Secondary School Students' Identity and Citizenship Perceptions*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to determine the secondary school students' perceptions of identity and citizenship concepts. The research is designed in a qualitative model. The study group consists of 30 5th, 6th and 7th grade students at a public secondary school in the province of Kastamonu. In the research, 5th, 6th and 7th graders were asked to paint on identity and citizenship concepts and to indicate what they want to tell with the pictures they drew. In the research, the pictures and views of the students were taken through content analysis. Secondary school students drew the picture of identity card for identity concept and pictures of "identity card" and "social values" related to citizenship concept. With the pictures they drew, the students stated that identity is "a document containing personal information" and citizenship means "adopting social values" and "awareness of the individual rights, duty and responsibilities".

1. Introduction

The main objective of Social Studies course, which is taught in primary and secondary schools, is to raise good and socially beneficial individuals. This course contributes to the individuals in a society in order to create a common world and acquire a social memory. Social Studies course introduces the region where we live and all its people. It also tells about the common past and the present of the society, and ensures to raise individuals with the same social consciousness for future. Thus, it is highly important in terms of establishing a collective identity. In the development of a healthy and strong society, individuals who are aware of their responsibilities and have the sense of belonging to a common identity should exist. Individuals are ensured to acquire all these information, skill and values related to social life through Social Studies. Therefore, the main aim of Social Studies course at primary and secondary school level is to raise good and effective citizens. In this regard, identity and citizenship are considered to be interrelated concepts. In this part of the study, identity and citizenship will be reviewed.

Identity is conceptually regarded as the answer to the questions of "Who am I?" or "Who are you?". The answer is at both the individual and social level (Vignoles, 2017). In the literature, some views suggest that identity concept arises from individuality. Accordingly, giving individuality prominence since the modern ages is an important factor which reveals the concept of identity (Çelik, 2012). Also, another view introduces that identity is shaped based on individual experiences; therefore, it is the characteristics that distinguish individuals or societies from others (Asiliskender, 2004). However, some other views in the literature indicate that identity develops with the social, environmental and cultural effects. According to this, identity is defined as a phenomenon revealing with the effect of modernism, postmodernism, globalization, religion,

language, government, ethnicity and similar factors on individuals (Dalbay and Avcı, 2018). Concerning this view, identity is seen as a result of the natural flow of life and it is not possible to regard identity independent from culture (Arslantaş, 2008). It represents the belief, attitude and values pertaining to the society (Yıldız, 2007). In addition, the identity of individual determines what to do or how to act, and this can be considered as a sign of social effect on identity (Oyserman, Elmore and Smith, 2012). The role of identity in understanding modern life is also a result of the social effect on identity (Abdelal, 2006). Thus, identity is said to be conceptualized through collective features rather than individual characteristics (Göktolga, 2013). In the literature, identity is also regarded as the common reflection of both individual and social effects. Although it is actually accepted as a reflection of subjective experiences of individuals, identity is a concept which can differentiate and also transform with the social, cultural and economic dynamics of the society in which individuals live (Aşkın, 2007; Armağan, 2013; Yıldız, 2007). Considering all these definitions and explanations, identity is seen as a concept involving different meanings.

Citizenship is a concept that refers to the rights and responsibilities of individuals sharing the same society (Marshall, 1950). Turkish Language Association (2020) defines citizenship by referring to everyone who is loyal to Turkish State through the bond of citizenship. To Rapoport (2009), citizenship indicates the responsibilities that an individual has to fulfill towards his state and the society to which he belongs, and the rights which he must benefit from. Kepenekçi (2008) defines citizenship as the nationality which ensures the individual to be bound to a particular state. According to Lawson and Scott (2002), citizenship is loyalty to the state and endeavor to create a basic identity. Hablemitoğlu and Özmete (2012) explain citizenship by referring to good individuals who have achieved social harmony and comprehended the sense of responsibility to do their part in the society. Therefore, they state that the continuance of societies can only be ensured by people in harmony with that society and aware of their social rights and responsibilities. Citizenship is vital for nation states adopting the social state approach. Indeed, those who are unaware of the requirement for being a citizen (Tansi, 2010) are condemned to disappear under the global world conditions. In this sense, citizenship is a socio-political membership that sets out the right and responsibilities of individuals or social groups for their common interests (Turner and Hamilton, 1998).

In the literature, there are studies dealing with identity and citizenship within the context of Social Studies course. Thompson (2004), in his study on identity concept and Social Studies curriculum, introduces the role of education systems in raising good citizens. Accordingly, this role can be achieved by identity to be established through Social Studies course. In another study, Zajda, Daun and Saha (2009) draw attention to identity and citizenship education in terms of nation-building. For Journell (2011), the transfer of traditions is ensured with Social Studies course, and thus, citizenship education and the American identity can be gained. Pamuk and Alabaş (2016) state that citizenship is defined as national identity and nationality in Social Studies Curricula. In this respect, they associate identity and citizenship concepts. İbret and Karasu-Avcı (2017) and Karasu-Avcı and İbret (2019) emphasize both the need for developing identity in order to raise good and effective citizens through Social Studies course and the importance of developing identity for creating the citizenship profile. One of the themes published by NCSS (1992) in relation to Social Studies course is "Individual Development and Identity". In this theme, it is envisaged to deal with various forms of human behavior, understanding of the relationship among the identities developed by social rules and social processes affecting the formation of identity. It is stated that the identity of the individual is shaped through culture, groups, institutions and experiences. Pointing out the identity concept in the lands where Social Studies course emerged reveals the role of identity concept in raising good and effective citizens.

Considering the main objective of education systems to raise citizens, identity and citizenship are thought to be interrelated and complementary concepts. Individuals have the ability to keep up with the rapidly changing and emerging world in the 21st century. And, this ability also has parallels with gaining a healthy identity and awareness on their right and responsibility thanks to their citizenship consciousness (Türkcan and Bozkurt, 2015). Except the study of Türkcan and Bozkurt (2015) on the elementary school students' perceptions of identity, culture and civic, no study is encountered in the literature. Seeing that the main purpose of the emergence of Social Studies course is to raise good and effective citizen, it is important to determine the secondary school students' perceptions of identity and citizenship. In this context, the problem statement of this study is:

What are the secondary school students' perceptions of identity and citizenship?

Sub-Problems:

1. What are the secondary school students' perceptions of identity?

2. What are the secondary school students' perceptions of citizenship?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

Case study, as a qualitative research model, was used. Case study is the research model which allows to investigate multiple cases in-depth and in an holistic approach. More than one data collection tool is used in data collection (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). In this research, in order to determine students' perceptions of identity and citizenship, they were first asked to draw pictures for these concepts. Then, their opinions on the pictures they drew were received. Therefore, case study was used in the research. This research is in the form of an explanatory case study of the case study types. Descriptive case study about a situation is the type where one or two situations are used to provide information (Aytaçlı, 2012).

2.2. Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 30 5th, 6th and 7th grade students at a secondary school in Pınarbaşı district of Kastamonu province during the fall semester of the academic year 2019-2020. 12 5th graders, 6 6th graders and 12 7th graders participated in the research. Volunteering was taken as basis for the participation of students in the research. Therefore, the sample group of the research was determined as convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the type in which the researcher selects the participants easy to reach (Dawson and Trapp, 2001). The relevant school and students were preferred in the study since they were the easiest samples to reach.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

In this research, the 5th, 6th and 7th grade students were asked to draw pictures for identity and citizenship concepts. Firstly, students were allowed one class hour (40 minutes) to draw their pictures related to identity concept. Within the same day, a convenient time was found for the 5th, 6th and 7th graders and they were then asked to fill in the structured interview form in order to state what they wanted to describe with the pictures they drew. A 20-minute time period was given the students to fill in the form. The same procedure was again applied in the following week by the researcher for citizenship concept.

2.4. Data Analysis

In the research, the pictures and structured interview forms were separately analyzed. Data obtained from the students was classified according to the grade levels and each of them was nicknamed (e.g. 5th grade-Esra, 6th grade-Emre, 7th grade-Ayşe). Then, the pictures were separated according to the grade levels and coded. Data from the structured interview forms was analyzed by content analysis. Content analysis is the type of analysis used to determine the presence of research subject consisting of text or texts by words, phrases or sentences. Data was first coded. The coded data was evaluated in terms of their relationship and similarities, and the categories were reached (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2012).

2.5. Validity and Reliability

The research reliability was proved by analyst triangulation. Analyst triangulation was defined as the process in which data is separately analyzed by two or more researchers and their findings are compared (Patton, 2014). In this research, one more researcher analyzed the data independently and the findings obtained by the two researchers were compared. The reliability of the research was achieved by reaching a consensus in case of dissenting. Based on the formula designed by Miles and Huberman (1994), the Percent Agreement was calculated as P=0,98. For the research validity, the obtained findings were included in the study in a systematic way to be easily understood by readers and direct quotations from students were included.

3. Findings

In this part of the study, findings obtained from the research and relevant interpretations are included.

3.1. Findings for the 1st Sub-problem

Findings for the sub-problem of "What are the secondary school students' perceptions of identity?" are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Perceptions of secondary school students about the concept of identity

Categories	Sub Categories	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	%
		f	f	f	f	
Identity card		12	6	10	28	84,8
	Civil Registry	1	-	1	2	
Official institutions	District Governorship	1	-	1	2	15,1
	Ministry	1	-	-	1	
Total		15	6	12	33	100

When Table 1 was examined, it was seen that the students mostly drew the picture of identity card (f=27, %=84,8) for the concept. In addition, 5 of the students (%=15,1) drew the pictures related to official institutions such as civil registry, district governorship, ministry. Considering the pictures according to grade level, most of the 5th, 6th and 7th graders drew the picture of identity card. Some of the 5th graders (f=3) and 7th graders (f=2) perceived identity as an official institution. Accordingly, most of secondary school students perceive the concept as identity card and official institutions.

After the students drew pictures for the concept, they stated what they wanted to describe with that picture in the structured interview form. The student opinions relevant to their pictures are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Opinions of secondary school students about the concept of identity

| Categories	Sub Categories	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	%
		f	f	f	f	
	To describe who we are	11	5	10	26	
	To keep the information secret	4	-	-	4	
A document containing personal information	To be unique to the person	3	-	1	4	
	To be required to be a citizen	1	1	1	3	
	Being in every individual	-	3	-	3	100
	Necessary in all areas of life	-	-	2	2	
	Preventing confusion in social life	-	1	-	1	
Total		19	10	14	43	100

When Table 2 was examined, it was seen that student opinions about their pictures took place under the category of "a document containing personal information" (f=43, %=100). Also, sub-categories were found for the category of "a document containing personal information". Accordingly, students explained the document containing personal information mainly as "to describe who we are" (f=26). That sub-category was followed by the categories of "to keep the information secret" (f=4) and "to be unique to the person" (f=4). Most of the 5th, 6th and 7th graders focused on "to describe who we are" (f=26) regarding the document containing personal information. Based on this, it is possible to say what students try to describe in their pictures for identity is the document which contains personal information.

Sample pictures related to the category obtained from the pictures that students drew for identity are given below.
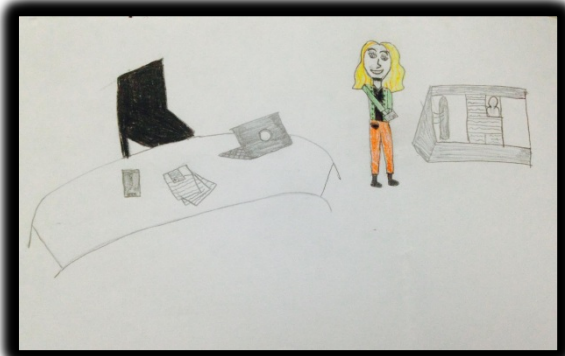
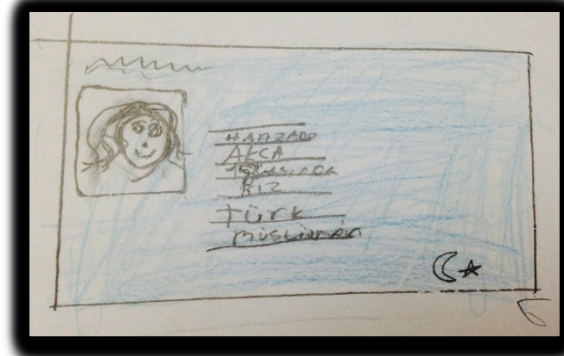Sample pictures related to the category of "a document containing personal information" for identity:

Picture 1: Esra's identity picture (5th grade)
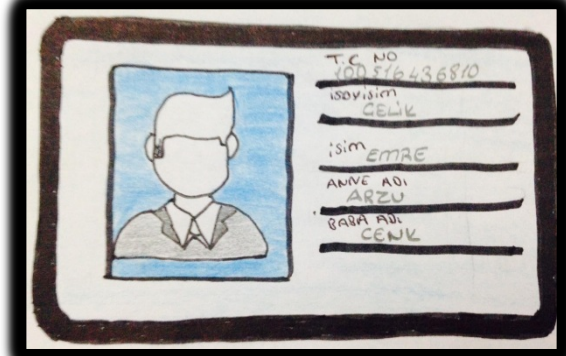
Picture 2: Emre's identity picture (6th grade)

Picture 3: Zeynep's identity picture (7th grade)

Picture 4: Ayşe's identity picture (7th grade)

When the pictures for identity which were drawn by some of the secondary school students (Esra, Emre, Zeynep and Ayşe) are examined, it is seen that Emre and Ayşe illustrated the concept of identity as identity card. With the picture she drew, Esra emphasizes that identity should be kept secret. Zeynep wants to state that identity is necessary in every aspect of life in her picture. It can be interpreted that students' perception of identity is generally related to a concept containing personal information. The opinions expressed by Esra, Emre, Zeynep and Ayşe about the pictures they drew are given below.

Esra *"In my picture about identity, I wanted to explain that we must keep our identity secret and not give it to anyone. Because they can steal your identity and commit a crime."* Emre *"Every individual has an identity. The person without an identity is not called an individual…"* Zeynep *"With this picture, I wanted to explain that we need to use our identity everywhere."* Ayşe *"It is possible for a person to vote and get a driver's license after 18 only with the identity."*

3.2. Findings for the 2nd Sub-problem

Findings for the sub-problem of "What are the secondary school students' perceptions of citizenship?" are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Perceptions of secondary school students about the concept of citizenship

Categories	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	%
	f	f	f	f	
Identity card	4	3	5	12	36,3
Social values	6	-	5	11	33,3
Rights, duty and responsibilities	2	3	3	8	24,2
Total	12	6	13	31	100

When Table 3 was examined, it was seen that the students mostly illustrated citizenship concept as identity card (f=12, %=36,3), social values (f=11, %=33,3) and rights, duty and responsibilities (f=8, %=24,2). Considering the pictures according to grade level, citizenship was illustrated as identity card mostly by the 5th graders (f=4), identity card and rights, duty and responsibilities mostly by the 6th graders (f=4) and identity card (f=5) and social values (f=5) mostly by the 7th graders. Based on this, the students perceive the concept as identity card, social values and rights, duty and responsibilities.

After the students drew pictures for citizenship concept, they stated what they wanted to describe with their pictures in the structured interview form. The student opinions about their pictures are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Opinions of secondary school students about the concept of citizenship

| Categories		5th grade	6th grade	7th grade		Total	%
		f	f	f		f	
	Cooperate	4	-	1	5		
To adopt social values	To be patriotic	1	-	2	3		
	Share	1	-	-	1	12	34,2
	To be fair	1	-	-	1		
	Respect for the National Anthem	-	-	1	1		
	Responsibility	-	1	-	1		
	Do your duty	-	-	3	3		
Awareness of the individual rights, duty and responsibilities	Right to vote and to be elected	-	1	1	2		
	The right to live	-	1	-	1		
	Environmental rights	-	1	-	1	10	28,5
	Human rights	-	1	-	1		
	Get a driver's license	-	-	1	1		
	Exercise our rights	-	1	-	1		
Individual's having an identity		-	4	2	6	6	17,1
The existence of the individual in society		4	1	-	5	5	14,2
Individual's belonging/being loyal to a country		1	-	1	2	2	5,7
Total		12	11	12	35	35	100

According to Table 4, student opinions about their pictures took place under the categories of "to adopt social values" (f=12, %=34,2) and "awareness of the individual rights, duty and responsibilities" (f=10, %=28,5), "individual's having an identity" (f=6, %=17,1), "the existence of the individual in society" (f=5, %=14,2) and "individual's belonging/being loyal to a country" (f=2, %=5,7). Students stated that they drew their pictures related to citizenship mainly for the categories of "to adopt social values" (f=12, %=34,2) and "awareness of the individual rights, duty and responsibilities" (f=10, %=28,5). Considering their opinions according to grade level, the concept was illustrated for the categories of "to adopt social values" mostly by the 5th graders (f=7), "awareness of the individual rights, duty and responsibilities" mostly by the 6th graders (f=5) and "awareness of the individual rights, duty and responsibilities" mostly by the 7th graders (f=10, %=28,5). Therefore, what students try to describe in their pictures is mainly the requirement for individuals to adopt social values and be aware of their rights, duty and responsibilities.

Sample pictures related to the categories obtained from the pictures that students drew for citizenship are given below.
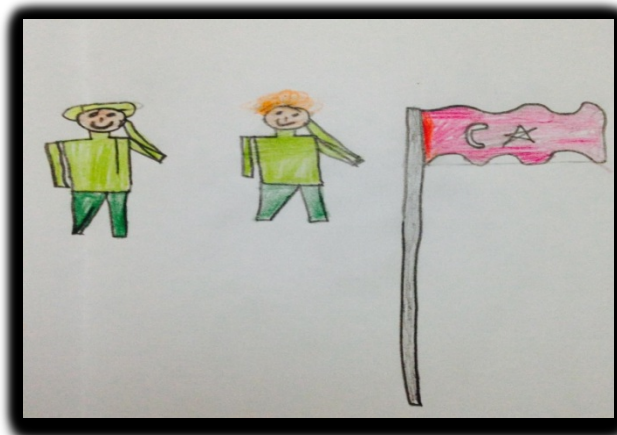
Sample pictures related to the category of "to adopt social values" for citizenship:
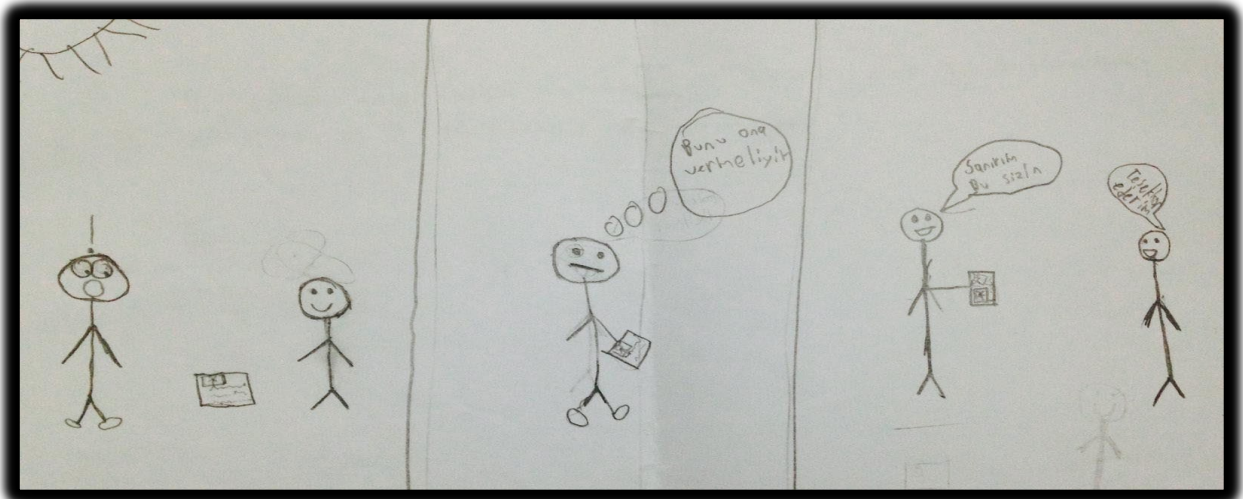
Picture 5: Murat's citizenship picture (5th grade)
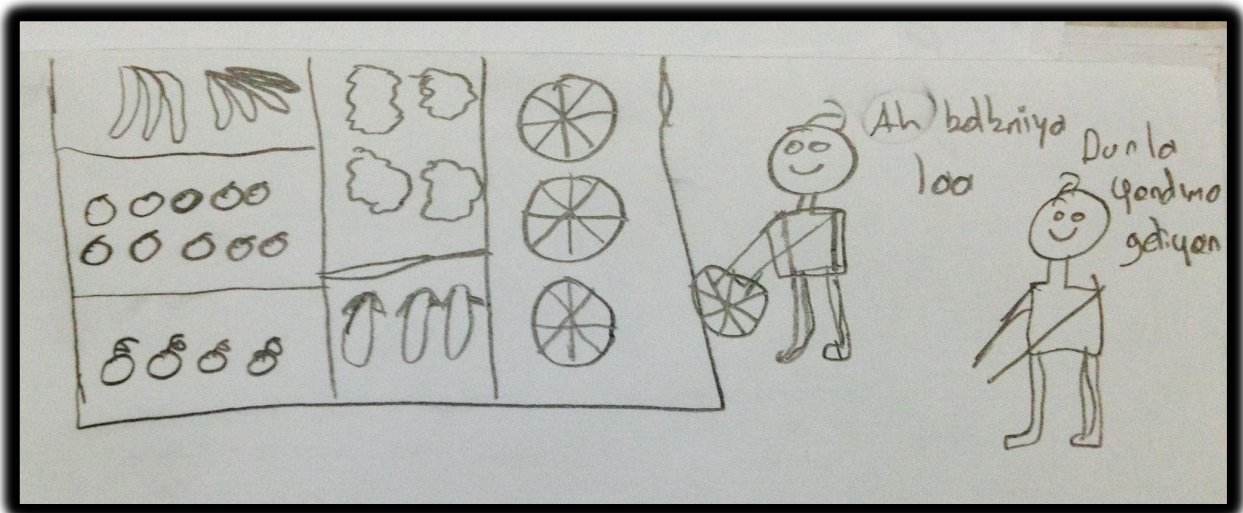
Picture 6: Ömer's citizenship picture (7th grade)

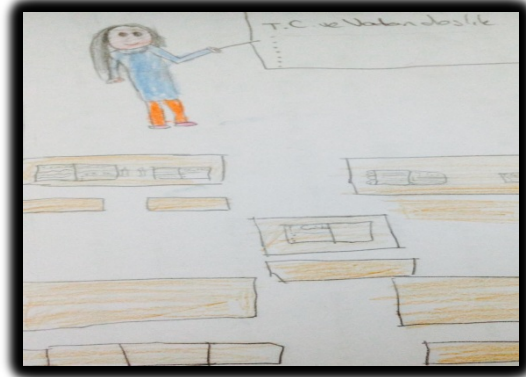**Picture 7:** Furkan's citizenship picture (7th grade)

Pictures numbered 5, 6 and 7, drawn by Murat, Ömer and Furkan for citizenship concept, are related to social values. In Picture 5 and 6, respectively, Murat and Ömer related cooperation to citizenship. In Picture 7, Furkan related protecting the country and nation to citizenship. Opinions for the pictures which Murat, Ömer and Furkan drew are given below.

Murat *"In this picture, I have tried to explain that humanity is not dead and helping someone who have lost his identity card."* Ömer *"Citizenship is to help people who are in need of help."* Furkan *"To protect the country, to wave the flag is a civic duty for all men and women."*
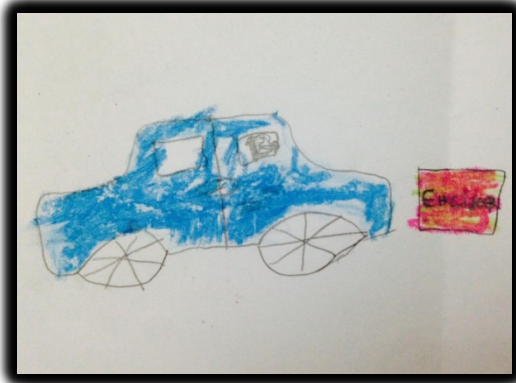
Sample pictures related to the category of "awareness of the individual rights, duty and responsibilities" for citizenship:

Picture 8: Yunus's citizenship picture (6th grade)

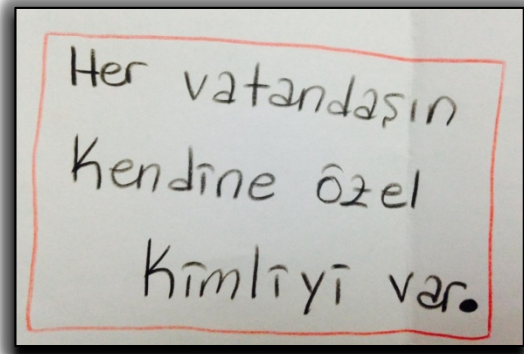**Picture 9:** Emine's citizenship picture (7th grade)

Picture 10: Seda's citizenship picture (7th grade)

Pictures numbered 8, 9 and 10, drawn by Yunus, Emine and Seda for citizenship concept, are related to the rights, duties and responsibilities of individuals. In Picture 8 and 9, respectively, Yunus related the right to elect and be elected and Emine related the right to education to citizenship. In Picture 10, Seda regards getting a driver's license as an individual right and relates it to citizenship. Opinions for the pictures which Yunus, Emine and Seda drew are given below.

Yunus *"Everyone is a citizen. Everyone has the right to vote. Nobody can prevent this."* Emine *"Citizenship takes its place in every aspect of our lives. In primary, secondary, high school and university… At all ages, we are citizens."* Seda *"Everyone who is citizen, for example, can get a driver's license."*

Sample pictures related to the category of " individual's having an identity" for citizenship:

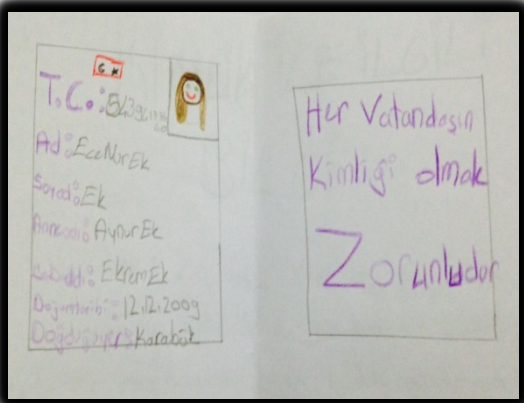**Picture 11:** Nida's citizenship picture (6th grade)

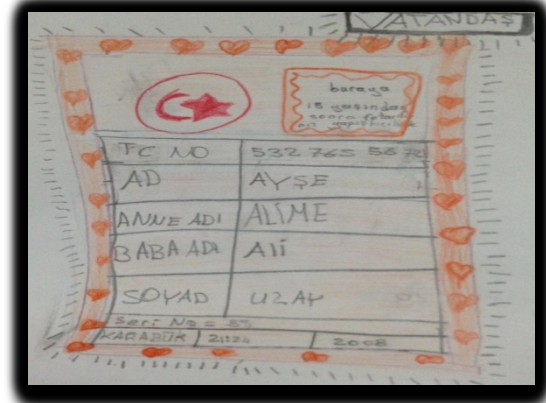**Picture 12:** Mert's citizenship picture (6th grade)

In Picture 11 and 12, the 6th grader Nida's and Mert's pictures were included. Nida, in her picture for citizenship, indicates that she has knowledge of an identity which is required for every citizen to have. Mert tries to illustrate citizenship concept by drawing an identity card. Accordingly, Nida and Mert relate citizenship to have an identity card. Opinions for the pictures which Nida and Mert drew are given below.

Nida *"Every citizen has an identity. Every person's identity is unique. Nobody can look at the other's identity by force."* Mert *"Identity is an important card that contains personal information. Every citizen has it."*
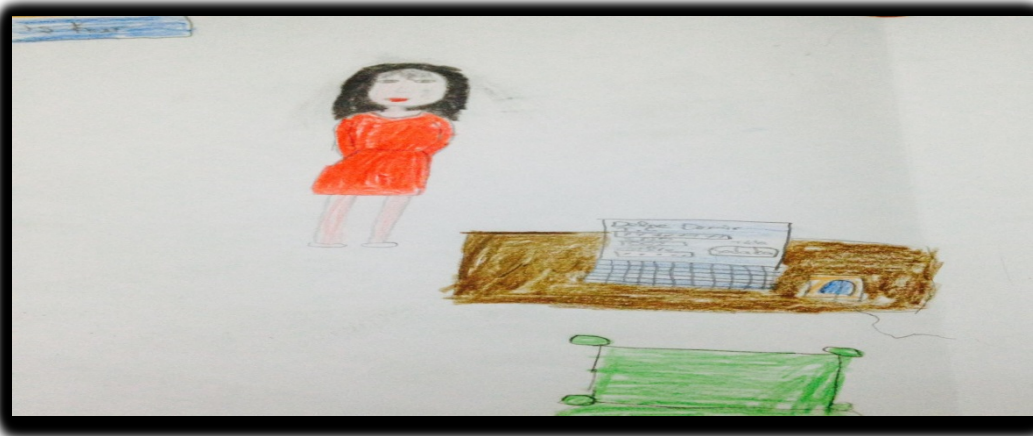
Sample pictures related to the category of "the existence of the individual in society" for citizenship:

Picture 11: Rabia's citizenship picture (5th grade)

Picture 12: Ceylan's citizenship picture (6th grade)

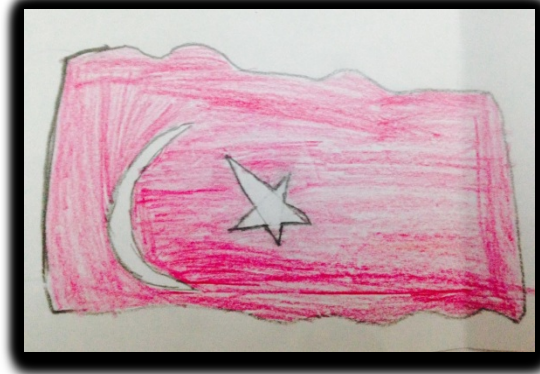**Picture 13:** Feyza's citizenship picture (7th grade)

In Picture 11, 12 and 13, the 5th grader Rabia's, 6th grader Ceylan's and 7th grader Feyza's pictures were included. In Picture 11 and 12, respectively, Rabia and Ceylan point out that identity is a must for an individual to exist in the society. In Picture 13, Feyza also emphasizes that identity is a requirement for making a job application. Opinions for the pictures which Rabia, Ceylan and Feyza drew are given below.

Rabia *"On our identity cards, our T.R. identity numbers are present. We encounter with this number in every aspect of our lives."* Ceylan *"Every person has an identity. Identity card is used everywhere. People can get on a bus or plane with this number."* Feyza *"...Identity and citizenship are everywhere in life. Our T.R. identity numbers and citizenship status are checked while looking for a job…"*

Sample pictures related to the category of "individual's belonging/being loyal to a country" for citizenship:

Picture 14: Ecem's citizenship picture (5th grade)

Picture 15: Ahmet's citizenship picture (7th grade)

In Picture 14 and 15, Ecem's and Ahmet's pictures for citizenship concept were included. Ecem, as a 5th grader, drew a picture to illustrate that an identity document must be issued by the district governorship so that a new born baby can belong to a country. Ecem lives in Pınarbaşı district of Kastamonu province. It is understood from her picture that she also has knowledge of an identity document to be received by applying to the civil registry in the building of district governorship. Ahmet, a 7th grader, while explaining citizenship as belonging/being loyal to a country, described that situation with the picture of Turkish flag. Opinions for the pictures which Ecem and Ahmet drew are given below.

Ecem *"People with T.R. identity number are citizens. Everybody needs to have a T.R. identity number. For this reason, we should seek help from official institutions."* Ahmet *"Country means a flag. Individuals living in the country preserve the flag. So, every individual has a country and its flag."*

4. Discussion

Secondary school students' perceptions of identity and citizenship were dealt in the research. Secondary school students drew the picture of identity card and some other pictures related to official institutions for identity concept. Students stated that identity was a document containing personal information with the pictures they drew. In the sub-category of the category "a document containing personal information", students expressed their opinions on identity mostly as "defining who we are". Considering the Social Studies Curriculum 2018, identity concept is seen to be addressed in the learning domain of "Individual and Society". Within this learning domain, the concept is included as identity card. Therefore, this may be the reason why secondary school students mainly perceive identity concept as identity card. In the study carried out by Türkcan and Bozkurt (2015), students mostly drew the picture of identity card for identity concept. They considered the concept in a way to present the features characterizing individuals, such as date of birth, sex, marital status, and etc., during the interviews made with them. Accordingly, the focus on the date of birth, sex and marital status of individuals supports the finding obtained in this research. Based on this finding, identity is perceived as "a document containing personal information." In both studies, students relate identity concept mostly to identity card. This shows that students perceive identity as an individual-specific concept. In the literature, studies addressing that identity consists of individual characteristics (Asiliskender, 2004; Çelik, 2012), and studies indicating that identity is formed through social effects

(Abdelal, 2006; Yıldız, 2007; Oyserman, Elmore and Smith, 2012; Göktolga, 2013; Dalbay and Avcı, 2018) and through both individual and social effects (Aşkın, 2007; Yıldız, 2007; Armağan, 2013) are seen.

For citizenship concept, students illustrated identity card, social values and rights, duty and responsibilities. Students expressed their opinions on their relevant pictures by referring to individual's belonging/being loyal to a country, having an identity, existing in the society, adopting social values and being aware of his rights, duty and responsibilities. In Türkcan and Bozkurt's study (2015), students conceptualized citizenship by focusing on social belonging, values and civic duty. Both in the pictures students drew for citizenship and in the interviews made with them, it was observed that students emphasized the elements symbolizing the national loyalty such as Turkish flag, Atatürk, patriotism. In addition, they underlined helpfulness and love for the community in the sense of being socially beneficial. They also mentioned about the duty and/or responsibilities to be fulfilled by citizens, such as paying tax and joining the army in relation to civic responsibilities. These are similar to the result of this research in terms of relating citizenship to social values and addressing individual right, duty and responsibilities. Also, in the study carried out by Avcı (2015), students related the value of patriotism to civic right, duty and responsibilities in the pictures they drew for patriotism. This finding supports this research in terms of relating citizenship to values. In the international literature, citizenship is considered in the sense of participation in democratic and social life and some social responsibilities (Egerton, 2002; Hatcher, 2011; Richey, 2011). This also supports the student opinions on citizenship concept.

In this research, students consider identity and citizenship concepts to be interrelated both with the pictures that they have drawn and in the answers that they have given to the interview form. Several studies in the literature relate the concept of identity and citizenship (Thompson, 2004; Zajda, Daun and Saha, 2009; Journell, 2011; Pamuk and Alabaş, 2016; İbret and Karasu-Avcı, 2017; Karasu-Avcı and İbret, 2019). In these studies, raising good and effective citizens through Social Studies course is directly proportionate to gaining correct and healthy identity.

In line with the results obtained from the research, the following suggestions can be made:

- Considering the relationship between identity and citizenship concepts, curriculum developers can reflect this to the curriculum. Thus, it can be possible to gain students' attention for the subject.

- In addition that identity is a document containing personal information, different examples and learning outcomes can be included in curriculum and course books.

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