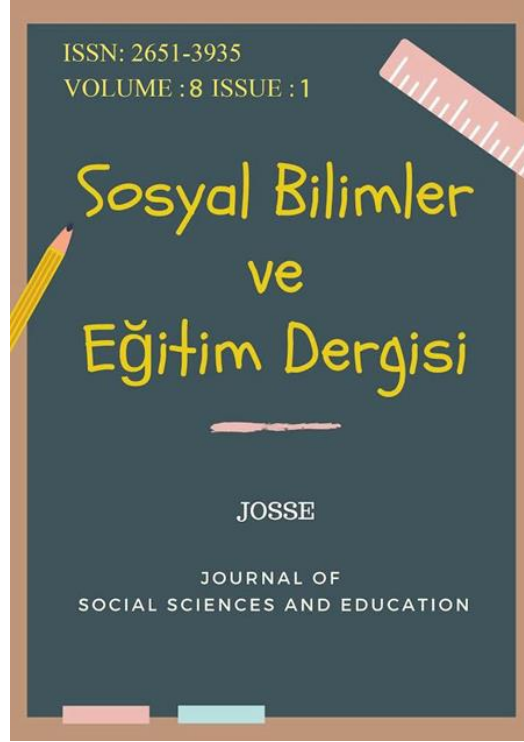


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**Social Studies Teachers' Views on the Contribution of Academic Research
to Their Professional Development**

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Social Studies Teachers' Views on the Contribution of Academic Research to Their Professional Development*

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Abstract

The views and thoughts of Social Studies Teachers on the contribution of academic research, especially master's and doctoral theses, to their professional development were examined within the scope of the study. Within the scope of the research, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 20 Social Studies Teachers working in Yozgat province by asking interview questions prepared by the researcher. The answers obtained were analyzed with the content analysis method. Striking results as a result of the data analysis are that Social Studies Teachers do not conduct academic research, and when they want to conduct any scientific research, whether related to their field or outside of it, the first source they turn to is the internet. Yıldırım, İlhan, Şekerci and Sözbilir (2013) emphasized the importance of teachers following academic research for their professional development. Can (2004) stated that an idealistic teacher always questions his/her own competencies, enters into a self-accounting process and should see change and development as a necessary process. In this context, the Ministry of National Education, the Council of Higher Education and universities have some responsibilities. In particular, the Ministry of National Education should financially support research teachers.

Keywords: Social Studies, Academic Research, Master's Degree, Teacher, Professional Development

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Introduction

Change is due to the fact that life is a dynamic process. Unstoppable and unstoppable change can only be managed positively. Teachers are practicing one of the professions that requires them to manage the change and development they will experience professionally in the best way possible and to do their job with a teaching approach that is appropriate for current conditions. Numanoğlu (1999) stated that teachers should keep their knowledge up-to-date, especially as a requirement of living in an information society today. Because keeping themselves up-to-date will also serve to ensure that the students they offer educational activities to receive up-to-date education. Russell (1926) drew attention to the fact that the education and training provided to students should be up-to-date by saying, “The sum of human knowledge and the complexity of human problems are increasing day by day; for this reason, each generation should review its own educational methods, if time is found for new ones.” According to Büyükkaragöz et al. (1998), the teacher has a great responsibility in this regard. The quality and competence of the teacher are the leading factors in achieving the determined goals in educational activities. According to Kılıç (2006), one of the primary duties of teachers is to create effective learning environments and diversify the teaching methods they apply in a way that appeals to every student.

Yıldırım et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of teachers following academic research for their professional development. Can (2004) stated that an idealistic teacher always questions his/her own competencies, enters into a self-accounting process and should see change and development as a necessary process. Stenhouse (1975) did not look favorably on the system where an expert produces information and the teacher transfers it to practice and argued that teachers should do research and practice together. Martimore (2000) argued that teachers' professional development is important and necessary and stated that teachers should follow educational research for their professional development and provide education in their classes in line with the results of these studies. It is extremely important for teachers to attach importance to their professional development, to follow publications that will help them improve themselves in this direction, and to reflect these changes and transformations they have made in themselves in the teaching they carry out in the classroom environment. Indeed, there are many other studies that draw attention to this issue.

Artvinli (2020) stated that teachers should not only be the ones who apply the results of academic research, but also the ones who carry out the academic research themselves.

Yavuz-Konokman, Tanrıseven, Karasolak (2013) expect teachers to be individuals who love learning, researching and questioning, and who develop themselves professionally.

It is not only a recommendation that teachers should constantly update themselves professionally and give importance to their development, but also a legal obligation according to the relevant legislation. In this sense, it can be said that legal regulations define teachers as a "career profession" and, based on this definition, require teachers to be in a constant state of professional change and development. Indeed, in Article 5 of the Teaching Profession Law No. 7528 titled "Teachers' rights, duties and responsibilities"; The following statements are included: "He/she uses in-school and out-of-school opportunities for effective implementation of educational activities." and "He/she improves himself/herself professionally without disrupting educational activities and responsibilities in the educational institution he/she works in." Similarly, the importance of teachers' professional development and the duties and responsibilities of teachers and the Ministry of National Education are stated in the National Education Fundamental Law No. 1739.

The sub-objectives of the research are mainly as follows;

1. Which sources do you use when conducting an academic research? Do you use it?
2. How do you access academic research on Social Studies?
3. Do you follow academic research on Social Studies? If so, for what purpose do you follow it?
4. Do you use master's and doctoral theses in the Social Studies courses you take? If so, to what extent and how do you use them?
5. To what extent and how do master's and doctoral theses contribute to your professional development?
6. Are the academic researches conducted so far on the Social Studies course sufficient? If you think they are not sufficient, which topics should be researched on?

Method

Model

The method of the research is qualitative research method. Since the research was carried out in the form of interviews, it was thought that it would be more appropriate to work

with qualitative research methods. Data analysis was carried out by content analysis. Maximum variation sampling method was used.

Working Group

The universe of the research is all Social Studies Teachers working in official institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. The sample is a total of 20 Social Studies Teachers, 5 teachers from each district of Merkez, Sorgun, Sarıkaya and Boğazlıyan in Yozgat province. Care was taken to ensure that the teachers participating in the study were equally distributed in terms of gender. In this context, interviews were conducted with 10 male and 10 female Social Studies teachers. In terms of professional seniority, it was aimed to create a diversity that would represent almost every seniority group. In this context, interviews were conducted with 4 teachers with 0-5 years of seniority, 6 with 6-10 years, 3 with 11-15 years, 4 with 15-20 years, and 4 with 20 years and above.

Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool is an interview form with 6 questions. The following steps were taken in the preparation process of the questions in the interview form:

1. The questions were prepared by the researcher.
2. They were presented to the views and suggestions of the advisor faculty member.
3. They were rearranged with the views and suggestions of the advisor faculty member and given their final form.
4. In addition, it was examined by the Yıldız Technical University Ethics Commission during the process of obtaining the Ethics Committee Permission and was deemed appropriate, and it was also examined by the Yozgat Provincial Directorate of National Education during the process of obtaining the research permit. No technical or ethical problems were found regarding the questions in the form.

The following questions in the interview form were directed to the participants;

1. Which sources do you use when conducting an academic research? Do you use it?
2. How do you access academic research on Social Studies?
3. Do you follow academic research on Social Studies? If so, for what purpose do you follow it?

4. Do you use master's and doctoral theses in the Social Studies courses you take? If so, to what extent and how do you use them?
5. To what extent and how do master's and doctoral theses contribute to your professional development?
6. Are the academic researches conducted so far on the Social Studies course sufficient? If you think they are not sufficient, which topics should be researched on?

Collection of Data and Analysis

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 20 Social Studies teachers, the questions in the interview form were asked, the responses given by the teachers were noted by the researcher, and the responses obtained from the interviews were analyzed using the content analysis method.

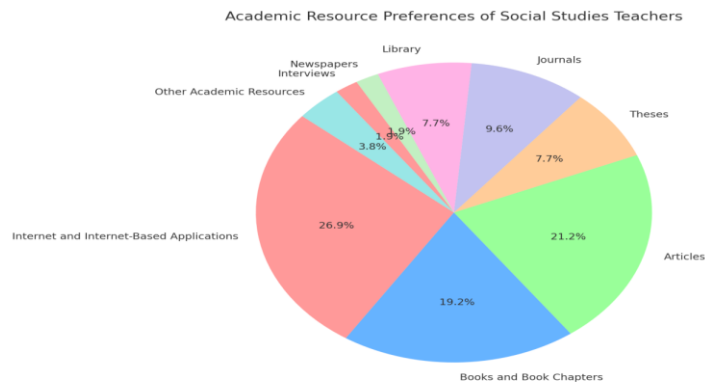
Ethical Committee Approval

Permission was requested from Yıldız Technical University Ethics Committee for the study, and the relevant permission was given with the decision taken at the Ethics Committee meeting dated 03.03.2025 and numbered 2025.03.

Findings

The first question asked within the scope of the interview was "Which sources do you use when conducting academic research?". The results in Graph 1 were reached with the content analysis conducted in line with the responses given by the teachers to the question.

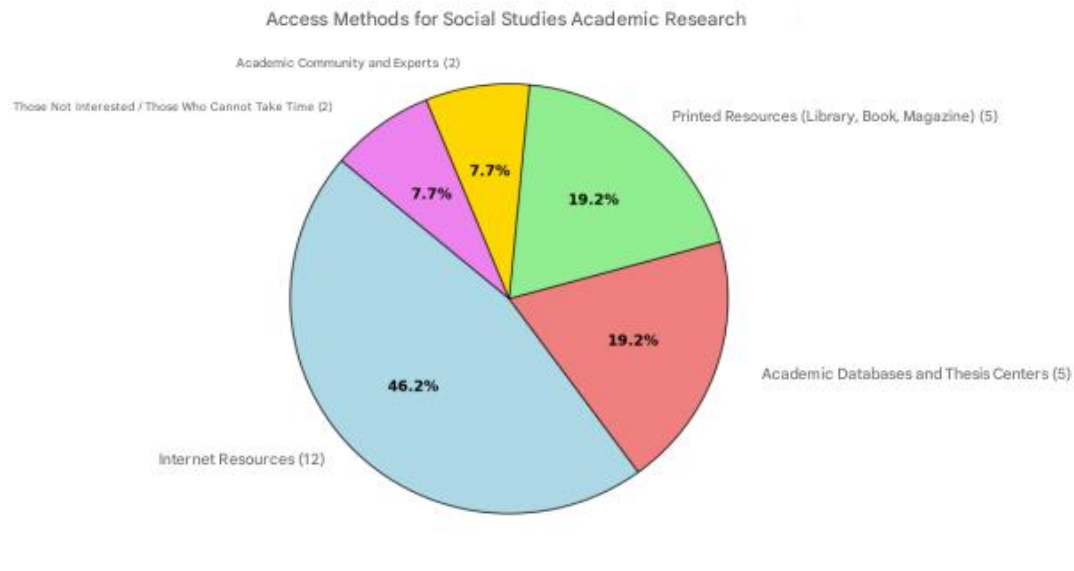
Graph-1



When the results are examined, it is seen that the source that Social Studies Teachers refer to most when conducting academic research is the Internet and Internet-Based Applications with 26.9%. In the study conducted by Yıldırım, İlhan, Şekerci and Sözbilir (2013), teachers stated that they mostly do their research on the Internet.

For this reason, it was stated in the study that the Ministry of National Education and universities should give importance to the internet in sharing information. This result, which emerged since our age is the age of technology, is understandable. After the internet, the most prominent responses were articles with 21.2% and books and book chapters with 19.2%.was **"How do you access academic research on Social Studies?"** The analysis results of the answers given to the question are shown in Graph-2.

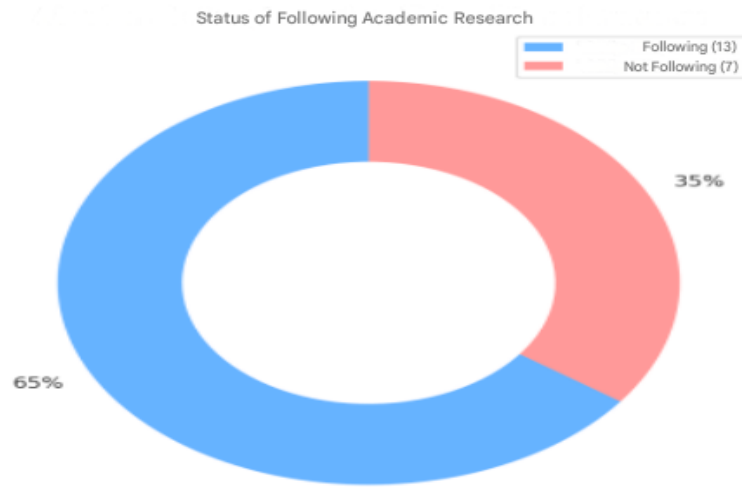
Graph-2



In this question, the first question is a bit more specific. It was aimed to learn from which sources Social Studies Teachers follow academic researches related to their fields. When the analysis results are examined, it is seen that Internet Resources are the source that Social Studies Teachers use the most with 46.2% while following academic researches in the literature. In fact, this situation is not seen only in Social Studies Teachers. It is known that in many academic studies, teachers/teacher candidates first turn to the internet while doing academic researches related to their fields. After the Internet, 19.2% of the participating Social Studies Teachers stated that they follow Academic Databases and Thesis Centers and Printed Resources for research in the literature.

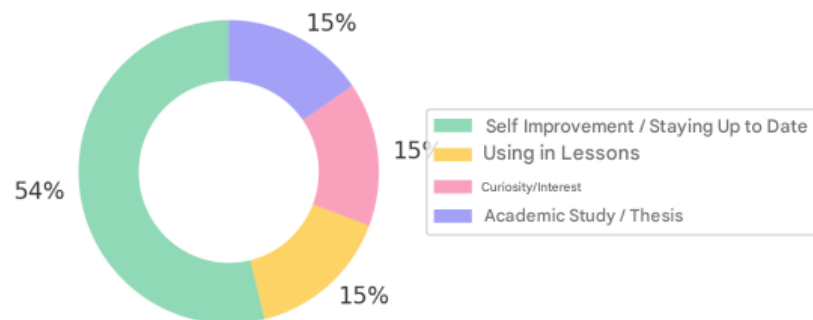
Was "Do you follow academic research on Social Studies? If so, for what purpose? " The analysis results of the answers given are given in Graph-3.1 and Graph-3.2.

Graph- 3.1



Graph 3.2

Purposes of Following (Following 13 People)

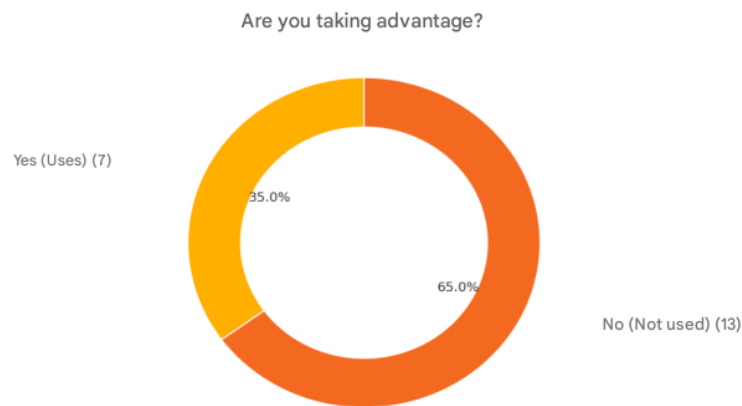


Çelikten, Şanal and Yeni (2005) stated that it is not possible for a teacher who does not learn continuously to provide education that is appropriate for current conditions. The first part of the question, which is whether they follow the research in the literature, was answered by 65% of the participating Social Studies Teachers as Yes and 35% as No. Based on these results, it can be said that the vast majority of Social Studies Teachers follow the academic research in the literature. In many studies conducted in the literature, the disinterest and non-following of teachers/teacher candidates in academic research has been determined. However, when it is considered that the participating Social Studies Teachers in the study significantly reflect the universe, we are faced with a different result than the results of the studies in the

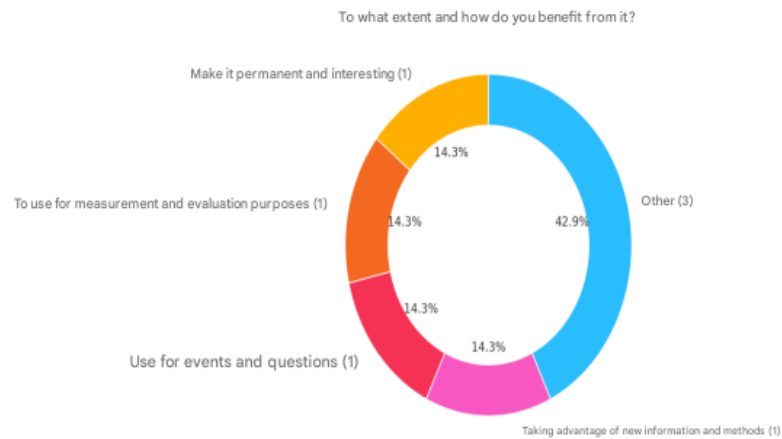
literature. When asked for the purpose of following, 55% of the participants answered "Self-Improvement/Staying Updated". 15% stated that they followed for "Using in Classes", 15% for "Curiosity/Interest" and 15% for "Academic Study/Thesis".

The fourth question asked during the interview was " **Do you use master's and doctoral theses in the Social Studies courses you take? If so, to what extent and how do you use them?** " The analysis of the answers given is given in Graphs 4.1 and 4.2.

Graph 4.1



Graph 4.2

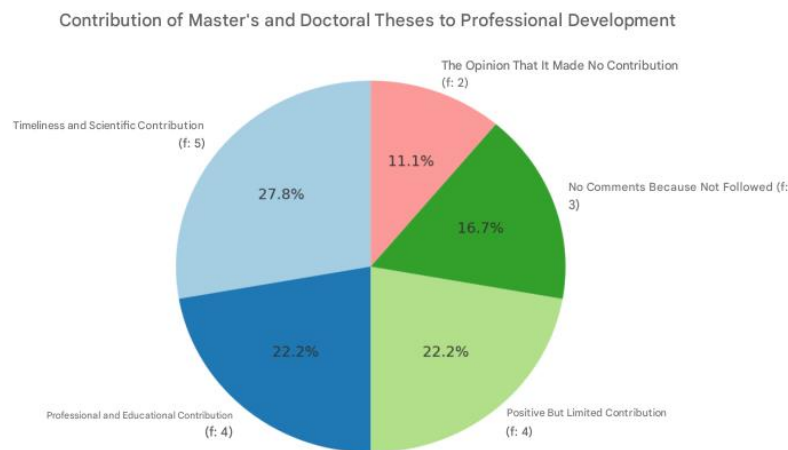


According to the analysis results, only 35% of the participating Social Studies Teachers stated that they benefit from their master's and doctoral theses in the courses they teach. 65% of the participating teachers stated that they do not benefit from them in the courses. Based on this data, it is understood that Social Studies Teachers do not use their master's and doctoral theses for R&D purposes in the education and training processes. As for how and to what extent they benefit, it was determined as a result of the content analysis that

they gave various answers in categories such as "To benefit from new information and methods", "To use for activities and questions", "To use for measurement and evaluation purposes", "To make teaching processes permanent and interesting". In the light of these results, it was not concluded that a category that could be generalized regarding how and to what extent Social Studies Teachers benefit from their master's and doctoral theses in the courses seems dominant and it was understood that each teacher follows their master's and doctoral theses in order to benefit from them in the teaching processes but their ways of using them in the teaching processes are different.

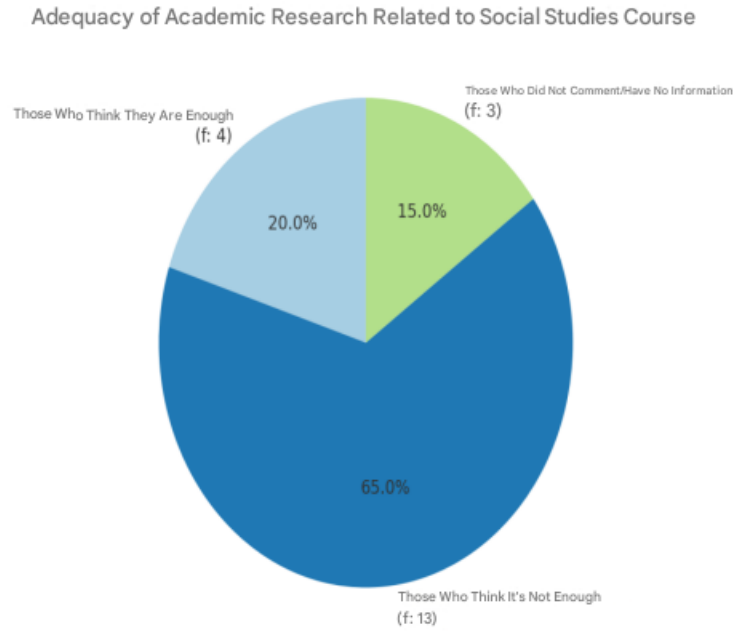
Was " **To what extent and how do master's and doctoral theses contribute to your professional development?** " The analysis of the answers is given in Graph 5.

Graph 5



Regarding the extent to which and how master's and doctoral theses contribute to their professional development, teachers mostly gave answers in the category of "Currenttness and Scientific Contribution" with 27.8%, "Professional and Educational Contribution" with 22.2% and "Positive but Limited Contribution" with 22.2%. 16.7% stated that they could not make any comments because they did not follow them and 11.1% stated that "It did not contribute at all".

The sixth question asked during the interview was "**About the Social Studies course** " **Is the academic research done so far sufficient? If you think it is not sufficient, on which topics should research be conducted?** " The analysis of the answers given is given in Graph 6.1 and Table 6.2.

Graph 6.1

When Graph 6.1 is examined, it is seen that 65% of Social Studies Teachers stated that the current research is not sufficient. In this direction, only the responses of those who think that the current research is not sufficient to the second part of the question were analyzed and Table 6.2 was created.

Table 6. 2*Suggested Topics*

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teaching Methods and Techniques	5	38.46
Curriculum and Content Arrangement	3	23.08
Social and Current Needs	2	15.38
Equality and Diversity in Education	3	23.08

According to Table 6.2, 38.46% of the participating Social Studies Teachers stated that research should be conducted in the literature on "Teaching Methods and Techniques", 23.08% on "Curriculum and Content Organization", 23.08% on "Equality and Diversity in Education" and 15.38% on "Social and Current Needs".

Results and Discussion

Within the scope of the research, it was tried to examine the opinions of Social Studies Teachers regarding the contribution of academic research to their professional development. Teaching is a profession in which the teacher must constantly update himself/herself and organize the education and training activities he/she carries out in line with these updates he/she has made in himself/herself in a professional sense. Çelikten, Şanal and Yeni (2005) stated that it is not possible for a teacher who does not learn continuously to provide education in accordance with current conditions. Numanoğlu (1999) stated that the teacher should keep his/her knowledge up-to-date, especially as a requirement of living in an information society today.

Within the scope of the study, 6 questions were asked to the teachers. In this context, the first question asked was " Which resources do you use when doing academic research? " 26.9% of the teachers answered "Internet and Internet-Based Applications" to this question. This result is reasonable and understandable since our age is the age of technology. The widespread use of the internet in every subject and field naturally seems to have affected the research behaviors of teachers who do academic research. In the study conducted by Yıldırım, İlhan, Şekerci and Sözbilir (2013), teachers stated that they mostly do their research on the internet. In the study conducted by Subaşı (2020) with teacher candidates studying at the faculty of education, including Social Studies Teachers, teacher candidates stated that technology should be used when doing academic research. In the study conducted by Baş (2017) with 315 Primary/High School Mathematics Teachers, teachers stated that they mostly use the internet when doing academic research. Çekiç, Ozturk and Apaydin (2018) also reached similar results.

The second question asked was " How do you access academic research on Social Studies? " This question is a more specific version of the first question. It was aimed to find an answer to the question of how teachers access the research in the literature. 46.2% of the participating Social Studies Teachers stated that they access the research in the literature from "Internet Resources". This result shows that Social Studies Teachers use the internet more when doing research in the literature compared to general academic research.

The third question directed to the participating Social Studies Teachers in the interview was " Do you follow academic research on Social Studies? If so, for what purpose do you follow it? " When the answers given were examined, it was evaluated that 65% Yes, 35% No answers were given and in this context, it can be easily said that Social Studies

Teachers follow academic research in the literature. When the purposes of following of those who answered yes to the first part of the question were examined, it was seen that 55% of them follow research for the purpose of self-improvement/staying up to date. When the studies conducted in the literature are examined, it is seen that the majority of teachers/teacher candidates in different branches do not make an effort to conduct academic research either in their own field or on any subject. In fact, the studies of Çepni and Küçük (2003), Yıldırım, İlhan, Şekerci, and Sözbilir (2013), Ekiz (2006), Cerit Berber (2013) are some of them. In this direction, it can be said that Social Studies Teachers attach more importance to professional development.

The fourth question asked in the interview was " Do you use master's and doctoral theses in the Social Studies courses you take? If so, to what extent and how do you use them? " The question was. When the answers given were examined, 35% of the participants answered Yes and 65% answered No. According to the results, it is understood that Social Studies Teachers do not benefit from the data of their master's and doctoral theses in their lessons. When the answers of those who answered 35% Yes to the second part of the question, namely how and to what extent they benefit, were examined, it was determined as a result of the content analysis that they gave various answers falling into categories such as "Using new information and methods", "Using for activities and questions", "Using for measurement and evaluation purposes", "Making teaching processes permanent and interesting". In this direction, it is understood that teachers who use master's and doctoral theses in their lessons use them for different educational purposes.

The fifth question asked was " To what extent and how do master's and doctoral theses contribute to your professional development? " and the answers given were examined. In this context, the teachers mostly gave answers in the category of "Currentness and Scientific Contribution" with 27.8%, "Professional and Educational Contribution" with 22.2% and "Positive but Limited Contribution" with 22.2% regarding the extent and how do master's and doctoral theses contribute to their professional development. 16.7% did not make any comments because they did not follow 11.1% stated that they could not do it and "It did not make any contribution".

The sixth question asked within the scope of the interview was " About the Social Studies course: The question " Are the academic studies conducted so far sufficient? If you think they are not sufficient, on which topics should research be conducted? " was asked. 65% of the participants stated that they were not sufficient. When the responses given to the second part of the question were examined, 38.46% of the Social Studies Teachers stated that

research should be conducted in the literature on "Teaching Methods and Techniques", 23.08% on "Curriculum and Content Organization", 23.08% on "Equality and Diversity in Education" and 15.38% on "Social and Current Needs".

Recommendations

Some suggestions can be made to the Ministry of National Education, the Council of Higher Education, universities and teachers. The Ministry of National Education, the Council of Higher Education and universities may need to act by considering the fact that teachers and teacher candidates mostly conduct research activities on the internet and develop policies in this direction. In addition, some regulations can be implemented to reward teachers who do research and give importance to their personal and professional development in order to encourage teachers who are disinterested in academic research.

Ethical Committee Approval

Permission was requested from Yıldız Technical University Ethics Committee for the study, and the relevant permission was given with the decision taken at the Ethics Committee meeting dated 03.03.2025 and numbered 2025.03.

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