



The Opinion of Primary School Students on Social Studies Course*

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ABSTRACT. In recent years, the interest towards qualitative research has increased in our country and it is desired to conduct studies in particularly social science fields by using qualitative methods. In content analysis, which is a qualitative research method, the main aim is to reach the concepts and relations that may explain gathered data. This study aims to throw a light the truth hidden in the data by using content analysis. In order to find out the attitudes, thoughts and expectations towards social studies course, the students were asked to reply three open-ended questions and their answers were analyzed with content analysis method. At the end of the study, it is found that the attitudes of the students towards social studies course are based on teacher qualifications. The other results are mentioned in the study in detail.

Key Words: Social studies course; the opinions of the students; content analysis

INTRODUCTION

The term social studies which are used to indicate the program formed by using the content taken from social sciences has been identified in different ways by different people. The social studies in Turkey can be defined as: Life knowledge / social studies citizenship education program; an education plan which establishes suitable aims for responsible citizens in democratic Turkish society, constitutes its content by relating history, geography and citizenship knowledge and presents life-long citizenship skills (Barth & Demirtaş, 1998).

The present social studies course education program of primary schools in our country has been put into practice in 1998-1999 academic year (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1998). In Official Communication Journal, it is indicated that this program for primary schools suggests a three-hour course per week (a total of 108 hours in 36 weeks) for 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades (Kocaoluk & Kocaoluk, 2001). This program has been prepared with a multi-disciplinary approach.

In recent years, the interest towards qualitative research has increased in our country and it is desired to conduct studies in particularly social science fields by using qualitative methods. As known, qualitative research is an approach which takes investigating and understanding social concepts in their own context into foreground and it aims to form theories (Yıldırım, 1999). However, in content analysis, which is a qualitative research method, the main aim is to reach the concepts and relations that may explain gathered data. In this framework, the data are defined by means of content analysis to bring the truths hidden in data into light (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000).

As known, research entails that both qualitative and quantitative strategies could be used depending on the phenomenon and research problem at hand (Poggenpoel, Myburgh, & Van Der Linde, 2001). This qualitative research has been supported by quantitative methods as well. In the data analysis process, the written data were transformed into numbers after specific steps and thus, qualitative data have been quantified.

Anything that is qualitative can be assigned meaningful numerical values. These values can then be manipulated to help us achieve greater insight into the meaning of the data (trochim.cornell.edu). Basically, qualitative data can be quantified in two ways: some percentage calculations and word-frequency calculations. On the other hand, there are some other methods which allow quantifying the

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data in ways giving opportunity to make complex statistical calculations with the qualitative data. However, these methods require using special computer programs prepared especially for this aim. There are not any programs available in Turkish that can be used to transform qualitative data in our country yet (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). It will be possible to establish meaningful relations between codes and to make relation analysis on condition that coding and theory-establishment programs are used. As suitable software wasn't available, the study relation analysis couldn't be performed; but frequency analysis and categorical analysis were applied.

To get the opinion of primary school students on social studies course, the following three open-ended questions were used:

1. Which part(s) of the Social Studies course did you like most?
2. Which part(s) of the Social Studies course did you dislike most?
3. How would you like your Social Studies course to be?

METHOD

Aim of the Study

This study aims to determine the opinions of the students regarding social studies course. In order to identify the opinions, attitudes and expectations of the students regarding this course, they were asked three open-ended questions in written form and the data consisting of students' responses were analyzed by using content analysis.

Research Group

A total of 37 8th grade students (13 girls, 24 boys) in a primary school in Bursa were chosen as sample since this course is given at 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. Therefore, 8th year students have received all courses in primary education and they do not have a fail-or-pass anxiety any more concerning this lesson.

In a qualitative research, it is difficult to include a lot of individuals or subjects in the study; because the gathered data need to be detailed in depth. Though there are not many participants included in the study, the amount and detail of the gathered data are quite a lot and their analysis might take a long time. Therefore it is natural that the research reports are quite long because of the presentation and interpretation of the qualitative data. Moreover, qualitative research does not produce generalizable results and generalizability is not a criterion in determining the importance and validity of a study. Every qualitative research has a unique and original quality (Yıldırım, 1999). Therefore, the results obtained from this study do not aim to be generalizable.

Data Collection

3-open-ended questions prepared in accordance with the aim of the study were asked to the students:

1. Which part(s) of the Social Studies course did you like most?
2. Which part(s) of the Social Studies course did you dislike most?
3. How would you like your Social Studies course to be?

The students were given 30 minutes to explain their opinions. In order for students to explain their real views and feelings, they are asked not to write their names. It is assumed that all the students participating to the study have answered the questions truly and honestly.

Data Analysis

Content analysis has been used extensively to document trends in social work research methods (Bush & Epstein, 1997). Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. Content analysis is also useful for examining trends and patterns in documents (Stemler, 2001).

In the analysis process of the study, the written data were transformed into numbers by using certain procedures and qualitative data were quantified. Excel was used to put the data into computer and sentences were used in analysis unit. In this process, the sentences were placed under the categories formed without destroying the original form and the meaning of the sentences. The students of the sample group were numbered from 1 to 37 and the opinion of each student was put into formed categories. During the categorical analysis, the answers of all 37 students were combined and used as a whole and the frequency analysis of the sentences coded and put under the related category.

As known, a qualitative research analyses the data in four phases: coding of the data, determining the themes, organizing the codes and the themes, identifying and discussing the results (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). In the present study, detailed coding and thematic coding were done almost simultaneously. Then, the data were organized and identified based on the resulting codes and themes. In the coding of the data process forming the first phase of content analysis, firstly, the data gathered from the written documents were examined and divided into meaningful units and the meanings they conceptually signify were tried to be identified.

In this study, coding according to the concepts emerging from the data is preferred. The important points are determined within the framework of the study by reading the data a couple of times line by line. In the coding process, the data regardless at the research questions were left out since they are not in line with the conceptual framework of the study. Themes and categories are formed according to the data. Thus the resulting code list has formed a conceptual structure for putting all the data. Since the codes are gained from the data directly, an inductive method is used. There was an improvement in the data analysis process by changing some codes or by leaving out some non-useful codes.

Furthermore, the similarities and differences of the resulting codes are identified and a thematic (categorical) coding conducted by putting the related codes together. Thus, the most general themes and some sub-themes have been identified and the codes have been organized under these sub-themes.

In order to help the thematic coding, the general opinions of the students are not investigated with a single question. Instead, three open-ended questions which would be helpful in forming an answer to the research question were asked to the students. These questions form three most general categories in this research and these three general categories have been examined under three main headings formed according to the answers received from the students. In other words, these three general categories have been coded under the same pattern formed according to the data and consist of the same sub-categories. The sub-categories under each general category of the three are:

1. Comments on the course
 - 1.1 Comments on social studies course
 - 1.1.1. Comments on history course
 - 1.1.2 Comments on geography course
2. Comments on the method
3. Comments on the teacher

During thematic coding, internal consistency and external consistency principles are considered by forming a meaningful piece from the resulting themes among themselves even though they are different from each other. Finally, having been organized according to themes and codes, the data were defined and the conclusion was reached.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

As explained before, three open-ended questions asked to the students in written form constitute the three most general categories in the study. These general categories are:

1. The most liked parts/points of the Social Studies Course
2. The least liked parts/points of the Social Studies Course
3. The desired parts/points in a Social Studies Course

The students have responded to the points above by using a total of 522 sentences. In Table I, the distribution and the percentage of these sentences into three general categories in total is given.

Table I. Frequency and percentage of the number of sentences according to three general categories

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sentences related with “the most liked parts/points	193	37
Sentences related with “the least liked parts/points	145	28
Sentences related with “the desired parts/points	184	35
Total	522	100

Table I indicates that while the students were mentioning their opinions and wishes concerning social studies course, they produced more sentences in explaining the most liked points of the course and why they like this lesson. The rate of the sentences in this category to the total number of sentences is 37 %. Based on this knowledge, it can be said that, generally, the points that the students like are greater in number than the points that the students do not like and that they have a positive attitude towards this lesson.

The Most Liked Parts/Points of the Social Studies Course

The students produced a total of 193 sentences for explaining the most liked points of the course. These 193 sentences of this category were considered as 100 % and the total frequencies and percentages of the sentences in sub-categories are shown in Table II.

Table II. The distribution of the sentences related with the most liked parts/points of the social studies course into sub-categories

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Course	117	60,6
Method	8	4,2
Teacher	68	35,2
Total	193	100

Table II indicates that while explaining the most liked parts/points of the course, the students produced more sentences in the general comments on the course. It is also seen that the frequency of the sentences related with teacher-sub-category is quite high and the least number of sentences was in method category.

Table III. The distribution of the sentences related with the most liked parts/points of the social studies course into sub-categories

Social Studies		COURSE		GEOGRAPHY		METHOD		TEACHER		Total Number of Sentences	
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
25	13	68	35,2	24	12,4	8	4,2	68	35,2	193	100

Table III which is a detailed form of Table II, shows under which sub-categories the comments on the course have distributed into. According to the table, while explaining the most liked parts/points of the course, the students have used a greater number of sentences for comments on history (f=68), and a less number of sentences for comments on geography (f=24). Thus, it can be said that historical subjects are more effective in students' liking this course. The most liked parts/points of the course have been put into course, method and teacher sub-categories are explained in detail below.

Comments on the course

Comments on social studies: The most liked parts/points of the course are listed in Table IV with their frequencies. The item with the highest frequency among the reasons why the students like this course is their thinking that it is necessary. The items with a frequency of one are mentioned under

the category “other”. These items are: its weekly class hours are suitable, there are links between subjects and it is a multi-dimensional lesson.

Table IV. The most liked parts/points of the social studies course

Comments	Frequency
I think this course is important/necessary	6
It is funny/enjoyable	5
It is easy	5
I like social studies course	3
It is related with the facts	3
Other	3
Total	25

Comments on history: Obviously, history shapes the self-image of a society, its thoughts and perceptions of other societies more than any other discipline. And this shaping process takes place within the education system starting from primary school (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000). In Table V, the students have explained the reason why they liked history course which has such an important role as follows:

Table V. The most likes parts/points of history in social studies course

Comments	Frequency
I like history	19
Learning what happened in the past/history	18
In history classes people have the feeling that as if they are living in that period	4
Learning the government administration	4
Learning Ottoman history	4
Learning the wars	4
History is enjoyable	3
Learning historical places	3
Learning the victories of Turkish Republic	3
History is necessary	2
Other	4
Total	68

Table V indicates that the items with the highest frequency among the comments are “I like history” and “learning what happened in the past”. Under the “other” category, there are items such as; history is creative, learning strategies in history course, history is the easiest lesson and learning antique events.

Comments on geography: Obviously, geography is a science which investigates physical, human/anthropological and economical events with unique methods and also it is a multi-dimensional discipline. The reasons why students like geography are indicated in Table VI. This table shows that the item with the highest frequency is “learning the world”.

Table VI. The most likes parts/points of geography in social studies course

Comments	Frequency
Learning the world	8
I like geography	6
Working with the maps	4
Learning anthropo-geographical subjects	3
Learning physical geography subjects	2
Geography is easy	1
Total	24

Comments on the method

Regarding method, the students indicated that what they like most is explaining the subject. This item is followed by using logic and making comments related with the subject.

Table VII. The most likes parts/points regarding method in the social studies course

Comments	Frequency
Explaining the subject	4
Using logic and making comments related with the subject	4
Total	8

Comments on teacher

In Table VIII, it is seen that while explaining the most liked parts/points of the course, the students produced 68 sentences concerning teacher.

Table VIII. The most likes parts/points regarding teacher in the social studies course

Comments	Frequency
S/he explains the subject well	13
S/he is a good educator	9
I like the teacher	8
S/he is witty/makes jokes	8
S/he chats/talks	7
S/he has a good physical appearance	7
S/he is funny	6
S/he is interested in the students	5
S/he is good	4
S/he does not give too much homework	1
Total	68

As shown in Table VIII, the item with the highest frequency is the teacher's explaining the subject well. It is seen that the personal qualifications of a teacher such as his/her being witty/making jokes, chatting/talking with the students, having a good physical appearance are quite effective in students' liking this course.

The Least Liked Parts/Points of the Social Studies Course

As known, there are factors decreasing the positive effects of social studies course. These factors stem from program, textbooks, other materials-tools and methods and techniques used for the presentation of the lesson (Sığan, 1997).

While explaining the parts/points of the course that they liked least, the students produced a total of 145 sentences. 145 sentences in this category are considered as 100 % and the total frequencies and percentages of the sentences in sub-categories are shown.

Table IX. The distribution of the sentences related with the least liked parts/points of the social studies course into sub-categories

	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Course	66	45,6
Method	7	4,8
Teacher	72	49,6
Total	145	100

Table IX indicates that while explaining the least liked parts/points of the course, the students produced more sentences in the comments on the teacher. It is also seen that the least number of sentences are related with method category. It is clear that teacher is an effective factor in the forming of negative attitudes towards the course.

Table X. The distribution of the sentences related with the least liked parts/points of the social studies course into sub-categories.

Social Studies		COURSE				METHOD		TEACHER		Total Number of Sentences	
		History		Geography		f	%	f	%	f	%
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
21	14,5	22	15,2	23	15,9	7	4,8	72	49,6	145	100

Table X which is a detailed form of Table IX shows the sub-categories into which the comments on the course have distributed. The least liked parts/points of the course have been put into course, method and teacher sub-categories and they are explained in detail below.

Comments on the course

Comments on social studies: The students explained the least liked part/point at the lesson as memorization.

Table XI. The least liked parts/points of the social studies course

Comments	Frequency
This lesson requires memorisation	11
This lesson is boring	3
There are many unnecessary things	3
The subjects are too long just like bed-time stories	2
Getting a bad mark	1
Learning the same subjects every year is boring	1
Total	21

The wise man forming the most valuable human type of ancient times is now replaced by the man who knows where and how to find knowledge and wisdom when necessary (Oktay, 2001). Therefore, social studies education should not be considered as merely the exchange of knowledge and should be freed from memorization.

Comments on history: In Table XII, the least liked parts/points of history in social studies course are given below.

Table XII. The least liked parts/points of history in social studies course

Comments	Frequency
Memorising the dates	13
History is unnecessary	3
History is boring	2
Dates referring far back are explained	2
No comments can be made as there is no probability so getting low marks on questions requiring interpretation/comment	2
Total	22

It is indicated by some students that the least liked part/point of history course is that it requires memorization. Furthermore, some students mentioned that history is unnecessary and boring. Some

students mentioned the presentation of dates far back in the history and not considering closer dates as the reason why they do not like history. Based on these, it can be concluded that not only the information about past events but also some recent knowledge on scientific, technical, cultural and artistic fields should be presented to the students sufficiently (Sığan, 1997). This will also provide a more common use of the principles such as “from near-to-far” and “from known to unknown” in education.

Comments on geography:

Table XIII. The least likes parts/points of geography in social studies course

Comments	Frequency
I don't like geography	7
It requires memorisation	4
I am not able to interpret it	3
There are geographic calculations, maps and graphs	3
Geography is unnecessary	2
Geography is boring	2
Geographical subjects are not presented in detail	1
The concerning data are not absolute	1
Total	23

Table XIII indicates that a part of the students mentioned the subjects of geography as the reason why they do not like the course. Even though students have some criticism related with history course, this lesson has never been stated as a reason for not liking the course.

Furthermore, in the latest social studies teaching program, the historical subjects mentioning past events have stayed mostly the same whereas the geography has increased in content but decreased in class-hours and this forms one of the negative sides of the program. It should be remembered that even though they occupy less number of pages in books, it is more difficult to understand mathematical geography and the movements of the earth than the historical subjects (Aka, 2000).

The necessity of re-handling geographical subjects functioning as a bridge between social sciences and natural sciences is more when compared with other sciences because, the developments in both areas necessitates a re-organization of geographical subjects (Aka, 2000).

Comments on method

Table XIV shows that the least liked parts/points regarding method are the existence of exams and explaining the subject in front of the blackboard and writing.

Table XIV. The least likes parts/points regarding method in the social studies course

Comments	Frequency
There are written and oral exams	3
To explain the subject in front of the blackboard	2
Writing during lesson	2
Total	7

Comments on teacher

Table XV indicates that among the least liked parts/points regarding the teacher in the course the item with the highest frequency is the teacher's granting privileges to some students.

Table XV. The least likes parts/points regarding the teacher in the social studies course

Comments	Frequency
S/he grants privileges to some students	13
His/her explanations are very quick and superficial	11
S/he is nervous	10
S/he asks difficult questions	7
The type of punishment when s/he gets angry	7
S/he gives homework	6
S/he insults and humiliates in front of everyone	4
S/he lets students to prepare exam papers	4
S/he has the students to draw a map	3
S/he changes seating arrangements in the exams	3
The teacher makes the students write a lot	2
S/he does not chat/talk with the students very much	2
Total	72

The Desired Parts/Points in a Social Studies Course

While explaining this category the students produced a total of 184 sentences. These 184 sentences of this general category are considered as 100 % and the total frequencies and the percentages of the sentences in sub-categories are shown.

Table XVI. The distribution of the sentences related with the desired parts/points in a social studies course into sub-categories

	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Course	64	34,8
Method	66	35,8
Teacher	54	29,4
Total	184	100

Table XVI indicates that while explaining the desired parts/points in a social studies course, the students have used most of the sentences in the comments on the method. It should be recalled that the least number of sentences are in teacher category, the frequency of this category is quite high though.

Table XVII. The distribution of the sentences related with the desired parts/points in a social studies course into sub-categories.

Social Studies	COURSE				METHOD		TEACHER		Total Number of Sentences		
	History		Geography		f	%	f	%	f	%	
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
34	18,5	18	9,8	12	6,5	66	35,8	54	29,4	184	100

Table XVII which is a detailed form of Table XVI, shows the frequency of the produced sentences for the general comments on the social studies course is higher than the produced sentences for comments on history / geography.

Comments on the course

Comments on social studies: Table XVIII indicates that the items with the highest frequencies concerning the desired parts/points in a social studies course are “being funnier/more enjoyable” and “increase in class hours”. In this table, it can be seen that some students prefer to have different teachers for geography and history courses than to have same teachers.

Table XVIII. The desired parts/points in a social studies course

Comments	Frequency
Being funnier	9
Increase in class hours	8
Separate teacher for geography and history	6
Short and brief subjects	3
Giving more value to this course	3
No memorisation	3
Emphasis on its relationship with real life	1
Emphasis on cause-effect relations	1
Total	34

According to one study, all the class-teachers forming the sample group have indicated that they have mastered in Turkish and Mathematics branches and think that the same efficiency shouldn't be expected from them in other courses. The most striking reflections of this is that as a result of an observation study it is seen that just as students, the teachers, too, are dependent on the books in social studies courses that they use rarely tools such as maps, films, etc and first-hand sources and evidence. Therefore, class-teacher system is far from answering the need in presenting this course. The increase in quality depends on specialization. Especially it should be considered to put the lessons of 4th and 5th grades which are in the second level of primary education and the ones with the same names in the third level under the same roof (Dilek, 1999).

Comments on history: Upon the examination of Table XIX, it is seen that the sentence with the highest frequency is “no memorization of the dates”.

Table XIX. The desired parts/points regarding history in a social studies course

Comments	Frequency
No memorisation of the dates	5
Detailed presentation of closer dates and recent events	4
Presence of related pictures	2
Learning history by observation	2
Dominance of history	2
Detailed explanations about the causes of events	1
Presentation of history from other countries' point of view	1
Adaptation of concepts since the wars are not made by swords anymore	1
Total	18

Comments on geography: Table XX indicates that the sentence with the highest frequency is “presentation of regions subject”. The most grieving result in this table is that some students want the total removal or exclusion of geography course from their course program. While there is no such a desire for history course, it is seen that the sentence frequency of the item showing exclusion of geographical subjects is 5.

Table XX. The desired parts/points regarding geography in a social studies course

Comments	Frequency
Presentation of regions subject	6
Exclusion of this course	5
Working with maps	1
Total	12

Comments on method

Table XXI shows that the item with the highest frequency is “using TV, computer, internet, vcd”. Teaching-training which continues its existence in the triangle of school-teacher-student for many many years is to use multi-dimensional, multi-channeled new alternatives with the addition of new technologies into our lives (Oktay, 2001). The use of technology in education has been discussed widely for the last few years. From here on, the developments in technology and the aims of education

move in parallel to each other and this creates many opportunities for the education to develop thinking and learning styles (Bayhan, 1999). The subject explained or defined in the theoretical part of teaching lesson should both be brought into the classroom and be seen and examined in its original place. The materials that should be presented in order to realize a good social studies education consist of; photographs, slides-films, maps, posters, tables and diagrams, CD ROM, recent articles with photographs taken from newspapers or magazines, video and TV, OHP, slide machine...(Efe, 1996-1997). Table XXI displays that the students want to use various modern methods during social studies lessons. In the book prepared by Barth, Demirtaş et.al. (1996) for teaching of social studies it is indicated that all teachers have the inclination to implement the lecturing model that they received during their own education and to transform their experiences by telling the others. However, it is not fully considered as teaching to transform the ready knowledge rather than obliging people to think. In this report problem solving method is presented as an alternative for transforming method in the teaching of life knowledge, social studies and social sciences (Yeşilkayalı, 1996).

Table XXI. The desired parts/points regarding method in a social studies course

Comments	Frequency
Using TV, computer, internet, vcd-cd	27
Using various modern methods	7
Using multiple-choice questions for the exams	5
Organising excursions	4
Preparing easy exams	4
Changing lecture type of presentation	4
Using theatre and drama	3
Listening to popular music during lesson	3
Presence of a separate social studies class	3
Presenting the subjects by using different sources	2
Not having the students write in their note-books during the lesson	2
More suitable classroom environment	1
Presenting subjects that require maps longer	1
Total	66

Comments on teacher

Table XXII. The desired parts/points regarding teacher in a social studies course

Comments	Frequency
Not humiliating or shouting at	7
Showing concern for the students and treats them well	5
Preparing easier and less in number exam	5
Presenting the subject better	5
Not going into the details very much	4
Being good, not ill-tempered	4
Giving fewer tasks/work and no homework for home	3
Not making any discrimination	3
Asking multi-dimensional questions	3
Having attractive physical appearance	3
Not changing the seating arrangement in the exam	2
Being more experienced	2
Taking the lesson more seriously	2
Presenting the subject by using the most fruitful knowledge	2
Making his/her lesson enjoyable	1
Being able to end his/her jokes	1
Listening to the students while they are talking	1
Not punishing the students with low marks	1
Total	54

Table XXII indicates that the sentences with the highest frequencies are related with the personal characteristics of the teacher and his/her attitudes towards students.

The quality of learning and teaching processes is influenced by the success of the communication/interaction between the teacher and the student. The effectiveness of the communication/interaction between the teacher and the students depends on the teachers' putting the communication/interaction competence into work since the teachers themselves are the ones who start this communication/interaction. In order for teachers to be successful in this process, it is very important to determine the communication/interaction competencies that the teachers should have and to donate the teachers-to-be with these services before they start teaching (Karaman, 2001).

CONCLUSIONS and SUGGESTIONS

In this study, three open-ended questions were asked to the students regarding course about the parts/points that they like most, parts/points they like least and the desired parts/points and their responses were analyzed by using content analysis method. Upon the examination of three general categories on the basis of sub-categories, the following results appeared:

When the distribution of the responses of the students into these general categories based on sentences is examined, it is seen that the students produced the greatest number of sentences while they are explaining the liked parts/points of the lesson and the reasons why they like it. Based on this knowledge, it can be said that, generally, the points that show the students' like are greater in number than the points that show the students' dislike and that the points that show a positive attitude towards this lesson.

While explaining the most liked parts/points of the social studies course, the students produced the greatest number of sentences in general comments on the course. History is more effective in students' liking social studies course. Additionally, the sub-categories with the highest frequency among the reasons why the students like social studies course are the students' liking history and teacher-sub-category. It is also seen that the item with the highest frequency is the teacher's explaining the subject well related with teacher-sub-category. It is also seen that the personal qualifications of teachers' are quite effective in students' liking this course

While explaining the least liked parts/points of the social studies course, the students produced the greatest number of sentences in comments on the teacher. Depending on these, it can be said that the teacher factor is quite effective in the formation of negative attitudes towards social studies courses. It is also seen that the frequency of the sentences related with course-sub-category is quite high. As the least liked part/point of the course, the students have indicated that it requires memorization. Furthermore, the items with the highest frequency one of the reasons why the students do not like this course is that this lesson requires memorization. Additionally, one of the reasons why students like social studies course is that the students like history, one of the reasons why students do not like social studies course is that the students dislike geography. Whereas there is no such want that the historical subjects should completely be removed from social studies course program, it is afflicting that some students want the complete removal/exclusion of geographical subjects from course program and this is a situation which requires careful thinking.

While explaining the desired parts/points in a social studies course, the students have used the greatest number of sentences in comments on the method. The item with the highest frequency among the parts/points the students desire in a social studies course is the use of technologies such as television, computer, vcd-cd in the lessons. It is also seen that the frequency of the sentences related with course and teacher-sub-category is quite high. Especially, it is seen that the sentences with the highest frequencies are related with the personal characteristics of the teacher and his/her attitudes towards students.

Based on the findings of the present study, the following can be suggested within the limits of the study:

✓ It might be useful to re-consider the social studies course program in the light of scientific developments and social changes and to re-organize it according to the recent requirements.

✓ Social studies education should not be considered as merely the exchange of knowledge and should be freed from memorization.

✓ The use of materials/tools in social studies education will both make the lessons more enjoyable and keep the students alert. The biggest role in providing the technology and tools to be used in education belongs to the government. By considering the investments on education as the investments of future, the sources should be used appropriately. Thus, social Studies courses can be made more effective and attractive by using the modern educational technologies.

✓ It might be more beneficial to involve students actively in the lesson and provide student-centered education in social studies courses.

✓ In order for students to develop positive attitudes towards this lesson, it might be useful to provide opportunities to the students in which they may express themselves better within the scope of the course. In social studies courses, which are very important in having students gain democratic attitudes, it might be possible to make the students good world citizens by leaving the attitudes and behaviors which may hinder the development of democracy out of the classroom.

✓ It is seen that the personal characteristics and attitudes of teachers affect the attitudes towards and consequently the success of the students in the lesson. Therefore, the studies on the improvement and development of communication/interaction skills and pedagogical formation of the teachers might be useful.

✓ The success of social studies course in reaching the aims stated in the program completely depends on the performance of the teacher who is the implementers of the program. Therefore, every positive study regarding teachers who are to give social studies course might be effective in the achievement of social studies course teaching program to reach its aims in primary education.

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İlköğretim Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Bilgiler Dersine Yönelik Görüşleri

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ÖZ. Son yıllarda ülkemizde nitel araştırma konusuna ilgi giderek artmakta, özellikle de sosyal bilimler alanlarında nitel yöntemler kullanılarak araştırmalar yapılmak istenmektedir. Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan içerik analizinde ise temel amaç, toplanan verileri açıklayabilecek kavramlara ve ilişkilere ulaşmaktır. Bu araştırmada, öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersine yönelik görüşleri belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersine yönelik tutumlarını ve bu dersten beklentilerini tespit etmek amacıyla, onlara yöneltilen üç açık uçlu soruya cevap vermeleri istenmiş ve bu cevaplar içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonucunda, öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersine yönelik tutumlarında öğretmen faktörünün oldukça etkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Diğer sonuçlar, araştırmada detaylı olarak açıklanmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sosyal bilgiler dersi; öğrencilerin görüşleri; içerik analizi

Problem: Son yıllarda ülkemizde nitel araştırma konusuna ilgi giderek artmakta, özellikle de sosyal bilimler alanlarında nitel yöntemler kullanılarak araştırmalar yapılmak istenmektedir. Bilindiği gibi nitel araştırma, kuram oluşturmayı temel alan bir anlayışla sosyal olguları bağlı oldukları çevre içerisinde araştırmayı ve anlamayı ön plana alan bir yaklaşımdır (Yıldırım, 1999). Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan içerik analizinde ise temel amaç, toplanan verileri açıklayabilecek kavramlara ve ilişkilere ulaşmaktır. Bu çerçevede, içerik analizi yoluyla veriler tanımlanmaya ve verilerin içinde saklı olabilecek gerçekler ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılır. İçerik analizinde temelde yapılan işlem, birbirine benzeyen verileri belirli kavramlar ve temalar çerçevesinde bir araya getirmek ve bunları okuyucunun anlayabileceği bir biçimde organize ederek yorumlamaktır (Yıldırım&Şimşek, 2000).

Amaç: Bu araştırmada, öğrencilerin Sosyal Bilgiler dersine yönelik görüşleri belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. İlköğretim kademesindeki bütün Sosyal Bilgiler derslerini görmüş ve artık bu dersten kalma ya da geçme kaygısı kalmamış olan öğrenciler olarak araştırmada, ilköğretim 8. sınıf öğrencilerinin örneklemini oluşturması uygun bulunmuştur. Öğrencilerin Sosyal Bilgiler dersiyle ilgili düşünceleri ve tutumları ile bu dersten beklentilerini tespit edebilmek amacıyla öğrencilere aşağıda belirtilen üç açık uçlu soru yazılı olarak yöneltilmiştir:

- 1- Sosyal Bilgiler dersinin en sevdiğiniz yönleri nelerdir?
- 2- Sosyal Bilgiler dersinin en sevmediğiniz yönleri nelerdir?
- 3- Sosyal Bilgiler derslerinin nasıl olmasını isterdiniz?

Yöntem: Araştırmada verilerin çözümlenmesi sürecinde yazılı biçimdeki veri, belirli aşamalardan geçirilerek sayılara dökülmüş ve böylece nitel veri nicelleştirilmiştir. Verilerin bilgisayara girilmesi sürecinde ise Excel programı ve analiz birimi olarak da cümleler kullanılmıştır. Bu süreçte, dokümandaki cümleler, orijinal formu ve anlamı bozulmadan saptanan kategoriler altına yerleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada örneklemini oluşturan öğrenciler numaralandırılarak, her bir öğrencinin görüşü oluşturulan kategorilere yerleştirilmiştir. Kategorisel analiz yapılırken tüm öğrencilerin cevabı birleştirilerek bir bütün olarak ele alınmış ve kodlanarak ilgili kategorilere yerleştirilen cümlelerin frekans analizi yapılmıştır.

Araştırmada, ayrıntılı kodlama ve tematik kodlama neredeyse eşzamanlı olarak yapılmıştır. Ardından ortaya çıkan kodlara ve temalara göre veriler düzenlenmiş ve betimlenmiştir. Kodlamayı yaparken verilerden çıkarılan kavramlara göre yapılan kodlama tercih edilmiştir. Verilerden hareketle

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tema ve kategoriler oluşturulmuştur. Bu şekilde oluşturulan kod listesi, tüm verilerin işlenmesi için kavramsal bir yapı teşkil etmiştir. Kodlar doğrudan verilerden üretildiğinden tümevarımcı bir yol izlenmiştir. Aynı zamanda, ortaya çıkan kodların benzerlik ve farklılıkları saptanmış ve birbiriyle ilişkili olan kodlar bir araya getirilerek tematik (kategorisel) kodlama yapılmıştır. Bu şekilde, en genel düzeydeki temalar ve bu temalar altında alt temalar ortaya çıkarılmış ve bu alt temalar altında da kodlar organize edilmiştir. Tematik kodlama yaparken, ortaya çıkan temaların birbirinden farklı olmakla birlikte kendi aralarında anlamlı bir bütün oluşturmasına dikkat edilerek iç tutarlılık ve dış tutarlılık ilkeleri göz önünde bulundurulmuştur. Tematik kodlamaya yardımcı olması için öğrencilere sosyal bilgiler hakkındaki görüşleri tek bir soru olarak sorulmamıştır. Bunun yerine araştırma sorusuna cevap bulmaya yardımcı olacak şekilde hazırlanan üç açık uçlu soru öğrencilere yöneltilmiştir. Bu üç soru, araştırmada en genel düzeydeki üç kategoriye oluşturmaktadır. Bu üç genel kategori de, öğrencilerin verdikleri cevaplar doğrultusunda oluşturulan şu üç alt kategori altında incelenmiştir:

1. Ders hakkındaki yorumlar

1.1.Sosyal Bilgiler hakkındaki yorumlar

1.1.1. Tarih hakkındaki yorumlar

1.1.2. Coğrafya hakkındaki yorumlar

2. Yöntem hakkındaki yorumlar

3. Öğretmen hakkındaki yorumlar

Son olarak da, veriler kodlara ve temalara göre organize edilerek tanımlanmış ve verilerin içerik analizi yöntemiyle çözümlenmesiyle aşağıdaki sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır:

Bulgular: Verilen cevapların üç genel kategoriye dağılımları cümle bazında incelendiğinde, öğrencilerin en çok cümleyi, dersin sevilen yönlerini ve bu dersi neden sevdiklerini açıklarken kullandıkları görülmektedir. Buradan hareketle, genel olarak öğrencilerin bu dersle ilgili olarak sevdiği yönlerin sevmediği yönlerden fazla olduğunu ve bu derse karşı olumlu bir yaklaşımını olduğunu söyleyebiliriz.

Sonuç: Öğrenciler sosyal bilgiler dersinin en sevilen yönlerini açıklarken en çok cümleyi ders hakkındaki genel yorumlarda kullanmışlardır. Tarih konularının öğrencilerin bu dersi sevmesinde etkili olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersini sevme nedenlerinde frekansı en yüksek alt kategoriler, öğrencinin tarihi sevmesi ve öğretmen alt kategorileridir. Öğretmen alt kategorisindeki maddeler incelendiğinde frekansı en yüksek maddenin öğretmenin konuyu güzel anlatması olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin kişisel özelliklerinin de öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersini sevmesinde oldukça etkili olduğu görülmüştür.

Öğrenciler sosyal bilgiler dersinin en sevilmeyen yönlerini açıklarken en çok cümleyi öğretmen hakkındaki yorumlarda kullanmışlardır. Buradan hareketle, sosyal bilgiler dersi hakkında olumsuz tutumların oluşmasında öğretmen faktörünün oldukça etkili olduğu söylenebilir. Ayrıca bu dersin sevilme nedenleri içinde ders kategorisinin de frekansının oldukça yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. Ders kategorisinde frekansı en yüksek olan madde ise bu dersin ezber gerektirmesidir. Ayrıca, sosyal bilgiler dersinin sevilme nedenleri içinde öğrencinin tarihi sevmesi maddesi yer alırken bu dersin sevilme nedenleri içinde de öğrencinin coğrafyayı sevmemesi maddesi yer almaktadır. Tarih konularının tamamen sosyal bilgiler ders programından kaldırılmasına ilişkin herhangi bir talep yokken bazı öğrencilerin coğrafya konularının tamamen ders programından kaldırılmasını istemeleri oldukça üzücü ve üzerinde düşünülmesi gereken bir durumdur.

Öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler derslerinde olmasını istedikleri özellikleri açıklarken en çok cümleyi yöntem hakkındaki yorumlarda kullandıkları görülmektedir. Öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersiyle ilgili isteklerinde frekansı en yüksek maddenin sosyal bilgiler derslerinde televizyon, bilgisayar, vcd-cd vb. teknolojilerden daha çok yararlanılmasını istedikleri görülmektedir. Ayrıca öğretmen alt kategorisinin frekansının da oldukça yüksek olduğu ve özellikle bu kategoride frekansı en yüksek olan ifadelerin de öğretmenin kişisel özellikleriyle ve öğretmenin öğrencilere karşı olan davranışıyla ilgili olduğu görülmektedir.