

## Multi-faceted Assessment of Special Field Competences of Social Studies Teachers

Ozkan AKMAN  
Gaziantep University

**Abstract:** It is a well-known fact that in order to advance as a society and to achieve prosperity in developed countries, good education must be provided in schools. However, in order to provide a good education in the schools, that is to be successful for the students, the quality of teaching in the school should be increased. The success graph in schools cannot be raised significantly without qualified teachers. In other words, good teachers are needed to have good students. Considering that teachers are trained in institutions that train teachers, these institutions have great responsibilities. However, the desired quality of teachers also depends on the existence of a number of standards. One of the ways to achieve this standard is teacher competencies. The aim of this study is to examine the special field competencies of social studies teachers in terms of various variables. The participants were working in the various provinces of Turkey consists of 450 social studies teachers. The research was obtained by using quantitative research methods. Data collection tool was prepared by using special field competence scale developed by the researcher. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 22.00 package program. According to the results obtained; As a gender variable, a significant result was obtained in favor of female teachers. Significant results were obtained in favor of men according to the high school and bachelor's degree. The number and quality of in-service training programs for teachers should be increased based on the conclusion that teachers receiving in-service training have higher perceptions of teaching qualifications than teachers who do not take them in-service. Teachers should be provided with the skills to collaborate with colleagues and evaluate themselves more objectively. Using these skills, studies should be conducted to make teachers realize that they have educational needs.

**Keywords:** Social studies teachers, Special field competencies

### Introduction

It is a well-known fact that in order to advance as a society and to achieve prosperity in developed countries, good education must be provided in schools. However, it is necessary to increase the quality of teaching in schools in order to provide a good education in the schools, that is, for the students to be successful. Improving the quality of teaching is also possible with qualified teachers (Seferoğlu, 2004). In a school he attended in Izmir in 1925, Atatürk stated that for those who save nations are only teachers and emphasized that teaching is a very important and demanding profession (Tekişik, 2003).

Although the educational policy of many countries encourages higher education to improve student achievement, questions remain about what quality education means. Part of this problem is the determination of teacher characteristics, especially in terms of student achievement. This is a fundamental issue inherent in the policy discussions about which qualifications will be supported. Teacher employment, how teachers' fees will be, and how teachers are appointed to ensure equality and adequacy in teachers' educational outcomes are another challenge.

Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) in a study they have done in order to increase teacher qualifications in the name of the students have emphasized that teachers have a great impact on the success of students. The importance of the higher education that teachers have made in the name of self-improvement clearly shows this situation. In this sense, the Ministry of National Education (MONE) reveals the necessity of supporting the existing teachers to contribute to their academic studies. The qualified and always renewing teacher's positive effect on

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the students is undoubtedly a great fact. In addition, many researchers are especially important in terms of increasing the quality of teacher candidates who prefer master and doctoral degrees in teacher employment (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff & Wyckoff, 2008). Although most studies that predict the effect of teacher qualifications have focused on the characteristics of teachers, in the studies conducted to understand whether the qualifications of school faculty members will have a contextual effect on student achievement; teacher competencies have been shown as an effect of teachers' success on school success. The negative effects of low school academic achievement; supportive, more knowledgeable and more talented teachers in schools with the transfer of teachers argued that can be reduced (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2007).

The main purpose of the recent policy initiatives of major states, such as the development of international teacher qualifications aimed at teachers' qualifications and distribution, is to ensure that schools in their education systems work with high-quality active teachers. However, the problem for a qualified teacher still remains (Rice, 2003).

It is known that some teachers are more effective than others in gaining student gains. With regard to teacher qualifications in the last two decades, teacher supply and demand have been an important issue for both education researchers and governments. However, although the subject of teacher supply and demand is of great interest and importance, it has brought important discussions (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The number of teachers includes qualifications, deficiencies, and many factors that are not easy to assess, measure and predict. As a result, many researches on these issues have revealed contradictory findings and conclusions. Many published reports, beginning in the early 1980s, focused on the possibility of serious national teacher shortages in the early 1990s. These estimates have become an important agenda item for governments (Malen & Rice, 2004). The reduction in population growth all over the world teaching force in the early 1970s, demand for teachers all over the world as well as in Turkey has brought the problem. However, researchers predicted that in the 1980s, teacher supply would decrease and demand for teachers would increase. These analysts indicated that less and less qualified university graduates chose to teach, that more children of the "population explosion" generation entered school, and that student enrollment increased (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 1998). Moreover, this increasing imbalance between supply and demand will, according to this view, increase further due to inadequate teacher problems. These analysts argued that the higher teacher level is the greatest source of demand for new teachers and an important factor behind predicted shortages. Some analysts have argued that the teacher supply is adequate and will continue, not particularly high. Research on teacher supply and the adequacy of school staff generally focuses mainly on understanding the problem of inadequate teachers and staff. In the simplest terms, teacher deficiencies arise when there is a lack of demand or the number of funded teaching positions exceeds the supply or the number of teachers available. As a result, such research typically aims to assess the amount of teachers present, the amount of teachers they need, and the gap between the two (Kane, Rockoff & Staiger, 2008).

Another issue is whether or not it focuses on the actual harmony between the needs of these schools and the qualifications of existing teachers, rather than focusing on whether there are enough teachers available. In other words, the focus is on shifting the adequacy of the amount of teachers towards the adequacy of teacher quality. The high number of teachers does not mean being a qualified teacher. According to the data of the Ministry of National Education, there are approximately one million teachers in our country today. This number corresponds to the total population of some countries in the world. However, international evaluation shows that we are not very good at education in commission reports. The premise behind this analysis is to determine a definite determination as to whether there are problems in teacher supply, to examine the qualifications of teachers, and especially to evaluate the distribution and qualifications of teachers among schools and students. The Ministry of National Education can use two general strategies to reduce the shortcomings between the wishes and demands of certain types of teachers. One involves changing the requested amount and the other involves changing the amount supplied. The first strategy is to reduce the demand for certain types of teachers by eliminating existing or new teaching positions (Gelbal and Kelecioğlu, 2007).

It is likely that efforts to anticipate and quantify teachers' supply, demand, and deficiencies, all of the above-mentioned reasons, often have different consequences. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education should not forget that research on teacher supply, demand and deficiencies has to focus on quality as well as on quantity (Gürşimşek, 1998). The availability of a sufficient number of teachers is a major problem in a country, but the real harmony between the needs of schools and the qualifications of teachers employed should be emphasized. One of the most controversial issues today is the question of how to identify and measure qualified teachers and quality teaching. One of the most important characteristics of a qualified teacher is the fact that education and preparation in the subjects or fields he teaches are accepted by all. A qualified teacher is the person who has full knowledge of the field (knowing what to teach) and teaching skills, ie pedagogical knowledge (knowing how to

teach) (Akman and Güven, 2015a). Knowledge of the field and pedagogy does not, of course, guarantee quality teaching or even qualified teachers, but both are prerequisites. However, nowadays there is another fact besides knowledge of field and pedagogy; it is also technology knowledge. The qualified teacher must have full knowledge of the field, pedagogy and technology knowledge and be able to combine these three situations in teaching. As a result, beyond the issue of insufficient number of teachers, assessment of teacher qualifications and quality has become a major issue in itself (Akman & Güven, 2015b). The aim of this study is to examine the specific field competencies of social studies teachers within the framework of the literature described above.

## **Method**

In this section, the design of the research consists of participants, data collection tools and data analysis.

### ***Research Design:***

This research is one of the quantitative research methods. In this research conducted within the framework of quantitative research approach, screening model was utilized. The screening model is a research model that aims to describe a past or present situation as it exists (Karasar, 1999). By taking this model into consideration, special field competencies of social studies teachers were tried to be described.

### ***Participants of the Study:***

The participants of the study consisted of 450 social studies teachers working in Gaziantep provinces and districts.

### ***Data Collection Tools:***

The data of the research were obtained from the social studies special field competence scale developed by the author. The scale was obtained from a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 40 items to measure 20 sub-competencies under 5 main headings.

### ***Data Analysis:***

Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.00 package program.

## **Results**

Table 1. Social Studies Teachers' Opinions about the Specific Field Competencies Independent Groups  
T Test Results by Gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>ss</b>	<b>sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Man</b>	200	4.18	16.49	448	1.029	<b>0.04</b>
<b>Woman</b>	250	4.22	23.86			
<b>Total</b>	450					

When Table 1 was examined, a significant result was obtained in favor of women by gender in relation to the special field competencies of social studies teachers ( $p < 0.05$ ). It was observed that female teachers had more specific field competencies than men.

Table 2. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results of Social Studies Teachers' Opinions about Special Field Competencies by Type of High School Graduated

Type of High School Graduated	n	x	ss	F	p
General high school	105	4.28	16,95	1.146	<b>0.03</b>
Anatolian High School	245	4.18	17.46		
Vocational high School	100	4.06	28.45		
Total	450	4.20	21.02		

When Table 2 was examined, it was found that the opinions of social studies teachers about their special qualifications were found to be significant in favor of vocational high school according to the type of high school graduated ( $p < 0.05$ ). It is thought that such a result is obtained due to the fact that the teachers studying in vocational high schools have more application areas.

Table 3. The Independent Group T Test Results of Social Studies Teachers' Opinions about Special Field Competencies According to Their Status of In-Service Training

In-Service Training Status	n	x	ss	sd	t	p
Yes	285	4.85	19.26	448	4.646	0.02
No	165	4.08	22.43			
Total	450					

When Table 3 was examined, significant results were obtained in favor of the special field competencies of in-service trainers according to the status of in-service training of social studies teachers ( $p < 0.05$ ). It is seen that in-service training activities have a great contribution to teachers' special field competencies.

Table 4. Special Field Proficiency Perceptions of Social Studies Teachers

Area of Proficiency	x	ss	Degree
Planning and Organizing the Teaching Process	4.16	4.26	Enough
Learning-Teaching Process	4.19	2.53	Enough
Monitoring and Evaluation	4.08	1.89	Enough
Collaborating with School, Family and Society	3.88	4.01	Enough
Providing Professional Development	4.38	2.47	<b>Excellent</b>
Total	4.07	13.26	Enough

When Table 4 is examined, it is observed that the social studies teachers' perceptions of special competence are generally sufficient, while the basic sub-dimension, professional development, is excellent.

## Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

The aim of this study is to determine the special proficiency perceptions of social studies teachers with "Social Studies Teachers Special Field Proficiency Scale" developed by the researcher. In general, when the results are examined, it is seen that social studies teachers have sufficient level of special field competencies. It was observed that the results ranged between 3.88 and 4.38 in different sub-dimensions. When the related literature is examined, it is seen that similar results have been reached (Kuğuoğlu, 2004; Kahramanoğlu & Yusuf, 2013).

When the results of the study were examined, a significant difference was found in favor of women by gender according to social studies teachers' perception of special field competence. Similar results were obtained when the literature was examined (Aktaş and Walter, 2005; Çapri and Çelikkaleli, 2008).

Similarly, it was observed that the teachers who participated in the in-service training activities had higher special field competencies than those who did not. According to the type of high school graduates, it is observed that the teachers who have graduated from vocational high schools have more special field competencies.

In the light of these results; In-service training activities are very important in the development of teachers. Teachers should be provided with the skills to collaborate with colleagues and evaluate themselves more objectively. Using these skills, studies should be conducted to make teachers realize that they have educational needs.

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## Author Information

### Ozkan Akman

Gaziantep University  
Gaziantep University Nizip of Education Faculty  
Gaziantep / Turkey  
Contact E-mail: akmanozkan@hotmail.com

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