                           |   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|
|                          | Ability to Make Decisions | 1 |
|                          | Experience for Life       | 1 |
|                          | Productivity              | 3 |
| Psycho-Motor Development | Go-Getting                | 1 |
|                          | Hand Skills               | 1 |

The answers given by the teachers can be divided into three categories: "Affective", "Cognitive" and "Psycho-Motor". The codes belonging to the Affective Development Category are as follows, respectively: "development of self-confidence" ( $f= 6$ ), "ability to express oneself" ( $f= 4$ ), "socialisation" ( $f= 4$ ), "collaboration" ( $f= 3$ ) and "sense of responsibility" ( $f= 2$ ). The codes related to the Cognitive Development Category are as follows, respectively: "interest in learning" ( $f= 3$ ), "investigative personality" ( $f= 2$ ), "decision-making skills" ( $f= 1$ ) and "experience for life" ( $f= 1$ ). The codes related to the Psycho-Motor Development Category are as follows: "productivity" ( $f= 3$ ), "go-getting" ( $f= 1$ ) and "hand skills" ( $f= 1$ ). Example direct quotations for the categories are as follows.

- Example direct quotations related to the Affective Development Category: "Since the student is at the centre of learning, since he/she takes an active role, the student becomes socialised. Besides, we have some passive students, students who have difficulty in expressing themselves. We have students who find it difficult to participate in groups. Thanks to this method, our students can overcome this passivity and become a group member and participate in activities" (T1). "I think learning how to work together and experiencing the pleasure of creating a product are valuable contributions" (T13).
- Example direct quotations related to Cognitive Development Category: "Research skills, presentation, self-expression skills" (T4). "There were some contributions in terms of experiencing life" (T5). "Making their own decisions and learning from the process can also be mentioned" (T13). "As I said before, I think the most fundamental contribution is permanent learning. 5. Whenever I meet an 8th-grade student with whom I did Authentic Learning work in the 5th grade, he/she still tells me about the activity we did 3 years ago" (T10).
- Example direct quotations related to the Psycho-Motor Development Category: "They will be more productive. It provides permanent learning experiences" (T11). "... We can observe that it increased his/her go-getting" (T7). "I think that developing hand skills contributes a lot to choosing a profession" (T5).

Another question asked to Social Studies Teachers was about the contribution of Authentic Learning Activities to students' academic performance. All of the participant teachers ( $f= 13$ ) expressed that Authentic Learning Activities contributed to students' academic performances. The reason for this situation was asked to the teachers. Their answers are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*The Opinions of Social Studies Teachers on The Reasons for The Effect of Authentic Learning on Students' Academic Performances*

| Category                  | Code                                     | f |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Learner-Centered Learning | Increase in Motivation                   | 5 |
|                           | Voluntary Participation                  | 4 |
|                           | Conduct of Researches                    | 3 |
|                           | Conversion of Information into Behaviour | 3 |
|                           | Transfers of Information into Daily Life | 2 |
|                           | Permanent Learning                       | 2 |
|                           | Contribution to Other Courses as Well    | 1 |
|                           | Stimulation of the Senses                | 1 |
| Process Oriented          | Active Learning                          | 6 |
|                           | Learning By Doing and Experiencing       | 4 |
|                           | Learning By Having Fun                   | 3 |
|                           | Out-Of-Class Learning                    | 1 |
|                           | Problem Solving                          | 1 |

When Table 5 is reviewed, it can be seen that the contribution of Authentic Learning to students' academic performance is divided into two categories. It is seen that the codes can be gathered under two categories: learner-centred learning and process-centred learning. The codes belonging to the Learner-Centred Learning Category are: "increase in motivation towards the lesson" ( $f= 5$ ), "voluntary participation" ( $f= 4$ ), "conduct of research" ( $f= 3$ ), "conversion of information into behaviour" ( $f= 3$ ), "transfer of information into daily life" ( $f= 2$ ), "positive effect on other lessons" ( $f= 1$ ), "stimulation of senses" ( $f= 1$ ) and "permanent learning" ( $f= 1$ ). The codes belonging to the Process-Oriented Learning Category are "active learning" ( $f= 6$ ), "learning by doing and experiencing" ( $f=4$ ), "learning by having fun" ( $f= 3$ ) and "out-of-class learning" ( $f= 1$ ). Example direct quotations for the categories are as follows.

- Example direct quotations related to the Learner-Centred Learning Category: "Both in exams and in subsequent lessons. .... When we talk to our teacher friends, we can see that it is also visible (noticeable) in other lessons" (T7). "The children study because they like the class; they have fun in that class. ... They put more effort into studying, loving the lesson, and coming up with new ideas." (T9). "I think it definitely contributed to the students. If the students adopt the subject matter that forms the context of the authentic lesson, i.e., if the children are genuinely curious and interested in the topic, they engage in research with great commitment. I think success comes naturally because they study willingly" (T12).

- Example direct quotations related to the Process-Oriented Learning Category: "I think it contributed a lot. Because it's interesting. The school environment is an environment that the school child sees all the time. When we move away from the school environment, the natural environment related to the subject contributes more to the child. It becomes more remarkable and interesting. I mean, maybe the child is doing it for fun. After all, he/she learns while having fun" (T2). "I strongly think it has a positive contribution. Once they are part of the activities ... They participate in the lesson with excitement and I think they achieve very successful results" (T13).

During the research, participant teachers were asked about the positive and negative aspects of the Authentic Learning process. Social Studies Teachers mentioned that Authentic Learning has both positive and negative aspects. The answers given by the teachers are shown in Table 6 as codes.

**Table 6**

*The Opinions of Social Studies Teachers on The Positive and Negative Aspects of The Authentic Learning Approach*

| Category         | Code                               | f |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Positive Aspects | Permanent Learning                 | 9 |
|                  | Active Learning                    | 6 |
|                  | Learning By Doing and Experiencing | 4 |
|                  | Arousing The Interest of Students  | 4 |
|                  | Product Presentation               | 3 |
|                  | Collaboration                      | 3 |
|                  | Being Happy                        | 2 |
|                  | Voluntary Participation            | 2 |
|                  | Making The Lesson Interesting      | 1 |
|                  | Accessing Information on Their Own | 1 |
| Negative Aspects | Configuring Own Knowledge          | 1 |
|                  | Problem-Solving Skills             | 1 |
|                  | Time Consuming                     | 9 |
|                  | Regional Opportunities             | 4 |
|                  | Student Inadequacies               | 3 |
|                  | Subject Limitation                 | 1 |
|                  | Plan Making                        | 1 |

When Table 6 is examined, it can be seen that the Authentic Learning process has both positive and negative aspects. The codes belonging to the positive aspects are formed as "permanent learning" (f= 9),

"active learning" ( $f= 6$ ), "learning by doing and experiencing" ( $f= 4$ ) and "arousing the interest of students" ( $f= 4$ ). The negative aspects are coded as "time-consuming", "regional opportunities", "student insufficiency", "subject limitation" and "plan making". Example direct quotations for the categories are as follows.

- Example direct quotations related to positive aspects: "The most important positive aspect is that the student actively feels his/her presence in the class, the student can say that I can also achieve something, I am also in the centre, and I am also here. Plus, the student gains self-confidence. The skills of presentation of the student develop" (T6). "Students' self-confidence goes beyond their limits, they develop empathy, and they also become independent. In other words, students develop their ability to access information and research with their own efforts" (T7). "They learn how to work as a team, plus, it encourages them to make experiments and observations. They can actively participate in the learning-teaching process. Since they are active, they can ensure permanent learning and internalise what they learn" (T11).
- Examples explaining the negative aspects are presented through direct quotations: "It is a study that requires some time and effort." It is also necessary to collect information outside the school" (T4). "Sometimes there are children who think the research process is boring. The subject is very important, the child herself/himself must be willing to study. Also, unfortunately, children have not previously conducted studies such as research and report preparation. This process, which requires labour, sometimes frustrates them. Moreover, it is tiring to deal with the permits and authorisation documents that need to be obtained especially for out-of-school activities" (T12).

Another question asked to the participant teachers during the research was what the difficulties they experienced in the process of Authentic Learning Activities were. The answers given by the teachers are shown in Table 7 as codes.

**Table 7**

*The Opinions of Social Studies Teachers About the Difficulties Experienced During the Authentic Learning Process*

| Category                            | Code  | <i>f</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------|
|                                     | Obtaining Permits from the Authorities            | 6        |
| Problems Arising Due to Formalities | Administrative Problems                           | 4        |
|                                     | Lack of Interest of Institutions                  | 3        |
|                                     | Unwillingness                                     | 4        |
| Problems Arising from The Teachers  | The Lack of Experience with Authentic Learning    | 3        |
|                                     | Difficulty in Establishing Control Over Students  | 3        |
|                                     | Nervousness due to Preparation for National Exams | 1        |

|                                   |                                    |   |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
|                                   | Unwillingness of the Parents       | 3 |
|                                   | Problems Related to Transportation | 3 |
| Problems Arising from The Process | Lack of Time                       | 3 |
|                                   | Security Problems                  | 2 |
|                                   | Inadequacies of the Students       | 1 |

The difficulties experienced by teachers during the Authentic Learning process can be categorised under three headings: "Problems Arising Due to Formalities", "Problems Arising Due to Teachers" and "Problems Arising from the Process". Problems Arising due to Formalities are coded as "Obtaining Permits from the Authorities" ( $f= 6$ ), "Administrative Problems" ( $f= 4$ ) and "Lack of Interest of Institutions" ( $f= 3$ ); Problems Arising from The Teachers are coded as "Unwillingness" ( $f= 4$ ), "The Lack of Experience" ( $f= 3$ ), "Difficulty In Establishing Control Over Students" ( $f= 3$ ) and "Nervousness Due to Preparation For National Exams" ( $f=1$ ); Problems Arising From The Process are coded as "Unwillingness of The Parents" ( $f= 3$ ), "Problems Related to Transportation" ( $f= 3$ ), "Lack of Time" ( $f= 3$ ), "Security Problems" ( $f= 2$ ) and "Inadequacies of The Students" ( $f= 1$ ). Example direct quotations for the categories are as follows.

- Example direct quotations related to the category of problems arising due to formalities: "It is a good approach to learning. It fits the constructivist approach. It can help students to be more successful. However, I cannot say that our education system and the attitudes of institutions, administrations and even teachers are very suitable for this." (T11). "... It is a bit troublesome to get permits because the people in the institutions/companies we want to visit may not accept us immediately. I mean, here age is an important factor, the grade level of the students is also important. You know, they do not want to accept young students. Because the environment we are intending to visit may be, for example, a factory environment. Since they know how things work there, they do not want little children to be involved, as it would be a risk for the children. Therefore, we are also having difficulties. Frankly speaking, we come face to face with a lot of problems in terms of obtaining permits." (T10).
- Example direct quotations related to the category of problems arising due to teachers: "Within the scope of occupational health and safety, during each and every event, the responsibility of the students is on the shoulders of the teachers. Therefore, a teacher may find himself/herself in judicial and administrative investigations in case of a negative situation" (T1). "On the other hand, the perspective of the parents makes it difficult to implement the Authentic Learning Approach. They believe that their children should constantly be preparing for exams and solving tests. Unfortunately, for some parents, our studies seem like a waste of time. Sometimes, there can be conflicts because of this" (T12).
- Example direct quotations related to the category of Problems Arising from the Process: "I mean, I think out-of-school organisations should be more willing to assist the school or teachers during activities. In fact, the procedures for obtaining permits from authorities for some activities can be exhausting, and it can also be frustrating to encounter an unwilling organisation or manager. But we need to be determined." (T13).

During the interview, the participant teachers were finally asked a question about what they would recommend to teachers who want to engage in Authentic Learning. The answers given by the teachers are shown in Table 8 as codes.

**Table 8**

*Recommendations for Teachers Who Intend to Engage in Authentic Learning Practice*

| Category                         | Code   | <i>f</i> |
|----------------------------------|--|----------|
| Process-Oriented Recommendations | A Good Plan Should Be Prepared   | 8        |
|                                  | The Teacher Should Act as a Guide  | 5        |
|                                  | Students Must Be Active  | 3        |
|                                  | It Should Be Suitable for the Student  | 3        |
|                                  | Sufficient Amount of Time Must Be Arranged   | 2        |
|                                  | Students Should Be Given Responsibilities  | 2        |
|                                  | The Plan Should Be Flexible  | 1        |
| Teacher-Oriented Recommendations | Alternative Plans Should Be Prepared   | 1        |
|                                  | Team Work (School Administration, Other Teachers, Etc.)                            | 3        |
|                                  | The Teacher Should Make Preparations in Advance                                    | 3        |
|                                  | The Teacher Should Benefit from the Experience of Others (Teacher, Internet, Etc.) | 2        |
|                                  | The Teacher Should Be Familiar with the Place Where He/She Works                   | 1        |
|                                  | The Teacher Should Have a Good Command of Field Knowledge                          | 1        |

The recommendations of the participant teachers to the teachers who intend to engage in Authentic Learning practices are divided into two categories as "Process-Oriented Recommendations" and "Teacher-Oriented Recommendations". Process-Oriented Recommendations are coded as "A Good Plan Should Be Prepared" ( $f= 8$ ), "The Teacher Should Act as A Guide" ( $f= 5$ ), "Students Must Be Active" ( $f= 3$ ), "Sufficient Amount of Time Must Be Arranged" ( $f= 2$ ), "Students Should Be Given Responsibilities" ( $f= 2$ ), "The Plan Should Be Flexible" ( $f= 1$ ) and "Alternative Plans Should Be Prepared" ( $f=1$ ). Teacher-Oriented Recommendations are coded as "Team Work" ( $f= 3$ ), "The Teacher Should Make Preparations in Advance" ( $f= 3$ ), "The Teacher Should Benefit from the Experience of Others" ( $f= 2$ ), "The Teacher Should Be Familiar with the Place Where He/She Works" ( $f= 1$ ) and "The Teacher Should Have a Good Command of Field Knowledge" ( $f= 1$ ). Example direct quotations for the categories are as follows.

- Example direct quotations related to the category of Problems Arising from the Process: "They should not do it without making plans and without knowing their students. Tasks should be assigned according to the grade level and condition of the students" (T9). "Students' interests, abilities and wishes should be prioritised." (T7). "Students should be guided, provided with an

environment where they can produce something and their creativity skills should be supported. This is what I think. But first of all, as a social teacher, I can say that it is difficult to disseminate this approach with this course load and so few hours. There can be workshops and studies at school." (T11).

- Example direct quotations related to the category of Teacher-Oriented Recommendations: "What are the facilities, conditions, and resources in his/her place? First of all, he/she should be familiar with the place where he/she works so that he/she can guide the students accordingly. Then, he/she will need to create a working environment or work opportunity accordingly. In this way, he/she can help students to do more accurate research or to learn more accurately. The teacher will first get to know the place well, match the information in the place with the information in his/her own field, and match the achievements in his/her subject. Accordingly, he/she will conduct studies and have them conducted." (T4).

### Discussion

Authentic Learning aims to help students achieve some gains in real life. The social studies lesson also focuses on helping students to acquire real-life skills, to adapt to society and to become active citizens. This harmonises Authentic Learning Activities with the content of social studies. It helps students to gain real-life experiences in the community by making use of community facilities. Pearce (2016) reported that Authentic Learning aims to equip students with basic life skills, to establish the connection between learning and real life, and to help students gain problem-solving skills for the problems they are likely to come across in real life. On the other hand, social studies aim to have a direct impact on the social and social life of learners and to develop, reinforce and transfer individual competencies and skills (Uygun & Uzun, 2019) through elements from life. This shows the intersection of social studies and Authentic Learning.

Authentic Learning and social studies are closely aligned. Therefore, during the research process, Social Studies Teachers mentioned that they conducted Authentic Learning Activities in different subjects. These subjects include Cultural Heritage, Social Sciences, Production Distribution Consumption, Scientists, Turkish Islamic Scholars, Silkworm Farming, and Production Processes in the Factory, Natural Disasters, Environmental Awareness, Active Citizenship, Economic Activities and Professions. Moving on from these examples, it can be said that there is a strong harmony between the subjects and outcomes of social studies and Authentic Learning. It is seen that Social Studies Teachers prefer to use public buildings, social spaces, museums, natural environments, the environment, factories, simulation centres (AFAD - Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) and archaeological sites within the scope of Authentic Learning. This situation reveals the fact that teachers benefit from out-of-school environments in Authentic Learning Activities under the context of Social Studies Classes. Teachers are advised to employ Authentic Learning Approaches during Social Studies Classes. Authentic Learning, which is an instructional design that mobilises students and allows them to explore, is one of the effective approaches that can be used to ensure that classes, especially Social Studies Classes, gain a dynamic structure (Yıldırım & Otak, 2021). In this way, students can both get to know real life closely and the knowledge, concepts, values and skills of social studies can be associated with everyday life.

During the Authentic Learning process, Social Studies Teachers employ methods and techniques appropriate to the essence of the Social Studies Classes such as education in the museums, re-enactment, collaborative learning, verbal history, observation, simulation, experience-based studies and local history studies. Lombardi (2007) suggested that, during the Authentic Learning process, real-world, complex problems and their solutions can be focussed on by engaging in role-playing exercises, problem-based activities, case studies and participation in virtual communities of practice. On the other hand, İneç and Akpınar (2017) suggested that problem-based learning, project-based learning, event-based learning, collaborative learning, situational learning, cognitive apprenticeship, scenario-based learning, research-based learning and evidence-based learning activities can be integrated into Authentic Learning during the Social Studies Classes. Thus, it is recommended that different methods and techniques should be used during Social Studies Classes. In this way, a dynamic structure is brought to the Social Studies Classes and an opportunity is created for students to learn by having fun.

The opinions of Social Studies Teachers on Authentic Learning, which is the focus of the research, are analysed. Considering the findings of the research, in line with the opinions of Social Studies Teachers, Authentic Learning can be defined as learning by doing, learning in daily life or learning processes centred in out-of-school environments based on the experiences gained under the umbrella of activity-based and task-oriented studies. Aydın Aşk (2016) pointed out that Authentic Learning studies are a process that develops discovery and research-inquiry practices. Based on this, it can be said that Authentic Learning is a strategy suitable for the constructivist approach. Because the constructivist approach is centred on the learner and is grounded on a learning process based on experiences gained by doing and experiencing. Kim (2003) reported that authentic assessment strategies and activities organised with a constructivist approach have positive effects on students' learning and achievement. Similarly, Koçyiğit (2011) reported that authentic tasks prepared in line with the constructivist approach increased students' performance and improved their attitudes towards the class positively.

The findings of the study reveal that Authentic Learning Activities contribute to students' affective, cognitive and psycho-motor development. The main purpose of an educational process is that it contributes to the holistic development of the individual. Holistic development on the other hand means the development of affective, cognitive and psycho-motor development dimensions together and in a way to support each other. In support of this situation, Koçyiğit (2011) pointed out that authentic task learning affects students' affective development as well as their cognitive development. Therefore, Authentic Learning Activities should be implemented during Social Studies Classes so that students can develop in a multidimensional way and realise themselves. As a matter of fact, one of the most basic goals of education can be expressed as the holistic development of students (Çalışkan & Yıldırım, 2022).

Authentic Learning contributes to the improvement of students' self-confidence, development of their verbal skills, their socialisation, their affective development such as cooperation and gaining a sense of responsibility. Supporting the findings of this study, Ruey (2010) stated that Authentic Learning Activities improve students' self-confidence and sense of responsibility. A similar case is also reported by Loyens, Rikers and Schmidt (2009). Similarly, Bolin et al. (2005) emphasise that Authentic Learning can address affective gains. Yıldırım and Çalışkan (2021) stated that task-oriented studies help children gain affective gains such as ownership and a sense of responsibility. In the study conducted by Gündoğan (2017), it was concluded that the studies conducted in Authentic Task-Oriented Learning Environments allow students to work collaboratively and carry communication outside the classroom.

Authentic Learning cognitively contributes to increasing students' interest in learning, their gaining a researcher personality, decision-making skills and a perspective on life. Yıldırım and Çalışkan (2021) stated that task-oriented studies help children develop a researcher personality. Similarly, Aydın Aşk (2016) stated that Authentic Learning Activities is a process that develops discovery, research and enquiry. Also, Aydın Aşk (2016) concluded in his action study that task-oriented learning environments are effective in cognitive awareness levels. Gündoğan (2017) on the other hand, found that students used high-level thinking skills and developed different perspectives in authentic task-oriented learning environments. In his study, Koçyiğit (2011) found that Authentic Task-Oriented Learning will improve the cognitive aspects of students. Lombardi (2007) stated that students gain high-level thinking skills during the authentic learner-oriented authentic learning processes.

Authentic Learning Activities contribute to the psycho-motor development of students. Especially students' product-oriented studies develop their go-getting and hand skills. Accordingly, it also contributes to students' behaviour acquisition. Aydın Aşk (2016) discovered that Authentic Task-Oriented Learning Processes affect behavioural changes in students. Indeed, in the research, it was determined that students were given the opportunity to transform their social authentic learning information into behaviour and transfer their knowledge into everyday life. In parallel with this situation, Yıldırım and Ortak (2021) stated that the use of the Authentic Learning Approach in social studies classes will contribute to students' acquisition of the skills required by the age.

Authentic Learning Studies also contribute to students' academic performance. A similar outcome was revealed in the studies conducted by Gündoğan (2017), Gürgil (2018), İneç (2017), Koçyiğit (2011), Yıldırım and Ortak (2021), and Önger (2019). Önger (2019) concluded that students learnt the subjects in a more concrete and meaningful way in the social studies classes taught in line with the Authentic Learning Approach. Aydın Aşk and Bay (2018) concluded that Authentic Task-Oriented Learning Processes are effective on the level of students' achievement of learning outcomes and the permanence of these achievements. Aydın Aşk (2016) emphasised that task-oriented learning environments ensure the effectiveness of learning. Authentic Learning Studies, especially by putting the student at the centre, increase the students' motivation towards the lesson, encourage the students to do further research, positively affect the other lessons of the student, stimulate the student's senses and provide the opportunity for the student to achieve permanent learning. Thus, students are given the chance to be active and learn by having fun in out-of-class environments by doing and experiencing.

The fact that Authentic Learning is for real-life experiences in out-of-school environments and activates the senses allows students to be active and achieve permanent learning. Authentic Learning prepares students to view the world outside the classroom by providing them with a set of skills (Yıldırım & Ortak, 2021). Çalışkan and Yıldırım (2022) stated that students' reflecting on their emotions towards the process in out-of-school environments and using their sensory organs effectively will bring students' active participation in the educational process. Hence, Cholewinski (2009) stated that problems related to daily life are processed during the Authentic Learning Process. Risko, Osterman and Schusster (2002) reported that students acquire problem-solving skills through Authentic Learning. In this way, it ensures that students are sensitive to the problems related to daily life. This is an important factor for the social studies classes. In line with this case, MoNE (Ministry of National Education) 2018 expects students to gain the awareness of developing innovative solutions to the problems they observe in their environment from an early age and the ability to produce these solutions by blending them with

different disciplines. This achievement can be possible through social studies classes to be taught with an authentic learning approach. Within the scope of the social studies classes, Authentic Learning Activities related to out-of-school environments should be planned so that students can gain real-life experiences and mobilise their senses.

Authentic Learning has both positive and negative aspects. Positive aspects can be expressed as active learning, especially permanent learning, learning by doing and experiencing, and arousing students' interest. It can be claimed that students' interest is one of the most important factors for the efficiency of a lesson. In this study, it is found that students are willing to take part in Authentic Learning Processes and they participate in the activities voluntarily. Fook and Sidhu (2010) found that Authentic Learning Process is preferred by students. Similarly, Gürgil (2018) stated that Authentic Learning Activities contribute to students' attitudes towards the course. Önger (2019) found that, in any social studies classes, where the Authentic Learning Approach is employed, students' motivation towards the lesson increased, the lessons became fun, the students had fun and enjoyed the process, and they wanted to engage in similar practices. Yıldırım and Ortak (2021) stated that in many studies conducted in the literature, it is determined that the Authentic Learning Approach is effective in developing positive attitudes towards the lessons.

Negative aspects are identified as: its being -consuming, inadequate regional facilities, unwillingness of the students, limitation of the subjects and difficulty in making plans. Similar findings were also concluded by Önger (2019). In his study based on the Authentic Learning Approach in Social Studies Classes, Önger (2019) identified some problems such as noise, high number of students in the class, desk organization, lack of time, and difficulty of the subject. Accordingly, Social Studies Teachers experience some difficulties in the process of Authentic Learning Activities. These difficulties can be listed as obtaining permits from the authorities, the unwillingness of teachers, the lack of experience of teachers, difficulty in establishing control over students, transportation problems, time limitations, and security problems.

Teacher-Oriented Recommendations for Authentic Learning Activities are as follows: a good plan should be prepared, the teacher should act as a guide, students should be active, enough time should be allocated, students should be given responsibilities, the plan should be flexible, alternative activities should be included, teamwork must be conducted, preparation should be made in advance, and the teacher should be familiar with the place where he/she works. One of the Teacher-Oriented Recommendations is that a good plan should be prepared and that the plan should be flexible. The flexibility of the prepared plan will make the Authentic Learning Process productive. Indeed, thanks to the flexible structure it offers to teachers in the course of practice, Authentic Learning Approach is one of the approaches that can be effective in ensuring the changes required by the age in the field of teaching (Yıldırım & Otak, 2021). Accordingly, it is recommended that teachers should prepare a good and flexible plan in the Authentic Learning Process and in this process, teachers should act as guides and students should take responsibility and be active. Furthermore, teachers are advised to prepare alternative activities and organize teamwork by communicating with other teachers.

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