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## Teachers' Views On Difficult Subjects in the Teaching and Learning of the Social Studies Course Article \*

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## **Abstract**

This study was conducted to determine social studies teachers' views on reasons leading to difficulties in teaching and learning some subjects in the social studies course and their solution proposals. The case study model, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was employed in the study. Study data were collected from 36 social studies teachers working in Tokat, Türkiye in the 2021-2022 academic year. The data were collected by using a semi-structured interview form consisting of seven questions, and they were tabulated under certain codes and subjected to content analysis. As a result of the interviews with the teachers, it was concluded that history subjects were the most challenging in the teaching and learning of the social studies course. Reasons for the difficulties in the teaching and learning of these subjects included teacher, student, curriculum, method-technique, and material-related problems. It was concluded that factors, such as lack of interest in the course, poor motivation, not doing homework, and not revising the subjects, were effective reasons why students had difficulty learning history subjects. Teachers' reasons why they had difficulties teaching history subjects were inadequate undergraduate education and school experience courses, not following the innovations in their fields, having problems with technology, and poor motivation. Students saw history subjects as rote learning, difficult, and boring, which decreased their motivation and negatively affected the teaching process of social studies course. For this reason, it is very crucial to use materials that will increase interest in the course and make it fun.

**Keywords:** Social studies education, difficulties in teaching social studies.

## **Introduction**

Schools are very important in ensuring social order and in raising responsible individuals and the type of people needed. An approach to education that does not only involve teaching, but also prioritizes academic success, and considers education holistically is very valuable. This approach can help raise self-confident, sensitive individuals with diverse knowledge and skills. The concept of education is encountered in every field, it has been defined many times and its functions have been tried to be determined.

Education has many significant functions. One of these functions is to achieve the continuity of society while the individual socializes through education (Özmen, 2010). Another function is to enable individuals to become active citizens and to provide individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values. These skills, values, knowledge, and attitudes are transferred to students through various courses. Apart from these common goals, each course also has specific objectives. For example, the specific goals of the mathematics course and the specific goals of the history course naturally differ. Individuals take many different courses from basic education to higher education and complete their education processes. One of the courses that individuals take during this education process is the social studies course. Although it varies from country to country, social studies education is included in the education system as a course from the 4th grade to the end of the 7th grade in primary education in Türkiye.

Societies need individuals who know and protect their own culture, ensure its continuity, and advance society, especially when information and technology are developing. Social studies course develops the individual's ability to obtain information, do analyses, cooperate, and solve problems. Michaelis (1964) uses the term social studies to denote an area of the curriculum that includes units based on the content of the social sciences. As a field of study created with an interdisciplinary approach, social studies education dates back to the 1920s. Social studies course has been created with an

interdisciplinary approach, making use of social sciences, such as history, geography, civics, economics, and sociology. The teaching of this course aims at transferring some of the basic knowledge and skills of the disciplines it includes to students.

The American-based National Council for the Social Studies Association [NCSS] has been offering important services in many areas, such as the definition, content, and curriculum of this course, since 1921. The definition of social studies by the NCSS is as follows: "Social studies is a field of study that combines arts, literature, and social sciences with an interdisciplinary approach to gain citizenship competencies (NCSS, 1994)". In addition to this definition of the association, it has been emphasized that social studies course is of significance in terms of "raising knowledgeable generations committed to democracy and citizens protecting democratic life". In this context, it is aimed to raise individuals who know both themselves and the society they live in through the teaching of the social studies course, besides raising good citizens. In addition to having individuals gain citizenship values and identity at the national level, it is planned to have them also gain universal knowledge, skills, and attitudes through this course.

The name "social studies" was first used in 1916 by a commission convened in the United States of America [USA] In the United States, the curriculum of this course mainly consisted of history, geography, and civics initially (Kan, 2010). The content of the course varied from country to country and the social structure and important events in the world impeded its standardization. However, this confusion has largely disappeared upon the NCSS's definition of social studies and determination of its content and fundamentals (Martorella, Bear, & Bolick, 2002).

### **The Content of the Social Studies Course in Türkiye**

In Türkiye, social studies first took place in the curriculum that was prepared in 1968 and it was put into practice in the 1968-69 academic year. Some changes were made in the curriculum in the later stages, and this course has been applied as a blend of social sciences from the 4th grade of elementary school to the 7th grade of middle school since then. The social studies curriculum in Türkiye includes the same learning areas from the 4th to the 7th grade. The learning area consists of an interdisciplinary structure that organizes learning, in which interrelated knowledge, skills, and values can be seen as a whole. There are units and subjects as sub-elements within these learning areas. The content of the learning areas is expanded according to the grade level. The curriculum has been structured within the framework of seven learning areas. These are "Individual and Society", "Culture and Heritage", "People, Places, and the Environment", "Science, Technology, and Society", "Production, Distribution, and Consumption", "Active Citizenship", and "Global Connections", respectively. These learning areas have been created with an understanding that centralizes social sciences, such as history, civics, geography, economy, sociology, and law (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018). Social studies course, which has been created with an interdisciplinary approach, can sometimes turn into a difficult course for students to understand due to many abstract concepts. Due to the many abstract concepts that the course contains and its comprehensive content, teachers have difficulties in the teaching process (Acar, 2003; Arslantaş, 2006; Atbaşı, 2007; Kuş & Çelikkaya, 2010). Each learning area is based on different social sciences. Learning areas in Social Studies Course are as follows:

1. Individual and Society: In this learning area, which includes the processes of being "me" and "us", an interdisciplinary approach has been adopted, with a focus on psychology, sociology, and social psychology fields from social sciences.

2. Culture and Heritage: This learning area, which is history-oriented, emphasizes culture and cultural heritage. It aims to create a national consciousness that will ensure the preservation and development of culture, based on the basic elements that make up the Turkish culture.

3. People, Places, and the Environment: This learning area, which aims to provide students with basic spatial knowledge, skills, and values necessary for human life, is basically geography oriented.

4. Science, Technology, and Society: In this learning area, students are expected to learn that innovative, critical, and scientific thinking is the basis of developments in science and technology and gain the skills to use technology to reach information by grasping the development process of science and technology and its effects on social life.

5. Production, Distribution, and Consumption: The basis of this learning area is the development of students' entrepreneurial and conscious consumer skills.

6. Active Citizenship: This learning area focuses on the concept of active citizenship within the framework of sociology, political sciences, and law.

7. Global Connections: Global connections learning area aims to raise effective and responsible Turkish citizens who can follow the agenda of the developing world and find solutions to the problems they face (MoNE, 2018, pp. 11-12).

### **Aim**

There are many studies on the problems experienced in social studies teaching. According to the results of these studies, among the main problems arising from students are that students are aimless, low motivated, uninterested, and unwilling to learn, and that they see the social studies course as a course consisting of memorization (Akgül, 2006; Altun, 2009; Kuş & Çelikkaya, 2010; Yılmaz & Tepebaş, 2011). One of the problems encountered in social studies teaching is related to teaching materials. According to the teachers, there are problems in finding materials for the course and providing course materials (Ağır, 2003; Akdeniz, 2008; Akgül, 2006; Alataş, 2008; Arslantaş, 2006; Atbaşı, 2007; Ayten, 2006; Işık, 2001; Kuş & Çelikkaya, 2010; Polat, 2006; Sığan, 1997; Tahiroğlu, 2006; Yazıcı, 2001; Yılmaz & Tepebaş, 2011; Gönenç & Açıkalın, 2017; Kocaoğlu & Egüz, 2019). Teachers also stated that they could not apply student-centered teaching methods such as out-of-school teaching methods, field observation, investigation and team teaching (Kuş & Çelikkaya, 2010).

Some of the studies have shown that parents, especially in regions with low socio-economic status, are unconscious, do not communicate and cooperate with school administration and teachers, and do not care about the social studies lesson (Akgül, 2006; Kuş & Çelikkaya, 2010; Tahiroğlu, 2006; Yılmaz & Tepebaş, 2011). There were studies in which teachers' opinions on simplifying the content of the social studies curriculum and increasing the lesson hours (Açıkalın & Gönenç, 2017; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015; Uygun, 2020).

It has been understood that the studies carried out to determine the problems encountered in teaching social studies reveal a general view of the difficulties experienced in the teaching process. This research tried to determine which issues teachers had difficulty in teaching the social studies course. This study was conducted to reveal teachers' views on difficult subjects in the teaching and learning of the social studies course, reasons for the difficulties experienced, and their solution proposals. The

problem statement of the research is “What are the challenging subjects in the teaching and learning of social studies course?” Five sub-problems were created for the main problem.

1) What subjects do social studies teachers have difficulty teaching in social studies course?

2) Why do social studies teachers have difficulty teaching some subjects?

3) What subjects do students have difficulty learning in social studies course?

4) Why do students have difficulty learning some subjects in social studies course?

5) What are social studies teachers’ solution proposals for difficult subjects in the teaching and learning of social studies course?

### **Significance**

Social studies course aims to develop skills for thinking, giving criticism, and decision-making (Akgül, 2006; Altun, 2009; Kuş and Çelikkaya, 2010; Yılmaz and Tepebaş, 2011), and an understanding of democratic structure and values in individuals (Gültekin et al., 2012, p. 25). It also contributes to individuals’ socialization (Sever & Koçoğlu; 2013, p. 19).

In the paragraphs above, research on the problems experienced in teaching social studies was included. Many studies have been conducted on factors that reduce the effectiveness of social studies course, including textbooks, teacher education, lack of tools and methods used, the inadequacy of weekly course hours, the unsuitability of the curriculum for learning outcomes, and teacher expectations. Studies have generally classified problems as teacher, material, and method and technique-based problems. In this study, it was aimed to reduce the problem to a more specific one. The most important aim of the study is to determine the subjects that are difficult for teachers to teach and for students to learn in social studies course according to grade levels. In addition to this aim, it is important to determine not only the issues in which difficulties are experienced, but also the solution suggestions for these difficulties.

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

The case study model, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in this study, in which the views of social studies teachers on difficult subjects in the teaching and learning of the social studies course were obtained. Qualitative research is a general concept that includes less disruption of the natural environment and many research models that help to understand the meaning of events (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). One of the most important features of qualitative research is that it allows one to see participants’ perspectives on the subject of a study and to reveal the social structure and processes according to this point of view (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The reason for choosing this method in the research was that the boundaries of the study could not be determined precisely, and this method allows the practitioner to do a more flexible and in-depth analysis.

### **Study Group**

The study group consisted of 36 social studies teachers working in secondary schools in Türkiye. Convenience sampling method was preferred in sample selection. Convenience sampling method allows a researcher to easily reach the units that can be included in the study and include those which are close to him/her in the sample (Baştürk & Taştepe, 2013).

### **Data Collection Tool**

Study data were collected using a semi-structured interview form, one of the qualitative data collection tools. The semi-structured interview technique is more suitable for research in educational sciences, as it provides both a certain degree of standardization and flexibility to researchers and participants (Tümüklü, 2000). This interview form was developed by the researcher following expert opinions (two lecturers from Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Faculty of Education, Social Studies Teaching Department, and two social studies teachers). As a result of the feedback received from the experts, the interview form was finalized with seven questions.

### **Data Collection Process**

The data collection process took approximately six weeks. In this process, social studies teachers were interviewed one-on-one at their schools. During the interviews, social studies teachers were informed about the study, such as difficult subjects for teachers to teach and for 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade students to learn, the reasons for these problems, and their solutions to eliminate these difficulties. An interview form was given to teachers who agreed to participate in the study voluntarily, and they were asked to fill it out.

### **Data Analysis**

Participants' responses were subjected to content analysis. In this analysis, the aim was to elicit main codes from answers and concepts that were similar to each other and develop them into a form that readers can understand. The data collected in the research were analyzed and interpreted based on sub-problems. In this way, research data not related to sub-problems were eliminated and excluded from the data set. The study data were primarily classified into codes and gathered under themes based on the common point of these codes. Direct quotations from the views of the participants in the interview form were presented, and they were reported by comparing and discussing with the results of other studies. In the study, each teacher was given a code, and they were kept confidential when their views were quoted directly.

### **Ethical Permits of Research**

In this study, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were complied with. None of the actions specified under the heading "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, have been taken.

### **Ethics Committee Permission Information:**

Name of the committee that made the ethical evaluation = Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee

Date of ethical review decision= 09.04.2021

Ethics assessment document issue number= 01-23

## Findings

In this section, the findings about the main questions of the research were given. The first of these findings was about the subjects that social studies teachers had the most difficulty teaching in the social studies course. Teachers were asked to choose among the 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade topics. The tables below present the findings on the learning areas/topics that were chosen as the most difficult to teach at each grade level. Below are the findings about the learning areas/subjects that teachers had the most difficulty teaching in the 5th grade.

Table 1. *The unit that social studies teachers had the most difficulty teaching in the 5th grade*

Unit 2: Journey into the Past	Participants	f
1. Civilizations	K1, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, K11, K13, K15, K16, K17, K18, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K29, K30	20
2. Beauties of Our Country	K1, K11	2
3. Our Rich Culture	K11, K26	2
4. Our Common Values	K11, K25	2
5. Our Culture from Past to Present	K19	1
Total		30

As seen in Table 1, it was determined that teachers had the most difficulty teaching "Culture and Heritage" among the learning areas (units) in the 5th grade. In this unit, it was determined that teaching the "civilizations" subject was the most difficult. As seen in the table, there are not many problems in teaching other subjects in the unit. The findings about the 6th grade are as follows:

Table 2. *The unit that social studies teachers had the most difficulty teaching in the 6th grade*

Unit 2: Journey into History	Participants	f
1. Central Asia, the Homeland of Turks	K1, K8, K9, K11, K18, K19, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K29	13
2. The Birth of Islam	K1, K11, K19, K21, K24, K26, K28, K29	8
3. Turks' Encounter with Islam	K1, K11, K13, K19, K26, K29	6
4. Anatolia, the New Homeland	K1, K8, K11, K13, K18, K19, K21, K26, K29	9
5. Historical Routes	K1, K11, K26, K29	4
Total		40

As seen in Table 2, the unit that teachers had the most difficulty teaching among the 6th grade units was Journey into History. In this unit, it was determined that "Central Asia, the homeland of Turks" was the most difficult subject to teach. There were difficulties teaching some other subjects in the unit. It was observed that teachers had difficulties in almost all of the subjects in this unit. The findings about the 7th grade are as follows:

Table 3. *The unit that social studies teachers had the most difficulty teaching in the 7th grade*

Unit 2: Journey into Turkish History	Participants	f
1. Establishment of Ottoman State	K3, K8, K9, K11, K25, K26, K29, K29	8
2. The Conquest Policy of the Ottoman Empire	K3, K8, K9, K10, K11, K15, K18, K22, K26, K28, K29	11
3. Developments in Europe and their Effects on the Ottoman Empire	K3, K8, K9, K11, K18, K19, K26, K28, K29	9
4. Reform Movements in the Ottoman Empire	K3, K8, K9, K10, K11, K12, K13, K18, K19, K21, K22, K24, K25, K28, K29, K30	16
5. Ottoman through the Eyes of Travelers	K3, K8, K9, K11, K25, K28, K29	7
Total		51

As seen in Table 4, the "reform movements of the Ottoman state" subject in the "Journey into Turkish History" unit was the most difficult 7th-grade topic to teach. Teachers had difficulties teaching

other subjects under this unit, too. Thus, it was determined that the units that social studies teachers had difficulty teaching in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades had history content.

The second finding of the study was related to the reasons why social studies teachers had difficulties teaching some subjects. Below are the codes and themes obtained as a result of the content analysis of the teachers' responses to the question of what the reasons for the difficulties encountered in the teaching of social studies course were.

Table 4. *The reasons for the difficulties encountered in the teaching of social studies course*

Themes	Codes	Participants	f
Reasons for the difficulties that teachers experienced	The inability of the teacher to adapt to technology and innovations	K6, K12, K20, K26, K32	5
	The discrepancy between theoretical knowledge obtained in undergraduate education and the practice	K9, K11, K12, K14, K19, K28	6
	Teacher's unprepared attendance to lessons	K1, K4, K9, K13, K14, K19, K20, K29	8
	Inability to reduce the subject to the level of the student	K1, K4, K5, K6, K7, K9, K13, K14, K15, K18, K23, K26, K30, K31, K34, K35	16
	Inability to teach abstract topics and not using tangible material	K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K13, K15, K16, K17, K20, K21, K23, K32	15
	Teacher's lack of motivation	K1, K8, K27	3
	Not basing new topics on prior knowledge	K2, K5, K7	3
	Failure to attract student's attention to the lesson	K1, K10, K13, K14, K25, K26, K27	7
	Inadequate teacher qualification	K11, K19, K24, K28, K31, K33, K36	7

Table 5 gives teachers' responses to the question of what the reasons for the difficulties experienced in the teaching of social studies course could be. They pointed out that the most important reason why social studies teachers had difficulties while teaching history subjects was that they could not teach the subject in accordance with the student's level. They stated that another important reason close to this reason was the "inability to teach abstract topics and not using tangible material". Some of the teacher's views are quoted below.

The statements of K13 and K26 about the inability to teach the subject in accordance with the student's level were as follows: "Problems arise due to the inability to reduce the subject to the level of the student and make it interesting, especially in history subjects." (K13) "We have to progress quickly while teaching the subjects because time is not enough for the course. We do not have enough time to try to explain the subjects at a level that the student can understand or to present the subject in a way that every student can grasp." (K26)

The statements of participants K14 and K23 about why they had difficulty teaching abstract topics and could not use tangible material were as follows:

"Generally, teachers use the presentation technique and accordingly, the narration technique. Although this seems to be the best method when time is considered, it is not adequate for teaching abstract subjects. Methods such as discussion, case study, concrete material design, etc., which will activate the student, cannot be used because time is not enough. We have problems conveying concrete subjects, as we have to use the narration technique. Due to the socio-economic problems of the school, unfortunately, there are no concrete materials in every school. In this case, the teacher is sometimes helpless." (K14)



“Unfortunately, textbooks cannot guide us in reinforcing learning outcomes and explaining abstract topics. For this reason, there are problems in the concretization of abstract subjects. Using their creativity, teachers can transfer abstract topics to the student or design materials and use them in the classroom.” (K23).

The third finding of the study included social studies teachers’ views about which units and topics students had difficulty learning in social studies course. Findings about social studies teachers’ views on which topics 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade students had difficulty learning in social studies course were tabulated separately for each grade level. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that there were two units in the 5th grade that students had equal difficulty in learning. The findings about units are as follows:

Table 5. *The unit of the social studies course that the 5th-grade students had the most difficulty learning*

Unit 2: Journey into the Past	Participants	f
1. Civilizations	K1, K6, K8, K10, K11, K12, K14, K15, K16, K17, K18, K21, K22, K24, K25, K26, K29	17
2. Beauties of Our Country	K1, K11	2
3. Our Rich Culture	K11, K26	2
4. Our Common Values	K11	1
5. Our Culture from Past to Present	K11, K19	2
Total		24

As seen in Table 6, the most difficult unit for the 5th grade students to learn was Journey into the Past. Of the subjects in this unit, the most difficult one for the students to learn was “Civilizations”. Teachers stated that students had difficulty learning units on history in the 5th grade. They also added that there was another unit that was challenging for students to learn. Findings related to this unit are as follows:

Table 6. *The unit of the 5th-grade social studies course that students had the most difficulty learning*

Unit 3: Human and the Environment	Participants	f
1. What do maps say?	K1, K3, K4, K6, K11, K12, K15, K18, K20, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K28, K29, K30	18
2. The impact of climate on our lives	K1, K11, K28	3
3. Population and settlement	K11, K19, K26	3
4. Why did it happen?		
5. Natural disasters and their effects		
Total		24

As can be seen from Table 7, another unit that students had difficulty learning was Human and Environment. This unit consisted of geography subjects. According to the teachers’ responses, “What do maps say?” was the most difficult subject of this unit for students to learn. There were no other difficult subjects in this unit. The table below gives findings related to the unit and subjects that 6th-grade students had the most difficulty learning.

Table 7. The 6th grade social studies course unit that students had the most difficulty learning

Unit 2: Journey into History	Participants	f
1. Central Asia, the Homeland of Turks	K1, K6, K8, K10, K11, K12, K16, K18, K19, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K29	16
2. The Birth of Islam	K1, K11, K19, K21, K23, K24, K26, K28, K29	9
3. Turks' Encounter with Islam	K1, K11, K13, K16, K21, K24, K26, K29	8
4. Anatolia, the New Homeland	K1, K8, K11, K13, K18, K19, K21, K23, K24, K25, K26, K29	12
5. Historical Routes	K1, K11, K18, K21, K29	5
Total		50

It was determined that the unit that students had the most difficulty learning was "Travel into History", and they had difficulty learning all of the subjects in this unit. In particular, it was determined that the subject of "Central Asia, the homeland of Turks" was the most difficult subject to learn in the 6th grade. Finally, the findings related to the unit that students had the most difficulty learning in the 7th grade social studies course were as follows:

Table 8. The 7th grade social studies course unit that students had the most difficulty learning

Unit 2: Journey into Turkish History	Participants	f
1. Establishment of Ottoman State	K3, K8, K10, K11, K18, K23, K24, K26	8
2. The Conquest Policy of the Ottoman Empire	K3, K7, K8, K10, K11, K15, K18, K22, K23, K24, K26	11
3. Developments in Europe and their Effects on the Ottoman Empire	K3, K8, K11, K13, K18, K19, K21, K23, K24	9
4. Reform Movements in the Ottoman Empire	K3, K8, K10, K11, K12, K13, K14, K18, K19, K22, K23, K24, K25, K28	14
5. Ottoman through the Eyes of Travelers	K11, K18, K21, K23, K25, K28	6
Total		48

As seen in Table 9, the unit that students had the most difficulty learning was "Journey into Turkish History". In this unit, the "Reform movements in the Ottoman Empire" was the most difficult subject for students to learn. It was determined that they had difficulty learning all of the other subjects in this unit. Findings related to the fourth research question "Why do students have difficulty learning some subjects in social studies course?" were as follows:

Table 9. *Reasons why students have difficulty learning some subjects in social studies course*

Themes	Codes	Participants	f
Student-based reasons	Students do not revise the subjects regularly.	K1, K3, K5, K7, K9, K10, K11, K16, K34, K35	10
	Students come to classes unprepared.	K1, K6, K14, K16, K18, K19, K20, K21, K22, K23, K26, K27, K31	13
	Students lack prior knowledge and readiness.	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K7, K8, K9, K11, K15, K17, K18, K19, K20, K21, K23, K24, K25, K26, K27, K29, K30, K32, K33, K34, K36	26
	Students are indifferent and prejudiced against the lesson (not internalizing the course).	K2, K3, K5, K6, K8, K11, K12, K13, K16, K18, K20, K21, K23, K24, K26, K27, K28, K30, K31, K33, K34	21
	Students and parents consider the course unimportant.	K1, K11, K13, K14, K16, K22	6
	Students cannot establish a relationship between the subjects.	K12, K22	2
Curriculum-based reasons	The curriculum has not been designed in accordance with student interests and needs.	K2, K4, K5, K11, K12	5
	There are a lot of topics, and they are abstract and above the student level.	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, K11, K12, K13, K14, K15, K16, K17, K18, K19, K20, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K27, K28, K29, K30, K31, K32, K33, K34, K35, K36	36
	Inadequate class time	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K13, K14, K15, K16, K17, K18, K19, K20, K21, K22, 27, K31, K32, K34, K36	24
	No inter-unit connection	K23	1
Method-technique and material-based reasons	The use of the narration technique because the course is based on rote learning	K1, K3, K11, K15, K18, K19, K26, K27, K31, K34, K36	11
	Failure to use an appropriate technique and the use of unsuitable techniques for the subject	K1, K4, K14, K24, K25, K28, K30, K32, K33, K34, K35	11
	Lack of the desired material in most schools or failure to use the existing material effectively	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, K11, K12, K13, K14, K16, K17, K18, K20, K21, K22, K23, K26, K27, K28, K29, K30, K35, K36	28
	Textbooks are not appropriate for the student level, they are not clear, intelligible, and plain, and the activities are not adequate.	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K7, K8, K11, K12, K13, K14, K15, K17, K19, K20, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K27, K28, K29, K31, K33, K35, K36	28

In Table 10, the answers given by the participants to the question about the reasons for difficulties experienced by students in learning social studies topics were grouped under three themes: student-based, curriculum-based, and method-technique and material-based reasons. Student-based sub-reasons (codes) are shown in the table. Accordingly, “students’ lack of prior knowledge and readiness” was the most emphasized one among these codes. Some of the participants’ responses within this theme (reason) are as follows:

For example, K3 and K16 mentioned the following issues about students’ unpreparedness for classes:

“Students come to class unprepared. They forget the previous subject because they do not revise what I have taught them in the past weeks. Thus, their prior knowledge is poor when handling the new topic. This causes students to be reluctant to study.” (K3)

"Students come to school without doing their homework. They do not exercise or do homework. They do not search for information. They do not bring their textbooks and activity notebooks." (K16)

K15's statement about student's lack of prior knowledge and readiness was as follows:

"Students do not listen to the lesson because they have no interest in it. Having poor vocabulary, unfamiliarity with the subject of "civilizations" in the 5th grade, and lack of knowledge negatively affect students' readiness for the lesson." (K15)

The codes under the curriculum-based reasons theme are given in Table 10. Among the curriculum-related reasons, the most emphasized one was "There are too many topics, and they are abstract and above the student level." Below are some participant's views on this theme.

"There are a lot of history and geography topics in the curriculum, and they make learning difficult." (K1) "Some units are heavily loaded. They are not appropriated for students' interests and needs." (K10) "Due to the regional factors, it is not possible for students to progress in learning abstract concepts in the curriculum." (K12) "I think social studies course is the most intense one in middle school. I can't understand why there are few weekly hours for such a comprehensive course. I am more concerned with keeping up with the curriculum rather than teaching the subjects to students." (K20) "I think the person who has prepared the curriculum thinks that everything should be included. It just turns into confusion." (K26)

Regarding the code that the curriculum had not been prepared in accordance with the interests and needs of the students, K4 said, "Some of the subjects in the curriculum are at a high level compared to the student's level." The statement of K11 for the same code was "The learning outcomes of the curriculum are above the student's learning level. It is above the student's level, the curriculum is heavily loaded, and it does not address the student's interests and needs. It should be revised".

Table 10 also presents the codes created under the method-technique and material-based reasons theme. There were two most emphasized reasons under this theme. One of them was that not every school had the desired material or that the existing material could not be used effectively. The other reason for the difficulties experienced was cited as "Textbooks are not appropriate for the student level, they are not clear, intelligible, and plain, and the activities are not adequate." Some of the participant views on this theme are as follows:

Participants' views about the code that the textbooks were not clear, intelligible, and plain for the level of the student and that the activities were not adequate were "Books are inadequate" (K5), "Subjects in the textbooks are abstract for the student. They should be improved" (K8), "Textbooks are above the student level. There are not enough activities. We need additional resources" (K15), "Textbooks should be simplified. They are above the student level" (K19), "Students get bored with the textbook. It should be plain. Activities should be developed" (K22), "Textbooks are above the student level" (K29), and "Textbooks are inadequate. We provide students with extra resources. Textbooks should be improved" (K36).

Table 11 gives findings about the fifth and last question of the research: "What are social studies teachers' solution proposals for the challenging subjects in the teaching and learning of the social studies course?"

Table 10. *Solution proposals for the difficulties experienced in the teaching and learning of social studies course*

Themes	Participants	f	
Solution proposals to the difficulties experienced in the teaching and learning of the social studies course	The curriculum should be simplified.	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, K11, K13, K14, K15, K16, K18, K20, K21, K22, K23, K24, K25, K26, K27, K28, K29, K30, K31, K32, K33, K34, K35, K36	33
	Weekly course hours should be increased.	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K11, K13, K14, K15, K16, K18, K19, K20, K21, K22, K23, K24, K27, K28, K29, K31, K32, K35, K36	28
	Concrete materials suitable for each school should be provided for abstract subjects, and the number of materials used should be increased.	K3, K12, K14, K15, K18, K30	6
	Students should regularly revise the subjects.	K1, K31, K35, K36	4
	Equality of opportunity in education should be ensured	K2, K19, K20	3
	Students' prior knowledge and readiness levels should be taken into account.	K1, K2, K3, K5, K18, K20, K26, K32, K33, K36	10
	There should be teaching methods that are student-centered, will make the student active, and will increase their interest in the lesson, and appropriate methods, techniques, and materials should be chosen.	K2, K3, K4, K6, K7, K10, K11, K15, K18, K19, K20, K26, K31, K35	8
	A positive classroom climate should be created.	K8, K13	2
	Teachers should be given in-service education for practice.	K9, K12, K28	3
	The quality of textbooks should be improved.	K2, K4, K5, K7, K8, K15, K19, K23, K24, K25, K28, K31, K33, K34, K36	15
	Class sizes should be reduced.	K12, K13	2

Table 11 shows the findings regarding the solution proposals for the difficulties experienced in the teaching and learning of the social studies course. It is understood that the most important solution proposal that draws attention here is the "simplification of the curriculum". Some participant opinions regarding this code are given below.

"The curriculum needs to be simplified to teach the subjects more efficiently." (K7) "The curriculum, the content is very intense; it needs to be simplified so that more time will be left for the activities." (K10) "The density in the curriculum should be reduced." (K13) "It is necessary to reduce the unnecessary subject load in each unit. Time should be adjusted according to the subject and content." (K18) "The curriculum definitely needs to be simplified." (K21) "The curriculum is too dense and abstract. It should be rearranged." (K28)

Participants also expressed their opinions about the need for an increase in weekly course hours. Some of the opinions are as follows:

"Course hours are inadequate for the subjects and learning outcomes." (K8) "Weekly course hours and the importance of the course should be increased. Students take it as an elective course." (K11) "Weekly course hours should be increased according to the density of the curriculum." (K13) "I think course hours should be increased. We do not have enough time." (K22) "The only thing we can do is to lecture during the allocated course hours. Weekly course hours should be increased; we cannot do any activities." (K29)

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The main problem of the research was to determine social studies teachers' views about the difficulties experienced in the teaching and learning of social studies course. Accordingly, the problems encountered in the teaching and learning of this course and the solution proposals were evaluated by comparing them with the results of studies in the literature.

The first finding of the study included the subjects that social studies teachers had difficulty teaching in social studies course. Teachers stated that they had difficulties teaching history subjects. According to them, the subjects that they had the most difficulty teaching by grade were as follows: the "Civilizations" subject of the "journey into the past" unit in the fifth grade; the "Central Asia, the homeland of the Turks" subject of the "Travel into History" unit in the sixth grade; the "Conquest policy of Ottoman State" and "Reform movements in Ottoman State" subjects of the "Journey into Turkish History" unit in the seventh grade. Social studies teachers stated that they had difficulties in the teaching process in the classroom because they found these subjects to be abstract, rote-learning, and boring.

A review of the literature revealed that students generally found history course difficult and boring (Akinoğlu & Aslan, 2007). For example, Ayva (2010) determined that students had more difficulty learning history subjects than other courses. In a study by Keçe (2013), social studies teachers were interviewed. In this interview, it was concluded that history subjects were intense and that the subjects had not been arranged in chronological order, therefore there were disconnections between the subjects. Çelik and Katmışlar (2010) also mentioned the lack of this chronological order in their study. Students stated that they could not understand the relationship and the transition between the subjects due to the lack of chronological order between history subjects and events. It was determined that teachers encountered problems in the teaching of history subjects in the 7th grade social studies curriculum. Reasons for teaching and learning difficulties were cited as follows: heavily loaded historical content; the lack of chronological connection; the inability to establish a connection between events; emphasis on political history rather than social history (Keçe, 2013).

A review of the studies in the literature indicated that they supported our results. Thus, it was concluded that teachers had the most difficulty teaching units with history content in the social studies course of the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. The second finding of the study was about why social studies teachers had difficulties in teaching social studies course. The results of this research showed that the problems experienced by the teachers were caused by them. Social studies teachers mentioned the following issues as difficulties in teaching history subjects in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades: the teacher's inability to adapt to technology and innovations; the discrepancy between theoretical knowledge obtained in undergraduate education and the practice; the teacher's unpreparedness for lessons; the teacher's inability to convey the subject in accordance with the student's level; the teacher's failure to convey abstract concepts and not using concrete materials; the teacher's lack of motivation; not controlling students' prior knowledge; the teacher's failure to attract students to the lesson; inadequate teacher qualification.

In some studies conducted with teachers, they stated that they did not follow publications related to their fields and did not adapt to technology and innovations (Ağır, 2003). Gönenç and Açıkalin (2016) and Dinç and Doğan (2010) stated that teachers saw themselves as inadequate in preparing material. Kus and Çelikkaya (2010) stated that in-service education of teachers mostly focused on

preparing and using materials and that they felt inadequate in this regard. Yener (2015) concluded that social studies teachers did not renew themselves, did not keep up with developments, and did not follow publications after graduating from university.

In a study with teachers by Topçu (2017), it was stated that they had problems with the structure of the course. It was also determined in this study that one of the main problems of teachers was the discrepancy between the theoretical courses they had taken during their undergraduate education and the practice in professional life. Yılmaz and Tepebaş (2011) concluded that students did not give enough importance to “school experience” and “teaching practices” courses that were taken at the education faculty and therefore they had problems when they started the profession. Gönenç and Açıklın (2016) stated that teachers had difficulties attracting students' attention and providing motivation.

It was concluded that the research results mentioned so far were similar to the results of this research and that there were difficulties teaching history subjects due to the problems arising from teachers. The third finding of the study included the subjects that students had difficulty learning in the social studies course. It was concluded that students in all grades included in this study had difficulty learning history subjects, but that the 5th grade students also had difficulty learning geography subjects. Thus, it was determined that the subjects that teachers had difficulty teaching and those which students had difficulty learning were the same. İbrahimoglu (2018) stated that students had the most difficulty learning history subjects, especially the Renaissance and the Reformation. In a similar study conducted by Çelikkaya (2015), it was concluded that students had the most difficulty in learning history subjects in the social studies course (5th, 6th and 7th grades). Regarding their difficulties, students think that the topics are not liked, they are difficult to keep in mind, and they are long and concise. In the study of Akengin and Demirsoy (2011), students stated that history and culture subjects are difficult to learn. The reason was given that the subjects were too long and difficult to memorize. This result of the research was consistent with the results of similar studies.

The fourth finding of the study included the reasons why students had difficulties learning the subjects in social studies course. These reasons were found to arise from students, the curriculum, and the method, technique, or the material used in the course. Student-based reasons included not revising the subjects regularly, coming to the lesson unprepared, lack of prior knowledge and readiness, indifference and prejudice to the lesson (failure to internalize the lesson), the inability to establish a relationship between the subjects, and consideration of the lesson as unimportant by students and parents. The curriculum-based reasons were that the curriculum had not been created consistent with students' interests and needs, there were too many subjects that were abstract and above the student level, the course hours were inadequate, and that there was no connection between the units. Reasons related to methods, techniques, and material were that since this course was seen as rote learning, the narration technique was used, appropriate techniques and methods were not used and some of the techniques used were not suitable for the subject, not every school had the desired material or the existing material could not be used effectively, the textbooks were not clear, intelligible, simple, and suitable for the level of the student, and that activities were not adequate.

In the study of Akengin and Süer (2011), it was concluded that students' readiness for the concepts in the social studies course was not adequate. Many studies have shown that students come to social studies course unprepared (Çelik & Katılmış, 2010; Yener, 2015). In a study on the examination of the social studies curriculum, Işık (2010) classified problems in the teaching and learning of the

course as those arising from materials used, textbooks, teachers, and lack of time. Yazıcı (2001) stated that necessary methods and techniques were not used adequately. The reason for this was that classrooms were crowded and the tools used were inadequate.

In their study on the problems experienced in the teaching of social studies course, Koçoğlu and Egüz (2019) concluded that weekly course hours were inadequate and that enough methods, techniques, and materials were not used in the teaching of the course. In a study on the expectations of teachers and students from the social studies course conducted by Pişmek (2020), teachers stated that learning outcomes needed to be reduced and that activities were difficult to implement. In a study, Göksu (2020) concluded that the weekly hours of social studies course were not adequate, textbooks were not qualified, students got bored during lessons because they saw the course as rote learning, and that they approached history subjects with prejudice. When the results obtained in this study were compared with the results of the studies in the literature, it was seen that they were similar.

The fifth and final finding of the study was about solution proposals for the difficulties experienced by social studies teachers in the teaching of social studies course and by students in the learning of the course. The following results were obtained in the study: the curriculum should be simplified, course hours should be increased, concrete materials appropriate for each school should be provided for abstract subjects, students should revise the topics regularly, students' prior knowledge and readiness levels should be taken into account, and a student-centered teaching environment should be provided. In addition, teachers should be given in-service education for practice, the quality of textbooks should be improved, and the number of students in classes should be reduced.

In their study with social studies teachers, Memişoğlu and Köylü (2015) concluded that weekly course hours needed to be increased, class sizes needed to be reduced, learning outcomes needed to be reduced, and that the curriculum needed to be simplified. In the study by Açıkalin and Gönenç (2017), social studies teachers suggested increasing weekly course hours and reducing class sizes. Uygun (2020) suggested simplifying the curriculum, reducing class sizes, increasing course hours, and supplying materials and equipment to eliminate the problems experienced in social studies course.

In the research, it was seen that the results obtained regarding social studies teachers' solution proposals were consistent with the results obtained by similar studies.

## **Recommendations**

According to social studies teachers' views, both teachers and students had difficulties in the teaching and learning of history subjects in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. Therefore, the subjects that teachers and students have difficulties with in the social studies curriculum should be simplified.

Social studies teachers stated that they had difficulties using methods, techniques, and materials. Teachers who have just started their careers and prospective teachers, who are undergraduate students, should be given pre-service and in-service training on methods, techniques, and the use and application of materials and methods.

According to the data obtained in the study, it was seen that textbooks were above students' level. Social studies textbooks should be updated and they should be plainer and have more activities consistent with students' level.



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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

### **Contribution Rate of Researchers**

Author 1: 50%

Author 2: 50%

### **Conflict Statement**

There is no material or individual organic connection with the people or institutions involved in the research and there is no conflict of interest in the research.



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# Sosyal Bilgiler Dersinin Öğretiminde ve Öğreniminde Güçlük Yaşanan Konulara İlişkin Öğretmen Görüşleri

## Giriş

Bilgi ve teknolojinin geliştiği bir dönemde toplumlar kendi kültürünü tanıyan, koruyan, kültürün devamlılığını sağlayan, toplumu daha ileriye taşıyacak bireylere ihtiyaç duyar. Sosyal bilgiler dersi ile bireyin bilgi toplama, analiz etme, iş birliği yapma, problem çözme becerileri gelişir. Michaelis (1964), sosyal bilgiler terimini, sosyal bilimlerin içeriğine dayanan üniteleri içeren bir programın bir alanını göstermek için kullanır. Sosyal bilgiler eğitimi disiplinler arası yaklaşımla oluşturulmuş bir çalışma alanı olarak geçmişi 1920'lere kadar uzanmaktadır. Sosyal bilgiler; tarih, coğrafya, vatandaşlık bilgisi, ekonomi, sosyoloji gibi sosyal bilimlerden faydalanılarak disiplinler arası bir yaklaşımla oluşturulmuş bir derstir. Bu ders aracılığı ile bünyesinde barındırdığı bilim dallarına ait temel bilgi ve becerilerin bir kısmını öğrencilere aktarılması beklenir. Amerika merkezli National Council for the Social Studies derneği [NCSS] 1921 yılından bu yana bu dersin tanımı, içeriği ve müfredat programları gibi pek çok alanda önemli hizmetler vermeye devam etmektedir. NCSS'nin sosyal bilgiler tanımı şu şekildedir: "Sosyal bilgiler, vatandaşlık yeterlilikleri kazandırmak için sanat, edebiyat ve sosyal bilimleri disiplinler arası bir yaklaşımla birleştirerek meydana gelen bir çalışma alanıdır (NCSS, 1994)". Derneğin bu tanımının yanı sıra "bilgili, demokrasiye bağlı nesiller, demokratik yaşamı koruyan vatandaşlar yetiştirmek" için sosyal bilgilerin önemli bir ders olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Bu bağlamda sosyal bilgiler dersi ile, iyi vatandaşlar yetiştirmekle beraber, insanların hem kendilerini hem de içinde buldukları toplumu tanıması hedeflenmektedir. Bu ders ile sadece ulusal düzeyde vatandaşlık ve kimlik kazandırılmasının yanında evrensel bilgi, beceri ve tutumların da bireylere kazandırılması istenmektedir. Sosyal bilgiler adı ilk defa 1916 yılında ABD'de toplanan bir komisyon tarafından kullanılmıştır. Amerika'da bu ders ilk önceleri tarih, coğrafya ve vatandaşlık konularının ağırlıkta olduğu bir programa sahipti (Kan, 2010). Sosyal bilgiler içeriği üzerinde farklı ülkeler farklı anlayışları benimsemişlerdir. Toplumsal yapı ve dünyada yaşanan önemli olaylar bu dersin muhteviyatının

standartlaştırılamamasına neden olmuştur. Ancak NCSS'nin sosyal bilgileri tanımlayıp, içeriğini ve temellerini belirlemesiyle bu karmaşa büyük oranda ortadan kalkmıştır (Martorella, Bear, & Bolick, 2002).

Sosyal bilgiler dersinin etkililiğini azaltan faktörler üzerine, ders kitapları, öğretmen eğitimi, kullanılan araç gereç ve yöntem eksikliği, ders süresinin yetersizliği, programın kazanıma uygun olmaması, öğretmen beklentileri üzerine birçok çalışma yapılmıştır. Çalışmalar genel olarak öğretmenden dolayı yaşanan sorunlar, araç gerek kullanımından dolayı yaşanan sorunla ve derste öğretmenin kullandığı yöntem teknikten dolayı yaşanan sorun olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. Bu çalışmada sorunu daha özele indirgemek amaçlanmıştır. Sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretmenler tarafından öğretimi ve öğrenciler tarafından öğreniminde zorluk yaşanan konuları sınıf kademelerine göre konu bazlı saptamak en önemli amaçtır.

Bu araştırmada, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretiminde ve öğrencilerin de öğrenim sürecinde güçlük yaşadıkları konuların belirlenmesi, yaşanan güçlüklerin nedenleri ve bunlara çözüm önerilerinin öğretmenlerin görüşleri ile ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırmanın problem cümlesi "Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretiminde, öğrenciler tarafından da öğreniminde güçlük yaşanan konular nelerdir? şeklinde belirlenmiş olup ana probleme yönelik 5 alt problem oluşturulmuştur.

1) Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretiminde güçlük çektikleri konular hangileridir?

2) Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin öğretimde güçlük yaşadıkları konuların sebepleri nelerdir?

3) Sosyal bilgiler dersinde öğrenciler hangi konuların öğreniminde güçlük yaşamaktadırlar?

4) Öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersi öğreniminde güçlük yaşadıkları konuların sebepleri nelerdir?

5) Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretiminde ve öğreniminde güçlük yaşanan konulara ilişkin çözüm önerileri nelerdir?

## **Yöntem**

Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretiminde ve öğrencilerin de öğrenmesinde güçlük yaşadıkları konulara ilişkin görüşlerinin alındığı bu araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden durum çalışması modeli kullanılmıştır. Nitel araştırma doğal ortamın daha az bozulması, olayların anlamını anlamada yardımcı olan birçok araştırma modelini içine alan genel bir kavramdır (Yılmaz & Şimşek, 2005). Nitel araştırmanın en önemli özelliklerinden biri de çalışma yapılan konuda katılımcıların bakış açısını görebilmeyi ve bu bakış açısına göre sosyal yapı ve süreçleri ortaya koymasına olanak vermesidir (Yılmaz & Şimşek, 2013). Araştırmada bu yöntemin seçilmesinin nedeni çalışmada sınırların kesin olarak belirlenememesi ve uygulamacıya daha esnek daha derinlemesine analiz yapabilme imkanı sağlamasıdır.

Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Türkiye'deki ortaokullarda görev yapan 36 sosyal bilgiler öğretmeni oluşturmaktadır. Örneklem seçiminde kolayda örneklem yöntemi tercih edilmiştir. Kolayda örnekleme yöntemi, araştırma sürecinde araştırmacının çalışma yapacağı birimlerin seçiminde

rahatlıkla ulaşabileceği, kendisine yakın olan birimleri örneklemine dahil ettiği örneklem seçme yöntemidir (Baştürk & Taştepe, 2013).

Çalışmada nitel veri toplama araçlarından yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği, araştırmacı ve katılımcılara hem belli bir derecede standartlık hem de esneklik tanınması sebebi ile eğitimbilim araştırmalarına daha bir tekniktir (Tümöklü, 2000). Veri toplama süreci yaklaşık olarak 6 hafta sürmüştür. Bu süreçte orta okullara gidilerek, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri ile birebir görüşülmüştür. Katılımcılardan alınan cevaplar içerik analizi uygulanarak çözümlenmiştir. İçerik analizinde temel olarak birbirine benzeyen belirli cevap ve kavramların başlıca kodlar haline getirilerek okuyucunun anlayabileceği bir forma getirmektir. Araştırmada toplanan veriler alt problemler esas alınarak analiz edilmiş ve yorumlanmıştır.

## **Bulgular**

Bu bölümde araştırmanın temel sorularına ait bulgulara yer verilmiştir. Bu bulgulardan ilki, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersinde öğretmekte en çok güçlük çektikleri konuların neler olduğuna dairdir. Öğretmenlerden 5, 6 ve 7. sınıflardaki konular arasından seçim yapmaları istenmiştir. 5. sınıfta yer alan öğrenme alanları (üniteler) içerisinde en çok “Kültür ve Miras” öğrenme alanının öğretiminde öğretmenlerin zorluk yaşadığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu ünite içerisinde de en çok “Uygarıkları Tanıyoruz” konusunun öğretiminde güçlük yaşandığı belirlenmiştir. Ünite içerisindeki diğer konuların öğretiminde çok fazla sorun yaşanmadığı görülmüştür. 6. sınıfa ait bulgular şu şekildedir: 6. sınıf üniteleri arasında öğretmenlerin öğretmekte en çok güçlük çektiği ünitenin “Tarihe Yolculuk” ünitesi olduğu görülmektedir. Bu ünite içerisinde de en çok “Türklerin anayurdu Orta Asya” konusunun öğretiminde zorluk yaşandığı tespit edilmiştir. Ünite içerisinde yer alan diğer konuların öğretiminde de güçlük yaşandığı görülmektedir. Bu ünite içerisinde yer alan konuların neredeyse tamamında öğretmenlerin zorluk yaşadıkları görülmüştür. 7. sınıf üniteleri arasında ise, öğretmenlerin öğretmekte en çok güçlük çektiği ünitenin “Tarihe Yolculuk” ünitesindeki “Osmanlı devletinin ıslahat hareketleri” konusunun olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Yine bu ünite içerisindeki diğer konuların öğretiminde de öğretmenlerin zorluk yaşadığı belirlenmiştir. Böylelikle 5, 6 ve 7. sınıflarda sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin öğretmekte güçlük yaşadıkları ünitelerin tarih içeriğine sahip olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Araştırmanın ikinci bulgusu ise sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin bazı konuların öğretiminde zorluk yaşanmasının sebeplerine ilişkindir. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin tarih konularını öğretirken zorluk yaşamalarının en önemli nedeni olarak “Konuyu öğrenci düzeyine uygun olarak aktaramamaları” göstermişlerdir. Bu nedene yakın bir başka önemli neden olarak da “Soyut konuları aktaramama ve somut materyal kullanmamaları” olarak belirtmişlerdir. Aşağıda bazı öğretmen görüşlerine doğrudan alıntı yoluyla yer verilmiştir. Çalışmanın üçüncü bulgusu ise: Sosyal bilgiler dersinde öğrencilerin hangi ünitelerde hangi konuları öğrenmekte zorluk yaşadıklarına dair sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin görüşleridir. 5. sınıfta tarih içerikli “Geçmişe Yolculuk” ünitesinin “Uygarıkları Tanıyoruz” konusunun öğrenciler tarafından zor öğrenildiği öğretmenler tarafından ifade edilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra öğretmenler coğrafya içerikli “İnsan ve Çevre” ünitesindeki “Haritalar ne Diyor?” konusunun da zor öğrenildiğini ortaya koymuştur. 6. sınıf öğrencilerinin sosyal bilgiler dersinde öğrenmekte zorlandıkları ünite olan “Tarihe Yolculuk” ünitesinin içerisinde yer alan bütün konuların öğreniminde güçlük yaşadıkları tespit edilmiştir. Son olarak 7. sınıf sosyal bilgiler dersinde öğrencilerin öğrenmekte en çok zorlandıkları ünitenin “Türk Tarihine Yolculuk” olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu ünite içerisinde yer alan bütün konuların öğreniminde öğrencilerin zorlandığı tespit edilmiştir.

Çalışmanın dördüncü araştırma sorusu olan “Öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersi konularında öğrenme zorluğu yaşamasının sebepleri nelerdir?” sorusuna ilişkin bulgular şöyledir: Katılımcıların sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğreniminde yaşanan güçlüklerin nedenlerinin neler olabilir sorusuna verilen cevaplar 3 tema altında toplanmıştır. Bu temalar: öğrenci kaynaklı, öğretim programı kaynaklı, yöntem-teknik ve materyal kaynaklı nedenler olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın beşinci ve son sorusu olan Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretiminde, öğrencilerin de sosyal bilgiler dersi öğreniminde yaşadıkları güçlüklerle yönelik çözüm önerileri nelerdir? sorusuna ait bulgular şöyledir: Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu programdaki konuların sadeleştirilmesini sosyal bilgilerin öğretimi ve öğreniminde yaşanan güçlüklerin çözümü olarak görmüşlerdir. Yine ders saatinin arttırılması, ders kitaplarının kalitesinin arttırılması ve öğrencilerin önbilgileri ve hazırbulunuşluk düzeylerinin dikkate alınmasını, çözüm önerisi olarak belirtmişlerdir. Bu kısımda çalışmanın verilerinden elde edilen bulgular özetlenerek yer almalıdır.

## **Tartışma ve Sonuç**

Araştırmanın ilk bulgusu sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretiminde sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin güçlük yaşadıkları konuların tespit edilmesiydi. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri derste tarih konularının öğretiminde güçlük yaşadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Literatür incelendiğinde öğrencilerin tarih dersini genel olarak zor ve sıkıcı bir ders olarak gördükleri yapılan bazı çalışmalarla ortaya konmuştur (Akınoğlu & Aslan, 2007). Ayva'nın (2010) yaptığı araştırma sonucunda öğrencilerin tarih konularının diğer derslere oranla daha zor öğrendiklerini tespit etmiştir. Yapılan araştırmalar incelendiğinde araştırmada elde edilen sonuçlarla diğer araştırmalardan elde edilen sonuçların bir birini destekler nitelikte olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Böylece sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretiminde 5, 6 ve 7. sınıflarda öğretmenlerin en çok zorluk yaşadığı ünitelerin tarih konularını içeren üniteler olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu kısımda çalışmanın bulgularından elde sonuçlara ve bu sonuçların benzer çalışmalarla olan ilişkisinin tartışılması özetlenerek yer almalıdır.

Araştırmanın ikinci bulgusu sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğretiminde neden zorluk yaşadıklarına ilişkindir. Bu araştırma ile öğretmenlerin yaşadıkları sorunların yine öğretmenlerden kaynaklandığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri 5, 6 ve 7. sınıfta özellikle tarih konularının öğretiminde zorluk yaşamalarının nedeni olarak; öğretmenin teknolojiye ve yeniliklere uyum gösterememesi, lisansta (üniversite eğitiminde) alınan teorik bilgi ile uygulamanın örtüşmemesi, öğretmenin derse hazırlıksız gitmesi, konuyu öğrenci düzeyine uygun aktaramaması, soyut konuları aktaramama ve somut materyal kullanmama, öğretmenin motivasyon eksikliği, öğrencinin önbilgilerini kontrol etmemesi, öğrencinin ilgisini derse çekememesi, öğretmenin yeterli donanımda olmaması gibi sebepleri göstermiştir. Öğretmenlerle yapılan bazı çalışmalarda öğretmenlerin alanları ile ilgili yayınları takip etmediklerini, teknolojiye ve yeniliklere uyum göstermediklerini ifade etmiştir (Ağıl, 2003). Gönenç ve Açıkalin (2016) ile Dinç ve Doğan (2010) yaptıkları araştırmalarda öğretmenlerin materyal hazırlama noktasında kendilerini eksik gördüklerini dile getirmişlerdir. Çelikkaya (2010) yaptığı çalışmasında öğretmenlerin hizmet içi eğitimlerde yoğunlukla materyal hazırlama ve kullanma konusuna yer verildiği, öğretmenlerin kendini bu konuda yetersiz hissettiklerini ifade etmiştir. Yener'in (2015) yaptığı çalışmada da sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri lisanstan mezun olduktan sonra kendilerini yenilememeleri, gelişimlere ayak uydurmamaları, yayınları takip etmedikleri sonucuna ulaşmıştır.

Topçu (2017) öğretmenlerle yaptığı çalışmasında öğretmenlerin dersin yapısına ilişkin sorunlar yaşadıklarını dile getirmiştir. Topçu çalışmasında öğretmenlerin temel sorunlarından birinin de öğretmenlerin lisans eğitimleri sırasında aldıkları öğretmenlik teorik dersler ile meslek hayatına başladıklarında farklılıklar yaşandığı tespitinde bulunmuştur. Yılmaz ve Tepebaş (2011) yaptıkları çalışmalarında eğitim fakültesinde alınan okul deneyimi ve öğretmenlik uygulamaları derslerinin önemsenmemesi ve mesleğe başladığında sorunların yaşanması sonucuna ulaşmışlardır. Gönenç ve Açıkalın (2016) çalışmasında öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin dikkatini çekmede ve motivasyonu sağlamada güçlükler yaşadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Araştırmanın üçüncü bulgusu sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğreniminde öğrencilerin güçlük yaşadıkları konuların tespitidir. Öğrencilerin öğrenmekte zorluk yaşadıkları konuların da tarih konuları olduğu ancak sadece 5. sınıfta hem tarih hem de coğrafya konularının öğreniminde aynı şekilde zorluklar yaşandığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Böylelikle öğretmenlerin öğretmekte zorluk yaşadığı konular ile öğrencilerin öğrenmekte zorluk yaşadığı konuların aynı konular olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

İbrahimoglu (2018) tarafından yapılan çalışmada, öğrencilerin en çok zorladığı konuların başında tahin konularının, özele inmek gerekirse de Rönesans ve Reform gibi konuların olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Yine Koçer (2017) yaptığı çalışmasında Reform, Rönesans, Coğrafi Keşifler konularının öğretiminde ve öğreniminde güçlükler yaşandığını ifade etmiştir. Böylece araştırmanın ulaştığı bu sonuç ile benzer araştırmaların el ettiği sonuçlar örtüşmektedir. Araştırmanın dördüncü bulgusu sosyal bilgiler dersinin öğreniminde öğrencilerin güçlük yaşamalarının nedenleridir. Bu nedenler: öğrenciden, programdan, yöntem teknik ya da derste kullanılan materyalden kaynaklanan sorunlardır. Öğrenci kaynaklı nedenler, öğrencinin konuları düzenli tekrar etmemeleri, öğrencilerin derse hazırlıksız gelmeleri, öğrencinin önbilgi ve hazırbulunuşluk eksikliği, öğrencinin derse ilgisiz ve önyargılı olmaları (dersi içselleştirememesi), öğrencinin konular arasında ilişki kuramaması, dersin öğrenci ve velilerce önemsiz görülmesidir. Program kaynaklı nedenler, programın öğrenci ilgi ve ihtiyaçlarına uygun hazırlanmaması, konuların yoğun, soyut ve öğrenci seviyesinin üzerinde olması, ders saatinin yetersiz olması, üniteler arası bağlantı olmamasıdır. Yöntem-teknik ve materyal; bu dersin ezbere dayalı olarak görülmesinden dolayı anlatım tekniğinin kullanılması, uygun teknik ve yöntemin kullanılmaması ve kullanılan tekniklerin bazılarının konuya uygun olmaması.

Araştırmanın beşinci ve son bulgusu sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretiminde, öğrencilerin de sosyal bilgiler dersi öğreniminde yaşadıkları güçlüklerle yönelik çözüm önerileridir. Elde edilen sonuçlar şunlardır: öğretim programının sadeleştirilmeli, ders saati artırılmalı, soyut konular için her okula uygun somut materyaller temin edilmeli, öğrencilerin dersi düzenli tekrar etmeleri, öğrencinin önbilgileri ve hazırbulunuşluk düzeylerine dikkate edilmesi, öğrenci merkezli öğretim ortamı sağlanmalı. Ayrıca öğretmenlere uygulamaya yönelik hizmet içi eğitim verilmeli, ders kitaplarının kalitesinin artırılmalı, sınıflardaki öğrenci sayısı azaltılmamalıdır.

Memişoğlu ve Köylü (2015) sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri ile yaptıkları çalışmada: ders saatinin arttırılması, sınıf mevcudlarının azaltılması, kazanımların azaltılıp programın sadeleştirilmesi gerektiği sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Açıkalın ve Gönenç'de (2017), sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri ders saatinin arttırılması, sınıf mevcudunun düşürülmesi önerisinde bulunmuşlardır. Uygun (2020) yaptığı çalışmada sosyal bilgiler dersinde yaşanan sorunları gidermek için programın sadeleştirilmesi, sınıf mevcudunun düşürülmesi, ders saatinin arttırılması, araç-gereç ve ekipman temini yapılması önerisinde bulunmuştur.



## **Öneriler**

Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinden alınan görüşlere göre hem öğretmenler hem öğrenciler 5, 6 ve 7. sınıf tarih konularının öğretiminde ve öğreniminde güçlük yaşamaktadırlar. Sosyal bilgiler öğretim programındaki öğretmen ve öğrencilerin güçlük yaşadıkları konular sadeleştirilmelidir.

Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri yöntem, teknik ve materyal kullanımında güçlük yaşadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Meslek hayatına başlayan öğretmenlere ve lisans okuyan öğretmen adaylarına yöntem, teknik, araç-gereç kullanımına ve uygulamasına yönelik hizmet öncesi ve hizmet için eğitim verilmelidir.

Çalışmada elde edilen verilere göre ders kitapları öğrencilerin seviyelerinin üzerinde olduğu görülmektedir. Sosyal bilgiler ders kitapları güncellenmeli, öğrencilerin seviyelerine uygun olarak, daha akıcı, daha bol etkinlikli olmalıdır. Bu kısımda çalışmanın sonuçlarına uygun olarak oluşturulan öneriler özetlenerek yer verilmelidir.