

|Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi|

Comparative Analysis of Social Studies Curricula in Türkiye (2005, 2018, 2023 and 2024)

Türkiye’de Uygulanan Sosyal Bilgiler Dersi Öğretim Programlarının Karşılaştırılması (2005, 2018, 2023 ve 2024)

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Keywords	Abstract
Social studies curriculum	The aim of this study is to comparatively examine the social studies curricula implemented in Türkiye following the adoption of the constructivist approach. In this context, the curricula published in 2005, 2018, 2023, and 2024 were analyzed in terms of their formal characteristics, learning areas, objectives/learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism. This study employed document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. The data sources consisted of the relevant social studies curricula. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The findings revealed both similarities and differences among the curricula across all dimensions. In particular, changes were observed in the organization of skills and values, differences emerged in the scope and content of learning areas, and variations were identified in the treatment of topics related to Atatürkism over time. The findings indicate a general tendency toward content reduction in the curricula, while skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism have varied across different periods, and the 2024 curriculum stands out with its holistic structure. These results are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the development process of the curricula and to guide future curriculum development efforts.
Skill	
Value	
Learning areas	
Atatürkism topics	
Anahtar Sözcükler	Öz
Sosyal bilgiler öğretim programı	Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’de yapılandırmacı yaklaşımın benimsenmesinden sonra yayımlanan sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretim programlarını karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemektir. Bu kapsamda 2005, 2018, 2023 ve 2024 programları; biçimsel özellikler, öğrenme alanları, kazanımlar/öğrenme çıktıları, beceriler, değerler ve Atatürkçülük konuları açısından analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden doküman incelemesi kullanılmıştır. Veri kaynaklarını ilgili öğretim programları oluşturmaktadır. Veriler betimsel analiz ile çözümlenmiştir. İncelenen programlar arasında tüm boyutlar açısından benzerlik ve farklılıklar belirlenmiştir. Özellikle beceri ve değer yapılarında değişimler olduğu, öğrenme alanlarının kapsam ve içerik bakımından farklılaştığı ve Atatürkçülük konularının ele alınışında dönemsel değişimler bulunduğu görülmüştür. Bulgular, programlarda genel olarak içerik azaltma eğilimi bulunduğunu; beceri, değer ve Atatürkçülük konularının dönemsel olarak değiştiğini ve 2024 programının bütüncül yapısıyla öne çıktığını göstermektedir. Bu sonuçların, programların gelişim sürecinin anlaşılmasına ve gelecekteki program geliştirme çalışmalarına katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.
Beceri	
Değer	
Öğrenme alanı	
Atatürkçülük konuları	

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Introduction

The social studies course is a subject that aims to educate individuals who possess decision-making skills; who love their country, nation, and humanity; who act consciously in production and consumption processes; who embrace democracy; and who are capable of multidimensional thinking (Sönmez, 2010). In the early years of the Republic, topics that fall within the scope of social studies education in Türkiye were taught through separate courses such as History, Geography, and Citizenship (formerly known as Civic Education). In the 1962 Draft Primary School Curriculum, these three subjects were brought together under the title "Community and Country Studies." Subsequently, this course was included in the 1968 Primary School Curriculum under the name "Social Studies," marking its first introduction as an independent subject at the primary school level (Öztürk, 2009).

This course was conducted predominantly through traditional approaches and methods for many years (Öztürk, 2009). From 1968 until the 2005–2006 academic year, no significant changes were made in the aims, philosophy, or teaching methods of the social studies course, and the revisions that were implemented remained largely limited to content (Sağlam & Başkan İşler, 2024).

However, since 1998, intensive curriculum development efforts have been carried out (Öztürk, 2009). Rapid changes and developments in individual, social, and economic spheres worldwide have had significant impacts in Türkiye, affecting various areas ranging from demographic and family structures to lifestyles, production and consumption patterns, as well as scientific perspectives and information technologies. Reflecting this multidimensional transformation in the education system and curricula has therefore been regarded as a necessity (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2005a). Accordingly, the need for a new instructional approach capable of addressing changing social and individual demands has increased.

The need for students to solve the problems they encounter in their daily lives and to adapt to change has made it necessary to adopt a learner-centered approach (Sağlam & Bilgili, 2006). Accordingly, the constructivist approach, which is based on enabling students to learn how to use knowledge rather than merely memorizing it and to construct new knowledge upon their existing knowledge, began to be adopted in the education system (Kaya et al., 2014). In this context, the primary education curriculum drafts prepared by the MoNE were piloted in the 2004–2005 academic year and were implemented in all schools starting from the 2005–2006 academic year (Sağlam & Başkan İşler, 2024). During this process, the social studies curriculum (SSC) was also restructured based on the social constructivist approach, emphasizing thematic learning, problem solving, and cooperative learning (Öztürk, 2009). Thus, the SSC was developed in line with the constructivist perspective, taking into account both global changes and the needs identified through the evaluation of previous curricula (MoNE, 2005b).

The 2005 social studies curriculum [2005 SSC] aimed to educate active citizens by equipping students with the skills, concepts, and values they need in the processes of knowledge production and effective use of knowledge (Ata, 2009). This curriculum remained in effect for many years and constituted the fundamental framework of social studies education in Türkiye. However, over time, developments in the field of education and feedback obtained from practice led to the need to review the curriculum. In this context, the SSC was further updated in 2015, 2017, and 2018.

During the development process of the 2018 social studies curriculum [2018 SSC], curricula that had been renewed in different countries based on similar rationales were examined, and academic studies on education and curricula conducted both nationally and internationally were reviewed. In addition, relevant legislation, development plans, council decisions, and reports prepared by various institutions were analyzed; and the views of teachers, administrators, and academics were evaluated through surveys and reports. In line with the opinions and evaluations obtained, the curricula were reviewed and put into practice in all schools as of the 2018–2019 academic year (MoNE, 2018).

The SSC, which was updated in 2018, was later reviewed again in 2023 with some limited revisions. In the 2023 update, no significant changes were made to the overall structure of the curriculum; rather, only minor modifications were introduced in the wording and content of certain attainments (MoNE, 2023). Therefore, the 2018 SSC and 2023 social studies curriculum [2023 SSC] largely share similar characteristics.

The process of updating curricula in Türkiye continued after 2023, and accordingly, the SSC was restructured in 2024 within the framework of the Century of Türkiye Education Model (CTEM). In the development of the 2024 Social Studies Curriculum [2024 SSC], a holistic educational approach was adopted to support students' multidimensional development in line with changing and evolving global conditions. Within the curriculum, conceptual skills, domain-specific skills, social-emotional learning skills, values, tendencies, and various literacy skills were addressed together, aiming to equip students with the competencies they need in both individual and social life. Furthermore, considering the interdisciplinary nature of the social sciences, the curriculum content was organized within the context of change and continuity from past to present, and a structure was established in which learning outcomes were integrated with skills (MoNE, 2024).

When the social studies curricula [SSCs] implemented in Türkiye are examined, it is seen that the structure of the curricula does not consist solely of content arrangements; rather, it has a multidimensional structure encompassing various components such as learning domains, attainments/learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism. Learning domains are defined as a fundamental structure that enables the topics and themes addressed in social studies education to be viewed holistically and that organizes the learning process (MoNE, 2005a). Attainments or learning outcomes refer to the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that students are expected to acquire through planned or structured learning experiences (Tarhan, 2014). Skills, on the other hand, are defined as the abilities that students are expected to acquire, develop, and use by relating them to daily life during the learning process, and that are necessary for performing a task or addressing a subject (Ata, 2009; Bilgili, 2009). In this respect, skills are considered an important component of the curriculum as they contribute to the development of higher-order cognitive processes such as critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making. The concept of value is expressed as a set of beliefs that guide individuals' behaviors and distinguish humans from other living beings (Ulusoy & Dilmaç, 2012). In this context, the values included in SSCs are among the fundamental elements that support the development of individuals as responsible, democratic, and sensitive citizens in social life. In addition, topics related to Atatürkism are also included in SSCs in Türkiye as an important dimension of history and citizenship education. Through the teaching of Atatürkism, it is aimed to educate individuals who understand and adopt Atatürk's principles and reforms (Dönmez & Yazıcı, 2008). Therefore, addressing these dimensions together provides an important framework for understanding the structural characteristics of SSCs and their changes over time.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are numerous studies comparing SSCs across different years and dimensions. In a significant portion of these studies, curricula have been analyzed in terms of fundamental components such as learning domains, attainments/learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism, and similarities and differences among curricula have been identified.

In this context, the study conducted by Semenderoğlu and Gülersoy (2005) compared the 1968 and 2005 SSCs, evaluating them in terms of various aspects such as specific objectives, units, and the number of topics/attainments. The findings revealed that the 2005 curriculum had both strengths and aspects requiring improvement. Similarly, Bekdemir and Polat (2016) compared the 2005 curriculum with the draft curriculum published in 2015 and found that the newer program adopted a more simplified structure by reducing general objectives, learning domains, and the number of attainments.

Another study comparing curricula in terms of their core components was conducted by Çoban and Akşit (2018). In this study, the 2005 and 2017 curricula were examined in terms of learning domains, skills, values, concepts, attainments, and Atatürkism. The findings indicated that learning domains were reorganized in the 2017 curriculum and that a new learning domain titled "Active Citizenship" was introduced. While the number of skills increased, the number of values and attainments decreased. In addition, it was determined that attainments related to Atatürkism were significantly reduced.

In the study conducted by Eker (2020), the 2005 and 2018 curricula were compared in terms of objectives, learning domains, instructional approaches, attainments, skills, values, and assessment and evaluation. The findings showed that in the 2018 curriculum, the number of learning domains was reduced, skills were increased, and values were associated with learning domains. Furthermore, the curriculum was

structured in a more simplified way, the number of attainments decreased, and some Atatürkism-related content present in the 2005 curriculum was removed.

More recent studies have focused on the comparison of the 2018, 2023, and 2024 curricula. Önger and Duman (2024) examined these curricula in terms of formal structure, content organization, educational process, and assessment and evaluation, concluding that while the 2018 and 2023 curricula are largely similar, the 2024 curriculum presents a more holistic and systematic structure. Similarly, Yıldırım and Çalışkan (2024) reported that the 2024 curriculum differs from previous curricula in terms of skills, values, concepts, and learning domains.

Dinç et al. (2024) compared the 2018 and 2024 curricula and found that in the 2024 curriculum, the number of learning domains and attainments was reduced, structural changes were introduced, and literacy skills were brought to the forefront. Likewise, Turan et al. (2025) compared the 2024 curriculum with the 2005 and 2017 curricula and emphasized that the new curriculum exhibits a more integrated structure in terms of learning domains, learning outcomes, skills and values education, and assessment and evaluation.

However, it is noteworthy that a significant portion of the studies in the literature have been conducted based on specific curricula or limited dimensions. Although these studies provide valuable insights into various aspects of the curricula, it can be argued that comprehensive comparative studies addressing the changes in SSCs over time from a multidimensional and holistic perspective remain limited. This situation indicates the need for more comprehensive analyses that examine the relationships among the fundamental components of curricula.

The aim of this study is to examine the 2005, 2018, 2023, and 2024 SSCs developed in Türkiye within the framework of the constructivist approach, in terms of their formal characteristics, learning domains, attainments/learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism, and to reveal the similarities and differences among these curricula. These dimensions were included in the scope of the study as they constitute the core components of SSCs and reflect the objectives, content, and value dimensions of the curriculum. Accordingly, these dimensions were determined as the analytical framework in order to reveal the structural characteristics of the curricula, as well as the change and continuity among them over time. In line with this general aim, the study seeks to answer the following research questions regarding the SSCs prepared by the MoNE in 2005, 2018, 2023, and 2024:

- What are the similarities and differences in terms of formal characteristics?
- What are the similarities and differences in terms of learning domains?
- What are the similarities and differences in terms of attainments/learning outcomes?
- What are the similarities and differences in terms of skills?
- What are the similarities and differences in terms of values?
- What are the similarities and differences in terms of topics related to Atatürkism?

This study is limited to the examination of the SSCs published in Türkiye through comparative document analysis. Within the scope of the research, only the SSCs published in 2005, 2018, 2023, and 2024 were included, and these curricula were compared in terms of formal characteristics, learning domains, attainments/learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism. The analysis conducted in this study was restricted solely to the relevant curriculum documents, and other data collection methods or stakeholder perspectives were excluded from the scope of the research.

Method

Research Design

This study is a qualitative research project that aims to examine and evaluate the 2005, 2018, 2023, and 2024 SSCs developed in Türkiye based on the constructivist approach. Qualitative research is an interpretive research method that relies on multiple subjective data types and allows for the investigation of events and phenomena in their natural settings (Christensen et al., 2020). In accordance with the study's aim,

the research was carried out using a document analysis design, one of the qualitative research methods. Document analysis is a data collection method based on the examination of existing records and documents (Karasar, 2010) and a research approach that involves the systematic examination and interpretation of written and visual materials related to the research topic (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2014).

Data Sources

In this study, criterion sampling, a purposeful sampling method, was employed. Criterion sampling involves selecting all cases that meet a set of predefined criteria (Patton, 2018; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The criterion for this research was defined as SSCs in Türkiye based on the constructivist approach and published by the MoNE. Table 1 presents information about the SSCs that constitute the data sources of this study.

Table 1

Data Sources of the Study

Full Title of the Curriculum	Year of Publication	Publishing Institution
Social studies curriculum for Grades 4–5	2005	Ministry of National Education, Board of Education
Social studies curriculum for Grades 6–7	2005	Ministry of National Education, Board of Education
Social studies curriculum (Primary and Lower Secondary Schools, Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7)	2018	Ministry of National Education, Board of Education
Social studies curriculum (Primary and Lower Secondary Schools, Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7)	2023	Ministry of National Education, Board of Education
Social studies curriculum (Primary and Lower Secondary Schools, Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7) Century of Türkiye Education Model	2024	Ministry of National Education, Board of Education

The table presents information about the SSCs used as data sources in this study. The curricula examined were published by the Ministry of National Education.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

In qualitative research, data may be collected through document review, observation of behaviors, or interviews with participants (Cresswell, 2013). In accordance with the purpose of this study, the document review technique was employed, which involves the analysis of written documents that contain information about the phenomena or situations under investigation (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2014). Document review enables researchers to systematically analyze existing printed or electronic materials to answer the research questions (Bowen, 2009).

During the document analysis process, the procedural steps suggested by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) were followed. First, in the stage of accessing the documents, the SSCs published in 2005, 2018, 2023, and 2024 by the Ministry of National Education were obtained from the official website (MoNE, 2018; MoNE, 2023; MoNE, 2024) of the Board of Education and the researchers' personal archives. Second, in the stage of verifying authenticity, it was confirmed that the obtained documents were official curriculum documents published by authorized institutions. In the third stage, which involves understanding the documents, the curriculum texts were read in detail and examined in line with the aim of the study. In the fourth stage, the data were analyzed, and the curricula were comparatively evaluated in terms of learning outcomes, learning domains, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism. Finally, in the stage of using the data, the findings were organized according to the research questions and presented and interpreted through tables and explanatory texts. The fact that the documents were obtained from official sources provided an important assurance regarding the authenticity of the data.

Data Analysis

In this study, the documents were analyzed within the framework of predetermined categories. The categories used in the analysis included formal characteristics, learning domains, learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism.

Each document was first analyzed separately according to these categories and then compared across the different curriculum versions. The data were analyzed using the descriptive analysis approach, in which the findings are summarized and interpreted based on previously defined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this approach, the data are presented as they are, interpreted within thematic contexts, and systematically categorized.

The descriptive analysis process was carried out in accordance with the four stages proposed by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008). In the first stage, which involves establishing a framework for descriptive analysis, the themes for analysis were determined in line with the aim and research questions of the study. Within this framework, the curricula were examined in terms of formal characteristics, learning domains, learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism. In the second stage, which involves processing the data according to the thematic framework, the examined curricula were analyzed in detail based on the predetermined themes, and the relevant data were organized under these themes. In the third stage, the identification of findings, the obtained data were systematically presented through tables and explanatory texts. In the final stage, the interpretation of findings, the results were evaluated in accordance with the research questions, and the similarities and differences among the curricula were identified.

To ensure the reliability of the study, the analysis process was conducted independently by two field experts. The categorizations made by the researchers were compared, and any discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached. This procedure aimed to minimize interpretation differences during the analysis process and to enhance the consistency of the findings.

Findings

The findings obtained from the analyzed documents are presented in accordance with the research questions and the predetermined categories, and are organized under specific thematic headings. In this context, the findings were discussed under the headings of formal characteristics, learning domains, attainments/learning outcomes, skills, values, and topics related to Atatürkism.

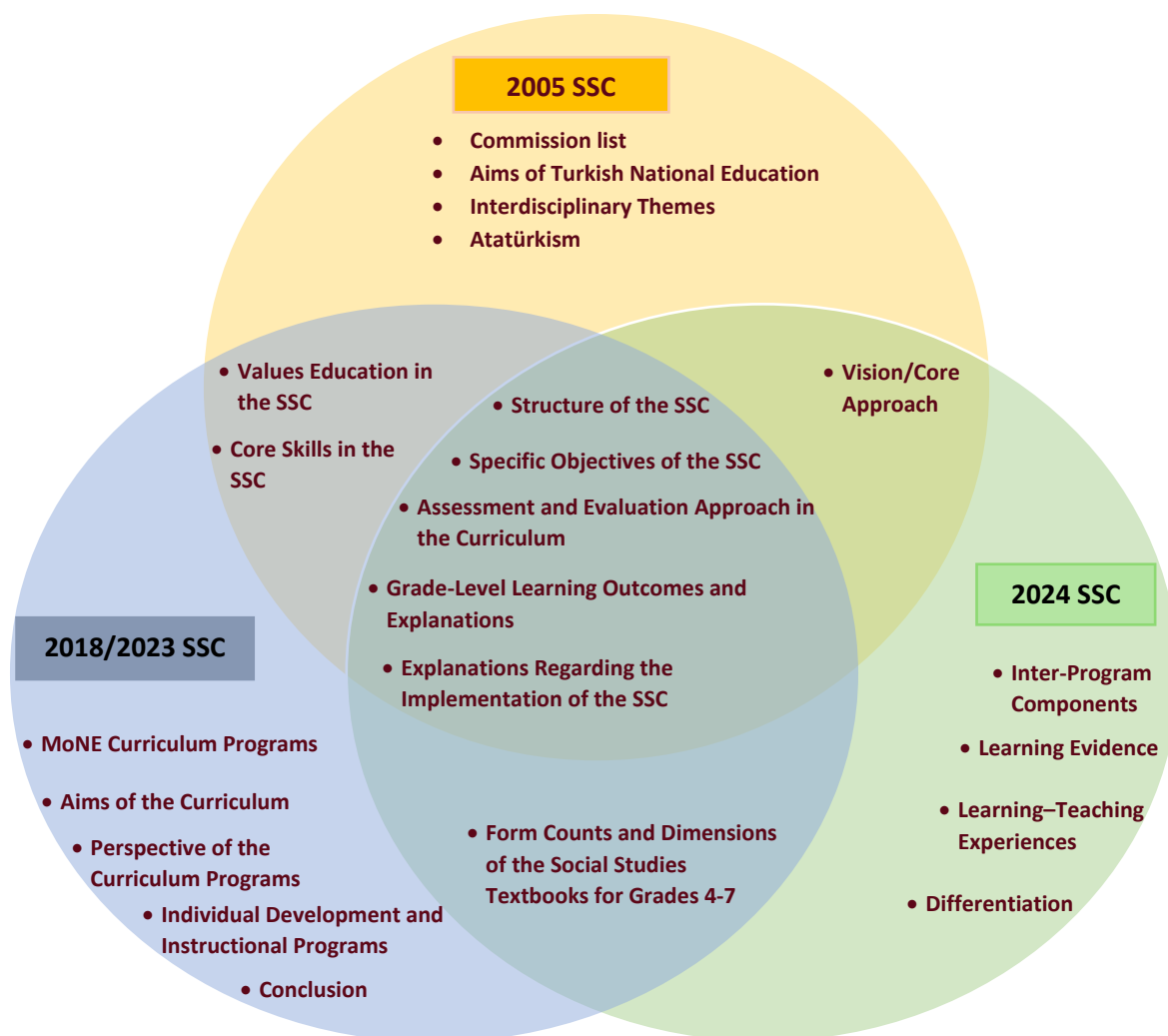
During the analysis process, the 2018 and 2023 SSCs were evaluated together, as they were found to be largely similar across the defined categories. This section presents the descriptive analysis results for each category and provides a comparative overview of the elements of change and continuity among the

Findings on the Formal Characteristics of the Curricula

When examined in terms of formal characteristics, both similarities and differences were identified among the SSCs included in the study. The comparison of the formal characteristics of the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs, all of which were prepared based on the constructivist approach, is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

A Comparison of the SSCs in Terms of Formal Features



An analysis of Figure 1 reveals both similarities and differences among the formal structures of the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs. The curriculum commission list, “Aims of Turkish National Education,” and “Interdisciplinary Themes” sections included in the 2005 SSC were not carried over into the later versions (2018/2023 and 2024).

In the 2005 SSC, course achievements were aligned with interdisciplinary outcomes, whereas in the 2024 SSC, a similar integration appears under the “Interdisciplinary Connections” section in the “Learning Areas by Grade Level” part of the SSC. This indicates that the 2024 program structures interdisciplinary connections through a more thematic approach.

The “Atatürkism” section included in the 2005 SSC was removed from the 2018/2023 and 2024 curricula. Additionally, the “General Objectives” section of the 2005 SSC was renamed in later programs: as “Specific Objectives of the Social Studies Curriculum” in the 2018/2023 SSC and as “Fundamental Philosophy and Specific Objectives of the Social Studies Course” in the 2024 SSC.

The assessment and evaluation components also show notable differences across curricula. In the 2005 SSC, a dedicated section for assessment and measurement tools with detailed implementation examples was included. In contrast, the 2018/2023 SSC addressed this component more briefly, omitting example tools. In the 2024 SSC, this area is presented under the title “Learning Evidence (Assessment and Evaluation),” which provides teachers with activity suggestions for each learning outcome.

Implementation guidelines for each SSC are also presented under different section titles. In the 2005 SSC, this section was titled “Explanations Regarding the Implementation of the SSC”; in the 2018/2023 SSC, it appeared as “Points to Consider During the Implementation of the SSC”; and in the 2024 SSC, it was titled “Principles for the Implementation of the SSC.” On the other hand, sections such as “Objectives of the

Curriculum,” “Perspective of the Curriculum,” “Individual Development and Instructional Programs,” and “Conclusion” are included only in the 2018/2023 SSCs and do not appear in the others.

The “Structure of the Program” section of the 2005 SSC is quite comprehensive in terms of skills, values, and concepts. This section provides detailed information on the definitions of skills, sub-skills, sample activities for skill instruction, approaches and activities for values education, concept teaching techniques, and concept lists.

In the 2018/2023 SSCs, the section titled “Structure of the Social Studies Curriculum” focuses only on learning areas, while “Basic Skills” and “Values Education” are presented as separate components. However, there is no dedicated section for concept teaching in these versions.

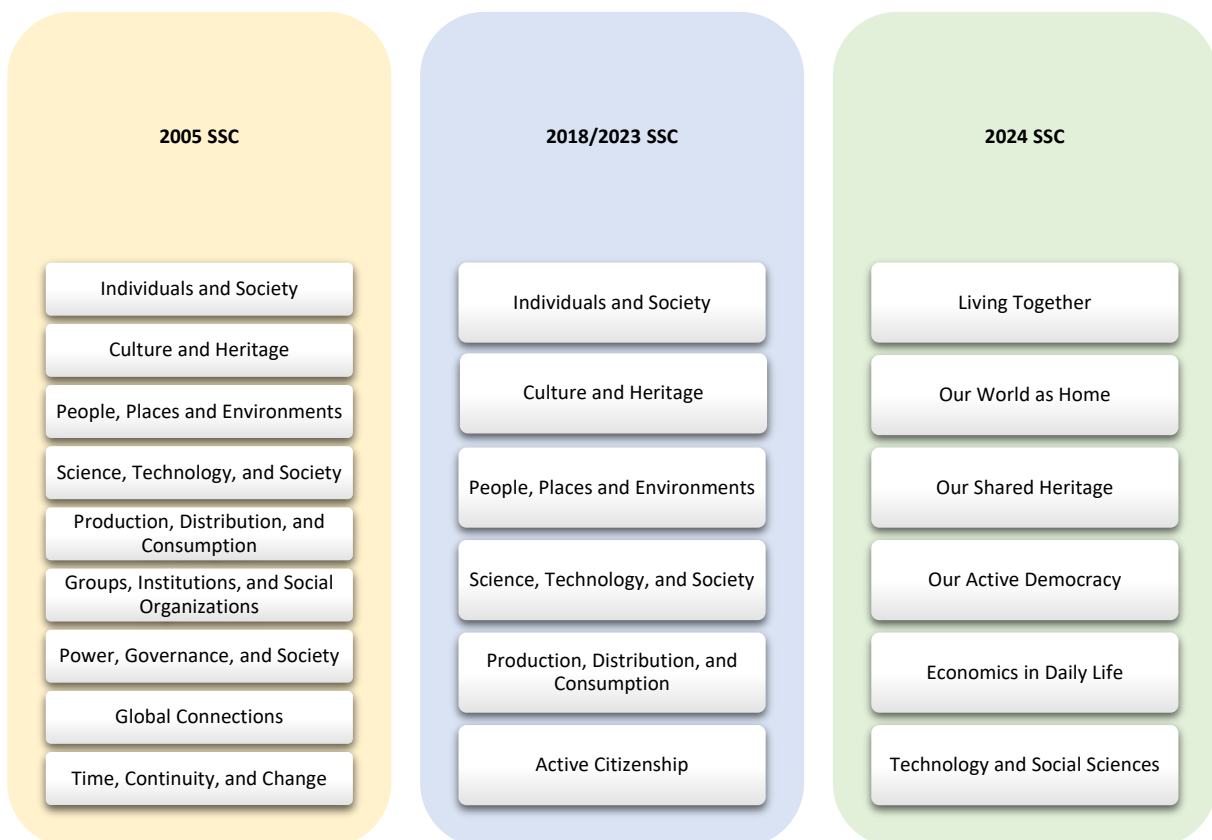
In the 2024 SSC, skills and values are addressed under the “Inter-Program Components” (social-emotional learning skills, values, and literacy skills). Unlike previous programs, the skills are not listed item by item but are categorically presented in the “Learning Areas by Grade Level” section. In this section, the target values and key concepts to be taught are specified, along with the inclusion of dispositions within the same framework. Suggestions for teaching skills, values, concepts, and dispositions are provided to teachers in the “Learning–Teaching Experiences” section.

Findings on Learning Areas

A learning area can be defined as a structure in which interrelated skills, themes, concepts, and values are addressed holistically, and the learning process is organized around these elements (MoNE, 2023). In this context, a comparative visual showing the similarities and differences among the learning areas in the examined curricula is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

A Comparison of the Learning Areas in the SSCs



When Figure 2 is examined, it is observed that the number of learning areas has decreased in the curricula under review, suggesting an effort to streamline the content of the Social Studies course. The 2005 SSC included nine learning areas. In this program, the “Time, Continuity and Change” learning area was

integrated into other learning areas and units, and did not contain standalone attainments. In addition, in the 2005 SSC, unit titles were included alongside learning domains.

In the 2018/2023 SSC, the number of learning areas was reduced to seven. The learning areas “Groups, Institutions and Social Organizations” and “Power, Governance and Society” from the 2005 curriculum were replaced with a new learning area titled “Active Citizenship.” In addition, unit titles were not included in the 2018 and 2023 SSCs.

In the 2024 SSC, the number of learning domains was reduced to six, and unit titles were again not included. Additionally, the program introduced a “School-Based Planning” process to allow for the implementation of extra-curricular activities such as research, reading exercises, social activities, out-of-school learning experiences, observations, and local studies, in addition to the five weekly class hours per grade level. This indicates the adoption of a more flexible structure that encourages schools to incorporate learning experiences based on their local and environmental resources.

Findings on Attainments/Learning Outcomes in the Curricula

In the 2005 and 2018/2023 SSCs, the term “attainment” was used, whereas in the 2024 SSC, this has been replaced by the expressions “learning outcomes” and “process components”. The findings regarding the comparison of the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs in terms of learning outcomes and process components—developed based on the constructivist approach—are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison of the Number of Attainments/Learning Outcomes in the SSC

Grade Level	Number of Achievements / Learning Outcomes		
	2005 SSC	2018/2023 SSC	2024 SSC
4th Grade	46	33	17
5th Grade	46	33	19
6th Grade	43	34	18
7th Grade	39	31	17
Total	174	131	71

As seen in Table 2, the number of attainments provided at each grade level tends to decrease with each newly published curriculum. This indicates a trend toward content simplification within the SSCs.

In the 2024 SSC, the term “attainment” was replaced by the concepts of “learning outcomes and process components,” which describe the processes related to the knowledge and skills students acquire through their learning experiences. The number of learning outcomes included in this program is significantly lower than the number of attainments in previous curricula. However, the structure of learning outcomes and process components in the 2024 SSC aligns more closely with the principles of the constructivist approach compared to its predecessors.

The 2024 SSC was designed with an approach that accommodates different learning styles and student characteristics. Accordingly, the curriculum aims to enable students to provide examples from daily life related to the topics, explain and interpret the knowledge they acquire in their own words, engage in activities based on observation and experience, and employ higher-order thinking skills throughout the learning process.

Findings Regarding Skills

In the 2005 SSC, skills were categorized into two groups as domain-specific skills (6 skills) and basic skills (9 skills), and each skill was explained in detail together with its subcomponents. In the 2018 and 2023 SSCs, however, skills were presented without any classification and were listed in a simple format. In the 2024 SSC, prepared within the framework of the CTEM, the skills aimed to be developed in students were organized into four main categories: “Domain-Specific Skills,” “Conceptual Skills,” “Social-Emotional Learning Skills,” and “Literacy Skills.” In addition, tendencies aimed at supporting students’ attitudes and behaviors in the learning process were also included in the curriculum. Among these, domain-specific skills are structured in accordance with the nature of the social studies discipline and aim to develop students’ integrated

knowledge and skills in areas such as history, geography, citizenship, and economics. Conceptual skills are integrated skills consisting of observable basic skills, mental processes requiring abstract thinking, and higher-order cognitive abilities used in performing complex actions. Social-emotional learning skills encompass the knowledge, skills, and tendencies that enable individuals to manage their emotions, develop empathy, establish healthy and supportive relationships, and build a strong sense of self. Literacy skills, on the other hand, include competencies that enable students to recognize change, adapt to new situations, and apply innovations emerging with advancing technologies to their daily lives (MoNE, 2024). Table 3 presents the information on the skills included in the SSCs developed based on the constructivist approach.

Table 3.

Findings on the skills included in the SSCs

Skills	2005 SSC		2018/2023 SSC		2024 SSC	
	Skills	Skills	Domain Skills	Conceptual Skills	Social and Emotional Learning Skills	Literacy Skills
Research	✓	✓				
Using Information Technologies	✓					
Collecting Information				✓		
Information Literacy						✓
Scientific Inquiry			✓			
Geographical Inquiry			✓			
Environmental Literacy		✓				
Inference				✓		
Analysis				✓		
Perceiving Change and Continuity	✓	✓	✓			
Digital Literacy		✓				✓
Critical Thinking	✓	✓		✓		
Empathy	✓	✓				
Flexibility					✓	
Financial Literacy		✓				✓
Generalization				✓		
Entrepreneurship	✓	✓	✓			
Visual Literacy						✓
Observation	✓	✓				
Map Literacy		✓	✓			
Legal Literacy		✓				
Communication	✓	✓			✓	
Collaboration		✓			✓	
Recognizing Stereotypes and Bias		✓				
Decision Making	✓	✓		✓		
Using Evidence		✓	✓			
Comparison				✓		
Self-Adaptation					✓	

Self-Regulation					✓	
Self-Awareness					✓	
Location Analysis		✓				
Cultural Literacy						✓
Media Literacy		✓				
Spatial Perception	✓	✓	✓			
Self-Control		✓				
Summarizing					✓	
Political Literacy		✓				
Problem Solving	✓	✓			✓	
Art Literacy						✓
Classification					✓	
Inquiry					✓	
Responsible Decision Making					✓	
Social Awareness					✓	
Social Participation	✓	✓	✓			
Sustainability Literacy						✓
Drawing and Interpreting Tables, Graphs, and Diagrams		✓	✓			
Historical Empathy			✓			
Discussion					✓	
Deductive Reasoning					✓	
Using Turkish Correctly, Beautifully and Effectively	✓	✓				
Adaptability					✓	
Civic Literacy						✓
Data Literacy						✓
Reflection					✓	
Structuring					✓	
Creative Thinking	✓	✓				
Interpretation					✓	
Understanding Time and Chronology	✓	✓	✓			
TOTAL	15	27	11	16	9	9

When Table 3 is examined, it can be observed that there has been an increase in the number of skills across the curricula. In addition, some terminological changes in the names of certain skills are noticeable. For instance, the skill referred to as “Creative Thinking” in the 2005 SSC was expressed as “Innovative Thinking Skill” in the 2018 and 2023 curricula. Similarly, the skill “Map Literacy” included in the 2018 and 2023 curricula was renamed as “Map Skill” in the 2024 curriculum. Moreover, the skill “Using Evidence” in the 2018 and 2023 curricula was redefined as “Evidence-Based Inquiry and Research Skill” in the 2024 curriculum. Likewise, the skill “Perceiving Space” included in the 2005 and 2018/2023 curricula was presented as “Spatial Thinking Skill” in the 2024 curriculum, while the skill “Drawing and Interpreting Tables, Graphs, and Diagrams” was expressed as “Table, Graph, Figure, and/or Diagram Skill.” Similarly, the skill “Perceiving Time and Chronology,” which appeared in the 2005 and 2018/2023 curricula, was included in the “Relationships Between Skills” section of the 2024 curriculum under the title “Perceiving Time and Chronological Thinking.” These changes indicate that skills have been restructured across the curricula and presented with more comprehensive and varied expressions.

Within the learning domain titled “Technology and Social Sciences” at the 7th-grade level in the 2024 SSC, the skill “Scientific Inquiry,” which is among the domain-specific skills of science education, was also included. This indicates that an approach integrating skills from different disciplines has been adopted in the SSC and that the program places greater emphasis on interdisciplinary relationships. These changes suggest that the skills have been redefined not only in terms of terminology but also in terms of meaning and scope.

Unlike these programs, the 2024 SSC organizes skills within a structure that integrates them with dispositions and values within the framework of the CTEM. Through this approach, the curriculum aims to support students’ multidimensional development and strengthen their ability to connect learning with everyday life. The program encourages students to experience and apply the skills they will need by relating them to real-life contexts.

Findings Regarding Values

The social studies course aims to help students internalize democratic values and adapt effectively to the society in which they live as individuals who are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Accordingly, the primary objective of the course is to ensure that students are equipped to transform the knowledge and skills they acquire into real-life practices.

This approach is based on the constructivist principle that “learning occurs through experience.” Therefore, in SSCs, values are not only treated as content to be taught but also as a learning component that supports students’ active participation in social life (MoNE, 2005b). Findings related to the values in SSCs, which are designed with a constructivist approach, are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Findings Regarding the Values Included in the SSCs



As seen in Figure 3, it has been determined that the values included in the SSCs, prepared according to the constructivist approach, have changed over time. While some values remained consistent across various curriculum versions from different years, others were removed and later reintroduced.

One fundamental element that should not be overlooked in designing learning experiences is the integration of value education into the process in alignment with curriculum content. Students can internalize values only through experiences that enable them to develop attitudes and behaviors consistent with those values. In this regard, it is essential to support participatory classroom environments based on values with the overall school culture (MoNE, 2025). For values education to be effective, appropriate pedagogical approaches and supportive learning environments need to be structured in an integrated manner (Berkowitz, 2011).

To enhance the effectiveness of value education, it is recommended to use alternative teaching approaches when appropriate. In transferring values to students meaningfully, pedagogical use of examples from national and spiritual cultural heritage, as well as historical figures, is encouraged. Additionally, both in-school and out-of-school learning environments should be incorporated into the process to allow students to observe and experience value-oriented practices (MoNE, 2025). The number of values included in the Social Studies course varies across the examined curricula. Specifically, the 2005 SSC includes 20 values, the 2018 and 2023 curricula include 18 values, and the 2024 curriculum again includes 20 values.

An examination of the curricula reveals that some terminological changes have been made in the expressions of certain values. For instance, the value expressed as “being fair” in the 2005 SSC was presented as “justice” in the 2018 and 2023 curricula. Similarly, the value referred to as “giving importance to family unity” in the 2005 and 2018/2023 curricula was reformulated as “family integrity” in the 2024 curriculum. In addition, the value “giving importance to being healthy” included in the 2005 curriculum was expressed as “healthy living” in the 2024 curriculum. Furthermore, the value “independence,” which appeared among the values in the 2005 and 2018/2023 curricula, was not presented directly as a value in the 2024 curriculum; instead, it was addressed under the heading of “dispositions. These shifts indicate that some values in the 2024 curriculum have been reframed with a focus on behavioral aspects, transforming them into a dynamic structure by integrating them with tendencies.

Findings Regarding Atatürkism-Related Topics in the Curricula

In the 2005 SSC, topics related to Atatürkism are presented together with their explanations and are associated with the relevant learning outcomes. In this context, topics related to Atatürkism are addressed in connection with different learning domains across various grade levels. Accordingly, Atatürkism-related learning outcomes are included in the Culture and Heritage and Science, Technology and Society learning domains in Grade 4; in the Culture and Heritage, Global Connections, and Power, Governance and Society learning domains in Grade 5; in the Individual and Society, People, Places and Environments, Culture and Heritage, Production, Distribution and Consumption, Global Connections, Power, Governance and Society, and Science, Technology and Society learning domains in Grade 6; and in the Individual and Society, Global Connections, and Power, Governance and Society learning domains in Grade 7 (MoNE, 2005a). This indicates that topics related to Atatürkism are integrated into different learning domains of the curriculum in order to contribute to the development of students’ historical awareness, social understanding, and citizenship consciousness.

In the 2018 and 2023 SSCs, direct references to Atatürk were included to a more limited extent. In these curricula, Atatürk is mentioned only in the learning outcome “Explains Atatürk’s contributions to the development of Turkish democracy,” which is included in the Grade 7 learning domain *Active Citizenship*, and in the statement found in the section on the specific objectives of the curriculum: “to comprehend the role of Atatürk’s principles and reforms in the social, cultural, and economic development of the Republic of Türkiye and to be willing to sustain democratic, secular, national, and modern values.” This situation indicates that the scope of Atatürkism in the 2018 and 2023 curricula has been narrowed and that it has been addressed mainly within the framework of democratic citizenship and values education.

In the 2024 SSC, it is observed that the theme of Atatürkism is addressed both at the level of specific objectives and within the learning domains. In the section titled “*The Fundamental Philosophy and Specific Objectives of the Social Studies Course*”, the curriculum includes the statement: “to draw conclusions about

the importance of national unity by referring to the sacrifices and solidarity demonstrated by Atatürk and the Turkish nation during the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye.”

Additionally, in the “*Our Living Democracy*” learning domain at the 4th and 7th grade levels, emphasis is placed on Atatürk’s democratic leadership, his understanding of national unity, and the values of the republic. In this respect, the 2024 SSC appears to have strengthened the theme of Atatürkism and addressed it in a way that is integrated with contemporary citizenship education.

Discussion

When the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs developed in Türkiye based on the constructivist approach are compared in terms of formal characteristics, it is observed that there are some fundamental differences. It was determined that the 2005 SSC was prepared with a highly detailed structure; in contrast, the 2018 and 2023 SSCs exhibit largely similar characteristics, and the detailed structure of the 2005 curriculum was replaced by a more simplified program structure. In the 2024 SSC, although a simplification is observed in terms of the number of learning domains and attainments, it is noteworthy that a more comprehensive structure was adopted in terms of explanations regarding the implementation of the curriculum. In this context, it is seen that new sections such as cross-curricular components, learning-teaching experiences, and differentiation were included in the curriculum. Furthermore, while the curriculum components in the 2005, 2018, and 2023 SSCs were presented in list form under separate headings, in the 2024 SSC these components were integrated and presented in relation to learning domains within a holistic structure.

These findings are also consistent with studies in the literature. Eker (2020), for instance, stated that the 2018 SSC has a more simplified structure compared to the 2005 SSC. Similarly, Önger and Duman (2024) reported that the 2018 and 2023 curricula share largely similar characteristics. Dinç et al. (2024) also emphasized that there are formal differences between the 2018 and 2024 SSCs, particularly highlighting that in the 2024 curriculum, program components are presented in a more integrated manner and in relation to learning domains. The way in which curriculum components are presented indicates a shift in the 2024 SSC from a fragmented structure toward a more systematic and relational framework.

However, it is noteworthy that the detailed and example-based explanations provided in sections such as learning-teaching processes, evidence of learning, and differentiation in the 2024 SSC show similarities with the 2005 SSC—the first curriculum prepared in line with the constructivist approach—in terms of including comprehensive explanations. This can be considered a factor that may enhance the functionality of the curriculum in guiding teachers. Indeed, Kalaycı and Baysal (2020) stated that the 2005 SSC was more adequate in terms of providing guidance to teachers compared to the 2017 and 2018 curricula. Similarly, Ocağ and Kocaman (2021) evaluated the absence of explanations in the 2018 curriculum—particularly regarding how each attainment should be assessed and how the learning-teaching process should be conducted—as a shortcoming of the program. Dalli and Hamarat (2025) also indicated in their study that the 2024 SSC has the potential to guide teachers.

These findings are largely consistent with the existing literature and demonstrate that the current transformation is also supported by previous studies. Consequently, although the 2024 SSC maintains the trend toward a simplified structure that began with earlier curricula, it can be argued that it adopts a hybrid structure by strengthening teacher-guiding explanations. This hybrid structure offers a more balanced approach compared to previous curricula, as it both sustains the simplified curriculum model and reinforces guiding elements for teachers. This situation indicates that curricula over time have been restructured not only in terms of content but also in terms of usability and practical applicability.

When the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs developed in Türkiye based on the constructivist approach are compared in terms of learning domains, it is observed that each new curriculum reflects a trend toward simplification in the number of learning domains. It is observed that while the 2005 SSC included a total of nine learning areas that varied depending on grade levels, the 2018/2023 curriculum was structured around seven learning areas that are common to all grade levels and defined with the same titles. In the 2024 SSC,

the number of learning domains was reduced to six, and a consistent structure was maintained across all grade levels.

In addition, changes were made not only in the number but also in the naming of learning domains; learning domains that were largely presented with similar titles in the 2005 and 2018/2023 SSCs were reorganized under different names in the 2024 SSC. Furthermore, it is observed that the unit structure presented together with learning domains in the 2005 SSC is not included in the 2018/2023 and 2024 SSCs. Another notable innovation in the 2024 SSC is the allocation of five class hours at each grade level within the scope of "school-based planning." This innovation is considered likely to enhance the functionality and efficiency of the course.

Similar to learning domains, a gradual decrease in the number of attainments/learning outcomes across the SSCs was also identified. While the 2005 SSC included a total of 174 attainments, this number decreased to 131 in the 2018/2023 SSCs. In the 2024 SSC, the term "attainment" was replaced with the more holistic, process- and learner-oriented expression "learning outcomes and process components," and a total of 71 learning outcomes were included in the curriculum.

These findings are consistent with studies in the literature. Çoban and Akşit (2018), in their comparison of the 2005 and 2017 SSCs, reported that there was no substantial change in learning domains, but a decrease in the number of attainments. Similarly, Eker (2020) and Öztürk and Kafadar (2020) stated that the number of learning domains in the 2018 SSC decreased compared to the 2005 SSC. In line with these findings, Dinç et al. (2024), Gürler and Gürgen (2025) and Kan and Çevik (2025) emphasized that both the number of learning domains and attainments in the 2024 SSC decreased compared to the 2018 SSC. Other studies have also concluded that there is a reduction in the number of learning domains and attainments in the 2024 SSC compared to previous curricula (Dallı & Hamarat, 2025; Turan et al., 2025; Yıldırım & Çalışkan, 2024). The notable decrease in attainments/learning outcomes observed in the 2018/2023 and 2024 SSCs may be associated with addressing the negative criticisms expressed by teachers and academics regarding the excessive number of topics and attainments (Altay, 2020; Karadeniz et al., 2015; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015).

However, there are also studies indicating that despite the reduction in learning domains and attainments in the 2018 SSC, the content remains dense (Altay, 2020; Taş & Kiroğlu, 2018). This situation may be related to the insufficiency of instructional time. Indeed, studies by Taş and Kiroğlu (2018), Çelikkaya and Kürümlüoğlu (2018), and Çelikleş and Sönmez (2021) reveal that teachers consider the allocated course time to be insufficient for the learning-teaching process. Similarly, Ocak and Kocaman (2021) reported that although the number of topics was reduced in the 2018 SSC, teachers still struggled to find sufficient time to implement activities.

In this context, the gradual decrease in the number of learning domains and attainments/learning outcomes may have been intended to reduce content density, deepen learning, and align the instructional process more closely with the principles of the constructivist approach. Indeed, Karadeniz et al. (2015) stated that although the 2005 SSC includes attainments consistent with the constructivist approach, it does not fully reflect the principles of this approach in certain respects. Accordingly, it can be argued that the reductions in the number of learning domains and attainments in subsequent curricula indicate a transformation toward a more simplified, holistic, and practice-oriented curriculum structure.

When the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs developed in Türkiye based on the constructivist approach are compared in terms of skills, it is observed that there were 15 skills in the 2005 SSC and 27 skills in the 2018/2023 SSCs. A notable increase in the number of skills to be acquired by students has occurred with each new curriculum. Similar findings have also been reported in the literature examining skills within SSCs. Eker (2020) indicated that the number of skills in the 2018 SSC increased compared to the 2005 SSC; likewise, Çiftçi and Akça (2019) stated that the number of geographical skills in the 2018 SSC was higher than in the 2005 SSC. Similarly, Önger and Duman (2024) and Gürler and Gürgen (2025) reported that the number of skills increased in the 2024 SSC compared to the 2018 SSC.

One of the findings obtained from the comparison of curricula in terms of skills is the variation in the way skills are presented. In the 2005 SSC, skills were listed, the sub-skills constituting each skill were explained in detail, and “skills to be directly taught” were also defined for each learning domain at all grade levels. In the 2018 SSC, skill categories were listed, and at the beginning of each learning domain for each grade level, the specific skills intended to be developed within that domain were explicitly stated. In contrast, in the 2024 SSC, skills were not presented as a separate list but were integrated within learning domains. This integrated structure has enhanced the systematic nature and coherence of the curriculum.

Similar findings have been reported in the literature. Eker (2020) noted that the presentation of skills differed between the 2005 and 2018 SSCs, stating that instead of specifying “skills to be directly taught” within each unit as in the 2005 SSC, the 2018 SSC presented multiple skills at the beginning of each learning domain. Likewise, Önger and Duman (2024) found that while core skills were addressed under a separate heading in the 2018 and 2023 SSCs, in the 2024 SSC, skills were embedded within learning domains rather than being treated separately.

In order to support students’ multidimensional development, the 2024 SSC categorizes skills into four main groups: 11 domain-specific skills, 16 conceptual skills, 9 social-emotional learning skills, and 9 literacy skills. In addition, tendencies aimed at supporting students’ attitudes and behaviors throughout the learning process were also incorporated into the curriculum. Yıldırım and Çalışkan (2024), Önger and Duman (2024), Dalli and Hamarat (2025), and Turan et al. (2025) also emphasized in their studies that in the 2024 SSC, which is designed with a skill-based structure, skills are organized under different categories. The structuring of skills under various categories in the 2024 SSC indicates that students’ cognitive, social, and affective development is addressed through a holistic approach. However, the increase in the number of skills also brings the risk of superficiality in the instructional process.

The inclusion of tendencies in the curriculum aims to develop not only students’ knowledge and skills but also their attitudes and mental dispositions (MoNE, 2025). This aligns directly with the ultimate goal of the social studies course, which is to educate active citizens. Bağçivan et al. (2025) stated that, compared to previous curricula, the CTEM represents an innovative approach in terms of Turkish education policy. When these findings are considered together, it can be argued that the 2024 SSC represents a significant transformation in Türkiye’s education system and adopts an innovative approach that prioritizes student-centered and holistic development. This situation can be interpreted as an indication that the curriculum aims not only at improving instructional outcomes but also at achieving a long-term transformation in Türkiye’s education policies. Furthermore, in the 2024 SSC, the inclusion of the “Scientific Inquiry” skill—originating from the field of science—within the “Technology and Social Sciences” learning domain at the 7th-grade level demonstrates that interdisciplinary integration has been strengthened. This suggests that the curriculum is not limited to discipline-specific skills but adopts a more holistic understanding of skills that encompasses competencies from different disciplines.

However, despite the adoption of a holistic approach to skills, it is noteworthy that some fundamental skills are not structured explicitly and prominently within the curriculum. The fact that the skill of “perceiving time and chronological thinking” is mentioned only within the “Interrelationships among Skills” section creates the impression that the visibility of this skill—previously included among the domain-specific skills in the 2005 SSC—has decreased within the curriculum. Yet, “perceiving time and chronological thinking” enables students to establish cause-and-effect relationships between events, comprehend historical continuity, and make sense of social change (Demirel & Turan, 2015; Galán, 2016; Seefeldt et al., 2015). In this respect, this skill can be considered a core competency that supports multiple learning domains. Therefore, addressing it merely as a “related skill” may not be sufficient; positioning it more centrally within learning outcomes would likely enhance its functionality. Otherwise, the absence of explicit emphasis on this skill may lead students to develop a more superficial understanding in processes such as establishing chronological relationships, comprehending historical continuity and change, and evaluating the historical background of contemporary events. In this context, the inclusion of certain skills only within the

“Interrelationships among Skills” section may also carry the risk of insufficient emphasis in classroom practices and the possibility of being overlooked over time.

When these findings are considered together, it is understood that SSCs have shown a tendency over time toward simplification, integration, and a skill-based structure. In particular, the 2024 SSC adopts a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach compared to previous curricula; however, it is considered that the positioning of certain core skills within the curriculum could be further reconsidered.

When the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs developed in Türkiye based on the constructivist approach are compared in terms of values, it is observed that while 20 values were included in the 2005 SSC, this number decreased to 18 in the 2018/2023 SSCs, and then increased again to 20 in the 2024 SSC. This finding is also supported by results obtained from various studies in the literature. Çoban and Akşit (2018) reported that there were 20 values in the 2005 SSC and 18 in the 2017 SSC. Similarly, Önger and Duman (2024) indicated that the number of values increased in the 2024 SSC compared to the 2018/2023 SSCs. The number of values reported in the studies by Yıldırım and Çalışkan (2024), Kan and Çevik (2025) and Turan et al. (2025) is also consistent with the findings of this study.

However, it is noteworthy that certain terminological changes have been made in the expression of some values across the SSCs. For example, the value expressed as “being fair” in the 2005 SSC was reformulated as “justice” in the 2018/2023 and 2024 SSCs. Similarly, the value “attaching importance to family unity” was revised as “family integrity” in the 2024 SSC, while “attaching importance to being healthy” was redefined as “healthy living.” These changes indicate that values have been reconsidered not only quantitatively but also conceptually and linguistically. In particular, the shift toward more general and inclusive concepts can be interpreted as an effort to facilitate students’ more holistic understanding of values and their connection to everyday life. Indeed, the 2024 SSC emphasizes the necessity of integrating values into instructional practices by supporting them with appropriate content, materials, and methods (MoNE, 2024). This suggests that a practice-oriented and experience-based approach, rather than merely conceptual transmission, has been adopted in values education.

Another finding obtained from the comparison of curricula in terms of values is the variation in how values are presented. In the 2005 SSC, values were listed, and comprehensive explanations were provided on issues such as values, approaches to values education, and value analysis; moreover, “values to be directly taught” were specified for each learning domain at all grade levels. In the 2018 SSC, value labels were listed, and at the beginning of each learning domain for each grade level, the specific values intended to be developed within that domain were indicated. In the 2024 SSC, values were addressed within the framework of “virtue–value–action” and were embedded into the learning experiences. Thus, a more practice-oriented and experience-based approach to values education was adopted.

These findings are supported by various studies in the literature. Eker (2020) noted that the presentation of values differed between the 2005 and 2018 SSCs, stating that while the expression “values to be directly taught” included in each unit in the 2005 SSC was removed, in the 2018 SSC values were instead presented at the beginning of learning domains. Yıldırım and Çalışkan (2024) found that methods related to the values education process were explicitly included for the first time in the 2005 SSC, but this approach was abandoned in subsequent curricula. Similarly, Turan et al. (2025) stated that values education was presented comprehensively in the 2005 SSC and was addressed within the “virtue–value–action” framework in the 2024 SSC.

It was found that the values of fairness (justice), family integrity (attaching importance to family unity), diligence, sensitivity, honesty, aesthetics, freedom, responsibility, respect, love, patriotism, and helpfulness are common across all examined SSCs. Another notable finding is that the value of “independence,” which was included in the 2005 and 2018/2023 SSCs, is not presented as a direct value in the 2024 SSC but is instead addressed under the heading of “tendencies.” This suggests that in the 2024 curriculum, the behavioral dimensions of certain values are brought to the forefront, indicating a shift toward a more dynamic and process-oriented structure in which values are integrated with tendencies.

When the 2005, 2018/2023, and 2024 SSCs developed in Türkiye based on the constructivist approach are compared in terms of Atatürkism-related content, notable differences in scope can be observed. While such content occupies a broader place in the 2005 curriculum, it appears to be considerably reduced in the 2018 and 2023 versions. In this regard, the 2024 curriculum represents an intermediate position, reflecting a partial expansion compared to the 2018/2023 curricula.

The findings obtained from this study are consistent with those reported in the literature. Çoban and Akşit (2018), Çelikkaya et al. (2018), and Güneş and Dündar (2019) for the 2017 SSC, as well as Eker (2020) and Boz (2022) for the 2018 SSC, stated that topics and attainments related to Atatürkism were included to a more limited extent compared to the 2005 SSC. This indicates that topics related to Atatürkism have been addressed within a narrower scope in curricula over time. This change suggests a shift in the content priorities of curricula. However, the narrowing of the scope of Atatürkism should not be interpreted solely as simplification; it should also be discussed in the context of value transmission and the construction of national identity.

In the literature, there is a growing emphasis on the need to address topics related to Atatürkism more comprehensively in curricula. Çelikkaya et al. (2018), in their comparison of the 2005 and 2017 SSCs, argued that the number and quality of attainments related to Atatürkism should be increased. Similarly, studies based on teacher opinions highlight that these topics should be given greater emphasis in curricula. Çelikkaya and Kürümlüoğlu (2018), in their study examining teachers' views on the 2017 SSC, found that teachers believe these topics should occupy a broader place in the curriculum. Likewise, Uygun and Akgül (2024) reported that teachers expressed the opinion that more emphasis should be placed on topics related to Atatürkism in the 2024 SSC.

The reduced emphasis on topics related to Atatürkism in curricula can be criticized in terms of value transmission and the construction of national identity (Çoban & Akşit, 2018; Tay, 2017), while it may also be interpreted as a form of simplification (Boz, 2022). However, the inclusion of "Atatürk's contributions to the founding process of the Republic of Türkiye" among the specific objectives of the 2024 SSC can be considered an improvement compared to previous curricula.

Overall, it is observed that SSCs have evolved over time toward simplification, integration, and a skill-based structure. This transformation indicates that curricula have been restructured not only at the level of content but also in terms of pedagogical approach. While the 2024 SSC presents a more holistic and interdisciplinary perspective compared to previous curricula, it also reveals a need to reconsider the positioning of certain core skills and content elements within the curriculum. In this context, it is considered important that changes in curricula be addressed not only structurally but also in terms of their practical implementation.

The findings of this study reveal that SSCs in Türkiye have undergone not only structural changes over time but have also evolved toward a more holistic, skill-based, and learner-centered framework in line with the constructivist learning approach. In this respect, the study contributes to the existing literature by examining curricular transformations not only at the level of content but also in terms of their theoretical foundations. Furthermore, by analyzing learning areas, learning outcomes, skills, values, and Atatürkism as integrated components, the study offers a comprehensive analytical framework and distinguishes itself from the limited number of comparative studies in the field.

Recommendations

In light of the findings obtained from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms may be developed by the MoNE to oversee the implementation processes of school-based planning activities. In this process, it may be recommended to simplify permission procedures to enhance the feasibility of out-of-school activities and, where necessary, to introduce arrangements that support parental involvement.

- Based on the finding that the scope of topics related to Atatürkism has changed over time, it is recommended that these contents be re-evaluated in line with teacher opinions, student needs, and the overall objectives of the curriculum.
- In the 2024 SSC, the inclusion of the skill “perceiving time and chronological thinking” only within the “Interrelationships among Skills” section may limit its visibility within the curriculum. In this regard, it is recommended that this skill be more explicitly defined among learning outcomes, supported through digital applications, and more clearly integrated into assessment and evaluation processes. In this way, it may contribute to the development of students’ awareness of historical continuity and their ability to establish relationships across time.
- In order to determine the effects of quantitative and qualitative changes in learning domains, attainments/learning outcomes, skills, and values on the learning process, it is recommended to increase experimental and qualitative studies focusing on classroom implementations of curricula and to reflect the findings of these studies in curriculum development processes.
- To identify the challenges encountered during the implementation of the 2024 SSC, it is recommended to conduct comprehensive field studies based on teachers’ views and to make evidence-based revisions to relevant components of the curriculum in line with the findings obtained.

Conclusion

This study comparatively examined the SSCs developed in Türkiye (2005, 2018, 2023, and 2024) within the framework of the constructivist approach in terms of formal characteristics, learning domains, learning outcomes, skills, values, and Atatürkism. The findings indicate that SSCs have undergone a significant transformation over time, characterized by a gradual shift toward simplification, integration, and a skill-based structure.

In particular, the reduction in the number of learning domains and learning outcomes reflects an effort to decrease content density and to support deeper learning processes. At the same time, the 2024 curriculum stands out with its more holistic and integrated structure, in which curriculum components are presented in relation to learning domains rather than as separate elements.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that while the scope and presentation of skills and values have evolved across curricula, the 2024 curriculum adopts a more comprehensive and multidimensional approach that supports students’ cognitive, social, and affective development. However, the positioning and visibility of certain core skills and content elements remain an issue that requires further consideration.

Overall, the results suggest that SSCs in Türkiye have evolved not only in terms of content but also in terms of pedagogical orientation, reflecting a transition toward a more learner-centered and practice-oriented structure. In this regard, the 2024 curriculum represents an important step in aligning curriculum design with contemporary educational needs.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

T. Sömen: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; M. Metin Göksu: Conceptualization, Investigation, Supervision, Writing – original draft; Y. Kop: Data curation, Investigation, Supervision, Writing – original draft

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Since this research used the document analysis method, ethics committee approval was not required.

Declaration of AI Usage Statement

In this study, the AI tool ChatGPT (access date: 05/04/2026; Version: GPT-5.3) was used. The tool was utilized for supportive purposes only, and the scope of use was limited to language editing, grammar checking, academic phrasing, and translation assistance. All content generated or suggested by AI has been reviewed for accuracy and originality by the authors, who take full responsibility. Data obtained through AI tools was reviewed in accordance with ethical and academic principles. AI was used in compliance with COPE and Kastamonu Education Journal publication policies. AI has not been listed as an author or co-author. The scientific content, accuracy, originality, and ethical responsibility of the work belong entirely to the authors.

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