

Investigation of Social Studies Curriculum and Coursebook in the Context of Today's World Problems: What Do Teachers Think?

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the views of social studies teachers on today's world problems and teaching practices. The study group consisted of social studies teachers (10 female - 8 male teachers) teaching in public schools in the Doğubayazıt district of Ağrı Province. The data of the study, which was conducted with phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, were obtained with a structured opinion form consisting of five open-ended questions. Content analysis technique was utilized in order to analyze the data collected through Google Online Form and face-to-face interviews. Based on the results obtained in the study, the social studies teachers mostly associated today's world problems with environmental and social issues such as global warming, wars, population growth, and deforestation. A common perspective was failed to reach for the curriculum and in-class teaching practices regarding the teaching of today's world problems. While some of the teachers thought that the curriculum and in-class teaching practices sufficiently incorporated today's world problems, the teachers who opposed this notion presented their views on the inadequacy of the curriculum, textbook, and duration, which was restricted within the theoretical framework.

Keywords: Today's world problems, teaching of social studies course, social studies textbooks, social studies teachers

Sosyal Bilgiler Dersi Öğretim Programı ve Ders Kitaplarının Günümüz Dünya Sorunları Bağlamında İncelenmesi: Öğretmenler Ne Düşünüyor?

Öz: Bu çalışmada, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin günümüz dünya sorunları ve öğretim uygulamalarına ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu, Ağrı'nın Doğubayazıt ilçesindeki resmi ortaokullarda görev yapan sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri (10 kadın - 8 erkek) oluşturmaktadır. Nitel araştırma desenlerinden fenomenoloji ile yürütülen çalışmanın verileri, beş açık uçlu sorudan oluşan yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile elde edilmiştir. Google Online Form ve yüz yüze yapılan görüşmeler ile toplanan verilerin çözümlemesinde ise içerik analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlarda; sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri günümüz dünya sorunlarını çoğunlukla, küresel ısınma, savaşlar, nüfus artışı, orman tahribi gibi çevresel ve toplumsal konular ile ilişkilendirmişlerdir. Günümüz dünya sorunlarının öğretimine yönelik ise öğretim programı ve ders içi uygulamalar için ortak bir görüşe

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ulaşılamamıştır. Öğretmenlerin bir kısmı öğretim programı ve ders içi uygulamaların günümüz dünya sorunlarını yeterince kapsadığını düşünürken; bu düşünceye karşı çıkan öğretmenler teorik çerçevede kalan öğretim programı, ders kitabı ve süresinin yetersizliği üzerinde görüşler sunmuşlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Günümüz dünya sorunları, sosyal bilgiler öğretimi, sosyal bilgiler ders kitapları, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri

Introduction

People have been demanding more and more every day in the world, and the existing resources are being utilized unconsciously in line with these demands. These resources, which are used up with noncompliant methods over time, generate numerous concerns in people as they damage the natural environment (Özey, 2006, p. 21). These issues, which concern the citizens of every country and are interconnected, are called “*global world problems*” in the international literature (Wang et al., 2008). This particular concept, defined as present day world problems in our country, signifies “*the events that negatively impact the world and the lives of living creatures on earth*” (Özey, 2006). The major global issues today include climate change, population growth, international migration and refugee crises, poverty and famine, water scarcity, and various environmental problems (Kan, 2009; Kışlalıoğlu & Berkeş, 1993; Özgen, 2012). Some important themes identified by the United Nations regarding today's global issues under the slogan “*Peace, dignity, and equality on a healthy planet*” include combating terrorism, disarmament, gender equality, respect for human rights, and international peace and security (<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues>). Even though each theme has different dynamics, it is a fact that these problems negatively impact the lives of all living creatures on earth, disrupt the natural balance of the earth, generate social conflicts and discrepancies (such as migration, poverty, gender inequality) (Yiğit, 2022), and thus lead to comprehensive and destructive consequences. Within the framework of all these facts and developments, raising awareness about the problems in question and trying to produce solutions to these problems are crucially significant for the contemporary societies (Sayhan & Çamurcu, 2013). Surely, the earth is the only planet on which there is life and is home to all living things. The most important function of being a human is to protect its “*home*”, that is, its world, against existing threats and problems. Developing solutions to the problems and potential threats experienced by the world requires knowing the source of existing problems. This is simply because it is not possible to express an opinion or propose a solution for something unknown (Özey, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness of global problems among individuals at both national and international levels, and to enhance knowledge, perspectives, and awareness in order to develop solutions.

The most functional way for people to be productive, sensitive, and highly aware of the global problems is through the education delivered to the individuals at an early age (Burnouf, 2004). By means of to education, individuals create a sense of fight against problems that are considered significant in the society and acquire behavioral changes for possible solutions (Yücel & Morgil, 1999). By virtue of education, individuals create a sense of challenge against the problems that are considered significant within the society and acquire the behavioral changes for possible solutions (Yücel & Morgil, 1999). Education also prepares individuals for life in terms of being aware of the local and global problems and generating solutions. Therefore, it is clear that there is a tendency towards today's world problems in some course contents. For instance, the science curriculum aims to educate individuals who are sensitive to the nature and aware of the global environmental problems (Gülersoy & Aydemir, 2024). In the geography curriculum, the

cultural, political, economic, and environmental organizations are questioned on a local, regional, and global scale. On the other hand, the objectives of the life sciences curriculum are based on students acquiring disaster awareness and applying sustainable environmental awareness in their lives (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2024). It was also revealed that the Turkish textbooks included various global problems, especially the environmental problems (Önal & Maden, 2024). On the other hand, the most comprehensive approach to today's world problems was found in the primary school social studies curriculum and subject content (Kılıçoğlu et al., 2012). The social studies course aims to teach the knowledge, skills and values with its interdisciplinary structure and inclusive approach to the global problems, and makes inquiries about the interaction of human beings with the natural and human environment for sustainable life. The main objectives of the social studies course are for the students to recognize the characteristics of the natural environment, analyze the interaction between the nature and human beings, and develop ideas and solutions for social problems (MoNE, 2024). Furthermore, this course content has sufficient content to create awareness of natural disaster in the students (Sarıkoca & Topçu, 2024). Therefore, social studies is one of the most suitable courses for the knowledge, skills and awareness training that individuals should be offered about the world problems (Avcı & Gümüş, 2017; MoNE, 2018; 2024; Palaz, 2017).

The social studies course is a field of study that prepares students for local, national, and global citizenship by examining individuals, communities, systems, and their interactions across time and space. Through the application of disciplinary skills in social studies, students are enabled to adopt an inquiry-based approach and generate solutions to the problems in their environment. As a result of analyzing the past history, taking part in the present time and learning how to shape the future, the social studies course prepares the students for a lifelong practice of civil discourse and participation (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2024). The objectives of the social studies course and the relevance of the knowledge and skills it aims to provide to individuals in addressing contemporary global issues have facilitated the inclusion of these subjects within its framework. The social studies discipline incorporates objectives related to global issues through the collaboration of the curriculum and textbooks. In this fashion, the individuals who understand and recognize today's world problems and can generate solutions to these problems can be educated. Throughout the duration of teaching individuals, the positive attitudes and habits regarding the world problems, it is vitally important for teachers to possess high levels of knowledge, skills and awareness on this subject (Seçgin et al., 2010), to allocate sufficient number of course hours to this subject in the curriculum, to present the course achievements and to make arrangements in the textbooks for all the essential knowledge and skills on this subject. Furthermore, the goal of *"individuals being aware of the limitations of the natural environment and resources and trying to protect the natural resources with environmental sensitivity, expressing the views for the solution of social problems, showing sensitivity to the issues that concern their own country and the world"* can be presented among the goals that the social studies course wants to offer regarding the world problems (MoNE, 2018). Conforming these objectives, the social studies textbooks and curriculum should teach about today's world problems and solutions to the individuals in the most effective way. This requires restructuring the social studies curriculum in the context of global problems. It is simply because the subject and impact area of global problems have changed over the years. In 2024, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] placed education at the top of the global agenda due to the increasing conflicts, accelerating climate change and growing inequalities (UNESCO, 2024). The United Nations [UN] (2024) has identified several current global problems, including aging, AIDS,

child and youth safety, the fight against terrorism, gender equality, human rights, peace, law and order, refugees, and more. The key non-economic aspects of well-being, such as health, social connections, and subjective well-being, have either worsened since 2019 or, despite accelerated action on climate change, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions have not been sufficient to prevent global warming. The inequalities in well-being have remained salient.

Throughout this process, teachers should be informed citizens who are aware of international concerns and debates in order to prepare their students for global citizenship. When the relevant literature on the subject is reviewed, it is clear that the studies of ‘the social studies teacher candidates’ high awareness of today's world problems’ (Avcı & Gümüş, 2017; Şimşir, 2023), ‘the significance of today's world problems with attitudes towards peace’ (Öztaşkın, 2014), ‘the strong relationship between social studies curriculum and global literacy’ (Bulut & Çakmak, 2019), ‘global warming as one of the crucial problems’ (Mercan & Sarı, 2020), and ‘environmental degradation and disasters’ (Özmen, 2015; Sever, 2013; Şeyihoğlu et al., 2018; Wong, 2003; Yalçinkaya, 2013; Yiğit, 2022) were the most frequently mentioned issues in the studies. The basic principle for the societies to have sufficient capacity and diversity in order to cope with the global problems of today and the future is to define and develop the requirements of world citizenship (Gibson et al., 2008). This understanding can only be achieved a strong global awareness education. It is possible to say that the current problems concerning the world have commonly been addressed with different aspects in the relevant international literature. At the outset, social studies teachers should engage with global problems and events in an effort to become global citizens (Demir, 2023). Specifically, regarding the environmental impacts and consequences, previous studies have emphasized that students' level of environmental education and awareness is insufficient (Uddin, 2024) and that natural disasters should be evaluated not in isolation, but in terms of their impacts and consequences on infrastructure and society as a whole. Therefore, there was an essential need to include more ‘action participation’ in the curricula of primary and secondary schools (Gong et al., 2021). For instance, Nkoana (2020) found that the secondary school students considered short-term dangers more important than the long-term dangers in climate change. This illustrated that these problems were not evaluated in all aspects. On the other hand, the teachers' perspective on this issue needed to address the sustainable development with its environmental, social, and economic aspects (Ferguson et al., 2021). If we want teachers and pre-service teachers to be trained as global citizenship educators, we should provide them with practical examples that would help them adopt this new identity (An, 2014) and implement an inclusive problem-solving approach to global issues (Chapman & Aspin, 2013).

Humanity has made significant progress toward a higher level of global awareness through cultures, religions, and worldviews over the centuries (Veselinovska et al., 2011). It is impossible for humans to continue its kind and survive without the environment to provide them with the opportunity to live, protect and feed. The presence of a globally aware citizen who recognizes their duties and responsibilities on local, national, and global scales, along with teachers who possess strong global knowledge, attitudes, and awareness to educate these citizens, has become increasingly important. Therefore, a well-planned social studies curriculum and textbook are essential for teachers to effectively teach today's global issues and solutions to students, and for students to develop awareness of these matters.

Amongst the main responsibilities of social studies teachers is to educate their students with an approach from local to global. Nevertheless, teachers cannot fully contribute to the curriculum and educational process without knowing the factors affecting the world. Therefore, there is a need

to learn the views and teaching approaches of social studies teachers in order to prepare students for the global issues. When the relevant literature is reviewed, it is evident that the number of studies conducted on this subject are restricted. Nevertheless, how the social studies teachers view the world is an effective factor on the students. It is believed that a teacher who cannot interpret the world he/she lives in and who is not aware of the global problems for the future or who cannot effectively transfer what he/she knows to the students cannot make a significant difference on the students. In this context, the present study aimed to reveal the knowledge and awareness of social studies teachers about global problems and the methods they utilized in the curriculum and teaching process. The study undertook important tasks by explaining social studies teachers' approach to the global problems and evaluating the social studies curriculum and textbooks in this direction. The social studies curriculum and textbooks are significant resources for conveying today's global issues to students and presenting possible solutions. Therefore, social studies teachers' views on current world problems, curriculum, and content are an important step in offering solutions to both current and potential issues. In this day and age, greater emphasis is placed on the presence of teachers who are sensitive, critical, and solution-oriented towards the problems experienced both nationally and internationally. Therefore, the content of social studies textbooks should effectively explain world problems and solution methods, and similarly, the necessary updates should be made to the curriculum. In this sense, the present study focused on the perspective of social studies teachers on today's world problems and the way they assessed the social studies curriculum and teaching practices. The basic problem statement of the study's as follows: "What are the views of social studies teachers on today's world problems and teaching practices?" In the light of this basic problem statement, the questions that were sought to be answered in the study are as follows:

1. What do the social studies teachers think about today's world problems?
2. How do the social studies teachers assess the curriculum and classroom teaching practices of today's world problems?

Method

Research Design

Since the present study aimed to explore the perceptions and views of social studies teachers regarding present day world problems and classroom teaching practices, it was designed with the phenomenology method, one of the qualitative research designs (Merriam, 2018, p. 9). In phenomenology, which aims to discover the common sense of past experiences, the common senses that participants attribute to incidences and phenomena are emphasized (Creswell, 2013, p. 79; Laverly, 2003). In this sense, the data obtained from the experiences of social studies teachers in the study have been analyzed and presented.

Study Group

The study group consisted of a total of 18 social studies teachers teaching in public schools in the Doğubayazıt district of Ağrı district in the spring semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. In the selection of the study group, the criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling types, was used. The criteria identified were that the participants were the social studies teachers and had at least one year of professional teaching experience. The reason for using a study group of teachers from the social studies discipline was the holistic connection between today's world problems and the social studies curriculum and course content. Since the teachers took into account a wide range of contextual factors from both school and society (Heilman, 2001), 18 social studies teachers were consulted in the study. With this method, the teachers had the opportunity to present

their experiences, views, and suggestions (Merriam, 2018). As for the results obtained, the responses from the social studies teachers provided guidance in recognizing the global problems affecting humanity in all aspects, generating ideas, and offering effective environmental education as a priority (Babacan, 2024). Surely, the objectives set forth within the scope of the 2018 MoNE curriculum and the 2024 Türkiye Century Maarif Model (System of Education Model) social studies Curriculum include a) protecting the natural environment and resources in which students live for a sustainable life, b) ensuring human-environment interaction, c) creating role models to reduce the effects of natural disasters, and d) producing ideas and solutions for social incidences (MoNE, 2024). Therefore, the views and assessments of social studies teachers on this subject enabled us to have an appropriate framework for the research topic. The descriptive information of the study group is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptive Information of the Study Group

N	Code	Gender	Age Range	Length of Teaching Experience
1	PT-1	Female	29 and below	4-8 years
2	PT-2	Female	29 and below	4-8 years
3	PT-3	Female	29 and below	4-8 years
4	PT-4	Female	29 and below	1-4 years
5	PT-5	Female	29 and below	1-4 years
6	PT-6	Female	Between 30-39	8 years and over
7	PT-7	Female	Between 30-39	8 years and over
8	PT-8	Female	29 and below	1-4 years
9	PT-9	Female	Between 30-39	4-8 years
10	PT-10	Female	Between 30-39	4-8 years
11	PT-11	Male	Between 30-39	4-8 years
12	PT-12	Male	29 and below	1-4 years
13	PT-13	Male	29 and below	1-4 years
14	PT-14	Male	29 and below	1-4 years
15	PT-15	Male	29 and below	1-4 years
16	PT-16	Male	Between 30-39	8 years and over
17	PT-17	Male	Between 30-39	4-8 years
18	PT-18	Male	29 and below	1-4 years

*PT: Participant Teacher

Considering Table 1, it is evident that the number of female teachers participating in the study (f=10) was more than the number of male teachers (f=8); 11 teachers were 29 years old and below, and 7 teachers were between 30-39 years old. It is also clear that the number of teachers with 1-4 years of teaching (f=8) was greater than the number of teachers with 4-8 years of teaching

experience (f=7) and those with 8 years or more (f=3). In summary, it is possible to say that the study group consisted of mostly middle-aged female teachers with a certain number of years of teaching experience.

Data Collection Tool and Its Application

The data collection process was conducted in two different stages: The first stage was the preparation of interview questions generated by the researchers. The research questions were designed by considering the relevant literature and social studies textbooks. With help of these questions, it was attempted to identify the views of social studies teachers on today's world problems in the social studies curriculum and textbooks. Some sample questions included “*What do you think about today's world problems?*”, “*What kind of activities do you include when teaching today's world problems?*”, “*Does the social studies course provide your students with the competence and skills to produce solutions to the global problems?*”, “*What are your thoughts on this issue?*” While formulating the research questions, firstly, the articles and thesis studies related to the relevant subject were examined and support was obtained from the literature. Therefore, the questions were formed in line with the global literacy skills (Bulut & Çakmak, 2019), social studies teachers' views on the global current events and current world problems (Dönmez & Yel, 2022; Işık-Mercan & Sarı, 2020; Öksüzoğlu, 2022), and social studies teachers' attitudes towards the global problems (Kan, 2009). In the following stage, the questions were finalized via the expert opinion in line with the opinions of two faculty members teaching at a state university and a social studies teacher who had been working in the MoNE for 11 years. The personal information form included questions about teachers' gender, age range and length of teaching experience. The interview questions were administered to 16 teachers via Google Online Form and to 2 teachers via face-to-face due to the ease of access and to minimize time loss. The participants volunteered to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis

The content analysis technique was utilized in the analysis of the data. Content analysis aims to reveal valid interpretations obtained from a text (Weber, 1990) and to numerically describe the concepts and themes in the text content (Creswell, 2013; Seggie & Bayyurt, 2017). In this sense, the teachers' views were divided into various categories by cross-reading in detail and coded in accordance with the content analysis. The teachers' statements were interpreted with an inductive approach (Merriam, 2018). The codes that were close to one another at the semantic level were brought together and presented under previously created categories.

Credibility and Transferability

In order to establish the suitability and credibility of the data analysis for the study, the peer debriefing technique suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) was utilized. In line with this technique, the views and suggestions of a senior lecturer working in the Social Studies Education Department of a state university were sought. In order to ensure the transferability of the study, national and international literature was initially analyzed in an attempt to reveal the tendencies of current studies and their relationship with today's world problems. Furthermore, the fact that the study group consisted of social studies teachers with a certain period professional experience was a crucial choice for transferability. In order for the participants to state their views and opinions

without being subject to any pressure, codes such as PT-1, PT-2, PT-3, etc. were created to represent them.

Findings

The results of this study, which investigated the views of social studies teachers on today's world problems and teaching practices, were presented under four headings as a) views on today's world problems, b) views on the curriculum, c) views on classroom teaching activities, and d) views on the adequacy of the social studies course to produce solutions to the global problems.

Results Regarding Today's World Problems

In the present study, initially, the views of social studies teachers on what today's world problems were investigated and the codes obtained are presented with frequency values in Table 2.

Table 2

Views on Today's World Problems

Category	Code	Participant	F
Problems threatening the world and humanity	Global Warming	PT-1, PT-3, PT-4, PT-14, PT-15, PT-16	6
	Wars	PT-3, PT-7, PT-9, PT-11	4
	Population Growth	PT-3, PT-16, PT-18	3
	Deforestation	PT-5, PT-4, PT-9	3
	Terror	PT-1, PT-3, PT-6	3
	Epidemics	PT-5, PT-3, PT-6	3
	Technology Addiction	PT-14, PT-8, PT-15	3
	Malnutrition	PT-14, PT-7	2
	Refugees	PT-16	1
	Moral Deprivation	PT-2	1
	Ignorance	PT-12	1

*PT: Participant Teacher

Given Table 2, it is clear that the majority of the teachers (f=6) stated that global warming was the major problem threatening the world and humanity. Following global warming, the teachers stated that wars (f=4), population growth (f=3), deforestation (f=3), terrorism (f=3), technology addiction (f=3), epidemics (f=3), refugees (f=1), moral deprivation (f=1) and ignorance (f=1) were the threats to the world and humanity. The participants' views were shaped around environmental (global warming and deforestation), political (wars and terrorism), and social

(population growth, moral deprivation, and illiteracy) phenomena and events. Furthermore, the fact that the participants defined issues such as technology addiction and refugees as global problems indicated that they followed the current trends in this field. Some of the teachers' statements that drew attention to this subject were as follows:

PT-1: *“Economic crises, terrorism, infectious diseases, wars, unsystematic population growth and climate crises are among the major problems that threaten both the world and humanity. Unless the necessary precautions are taken, there will be no future in the next 50 or 100 years.”*

PT-9: *“Deforestation, water, light, noise pollution, famine, conflicts of interest, conflict between the powerful and the weak are some of the biggest problems in the world.”*

PT-16: *“In my opinion, global warming, uncontrolled population growth, and the refugee problem are the problems that have a significant negative impact on the world today.”*

PT-18: *“Insufficient natural resources, overpopulation.”*

PT-6: *“Cyber wars, terrorism, deliberate epidemics.”*

PT-5: *“Cultural degradation, pollution of nature and epidemics.”*

PT-3: *“Global warming, terrorism, genocide.”*

PT-12: *“I think that ignorance is one of the problems that threatens the world and humanity the most. Hunger, war or overpopulation can be stopped by taking precautions, but ignorance is not a problem that can be easily solved.”*

Results Regarding the Place of Today's World Problems in the Social Studies Curriculum

In the study, teacher responses regarding the social studies curriculum's status to meet today's world problems were examined and the codes obtained were presented with codes and frequency values in Table 3.

Table 3

Views on the Status of the Social Studies Curriculum in Meeting Today's World Problems

Category	Code	Participant	F
The status of the social studies curriculum in meeting today's world problems	No, it does not meet them.	PT-6, PT-7, PT-8, PT-10, PT-11, PT-12, PT-13, PT-15, PT-16, PT-18	10
	Yes, it meets them.	PT-1, PT-2, PT-3, PT-4, PT-5, PT-9, PT-14, PT-17	8

*PT: Participant Teacher

As shown in Table 3, it is evident that 10 teachers believed the social studies curriculum was inadequate to address today's world problems. The number of teachers who thought that the program covered the subjects sufficiently was 8. The teachers who expressed negative views on this issue drew attention to the lack of practical applications. Some of the teachers who expressed positive views stated that, since the social studies curriculum was too comprehensive, current issues were not addressed sufficiently, and students could not be left alone with potential problems (with the aim of a solution-oriented approach). For this issue, there was no response as 'I have no idea' or 'I don't know'. All the teachers stated a positive or negative opinion and emphasized the insufficiencies of the programme. Therefore, it is possible to say that a significant part of the teachers who gave both yes and no answers believed that the programme had inherent deficiencies. Some of the salient teacher statements regarding this question are as follows:

PT-10: *"I do not think that the curriculum fully covers the world problems. However, it is of course possible to talk a curriculum that is appropriate to the level of the students. The objective of the social studies curriculum is to educate world citizens at a global level. In line with this purpose, it offers the individuals with the skills to overcome all kinds of problems and issues."*

PT-16: *"I think that since the scope of the social studies course is very broad, it deals with world problems only superficially and individuals are not sufficiently aware of these problems."*

PT-7: *"I find the curriculum insufficient. Furthermore, countries should make sure that the social studies courses are more dynamic and increase the number of course hours."*

PT-1: *"I think about the curriculum positively because it touches on today's world problems, albeit not completely, and because it allows future generations to recognize and acquire preliminary information about these problems."*

PT-2: *"I think the social studies curriculum keeps up with the rapidly developing world. More practice opportunities should be available."*

PT-4: *"I find the social studies curriculum's stance towards world problems positive. I also think it should be more up-to-date."*

PT-17: *"I find the social studies curriculum positive. The global issues are sufficiently included in the curriculum."*

Results Regarding the Methods and Classroom Activities Applied in Teaching Today's World Problems

The methods and classroom activities used by teachers while teaching today's world problems in social studies classes were examined, and the findings were presented in Table 4 with corresponding codes and frequency values.

Table 4

Views on the Methods and Activities Applied in Teaching Today's World Problems

Category	Code	Participant	F
Methods and classroom activities	Current Events	PT-12, PT-3, PT-4, PT-14, PT-5	5
	Learning activities by doing and experiencing (Simulation, Trips, Drama, Drill)	PT-8, PT-18, PT-17, PT-16, PT-11	5
	Video	PT-1, PT-12, PT-13	3
	Visual elements (Concept Map, Fishbone)	PT-1, PT-13	2
	In-class discussion activities (Brainstorming, Discussion, Question-Answer)	PT-6, PT-5	2
	Project	PT-2	1

*PT: Participant Teacher

Considering Table 4, it is clear that the social studies teachers mostly included current events (f=5), learning activities by doing-experiencing (f=5), videos (f=3), visual elements (f=2), in-class discussion activities (f=2) and projects (f=1) regarding today's world problems in their lessons. The statements of the participants highlighted that they placed greater emphasis on methods and activities that would actively engage students. Practices such as current events, drama, and drills, which were quite suitable for today's world problems, constituted an alternative for many global problems. For instance, the drills could be used for earthquakes, which occur quite frequently in our country, and current events could be used for global warming. This approach was shaped by students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Some of the salient teacher statements regarding this question are as follows:

PT-3: *"I often include activities such as case studies, discussions, and brainstorming. Students get more active in class with these activities."*

PT-14: *"The most important goal of the social studies course is to raise children as world citizens and to provide them with problem-solving skills. In line with this purpose, following the world agenda one-on-one and relating the subjects to current events will provide students with more permanent learning. I always make sure to reinforce the subjects with current case studies in the course."*

PT-1: *"While I teach these topics, I create a concept map about these topics. Visual learning is also very important in class. When I finish the topic, I show the children the visuals and videos about this topic. Then I want the children to prepare a show that depicts the negative*

aspects of these world problems. The children both repeat the topic and learn by doing and experiencing the topic.”

PT-6: “World issues are theoretically discussed in the book. As I mentioned before, we find the appropriate method and technique while teaching these topics to the students in order to ensure permanent learning. The method I use the most in social studies class is the research method. Besides, brainstorming, drama, question-answer, etc. are some of the techniques I frequently use. Moreover, even though it is not suitable for every subject, I especially reveal the sense of empathy in students with the six thinking hats technique.”

PT-17: “When teaching such topics, I organize trips or community service events where they can see the problem first-hand, using the method of experiencing it by doing.”

PT-2: “I make sure that I prepare projects on the world problems and create experiences for students by using technological materials.”

PT-11: “Disaster drills, proper use of the internet, demonstration with on-site activities within the nature.”

PT-13: “I show visuals, show videos, and include intelligible and permanent activities to encourage empathy.”

PT-18: “I often include simulation and creative drama activities in the classroom.”

Results Regarding the Suitability of Social Studies Course to Produce Solutions to the Global Problems

Teachers' statements regarding the suitability of the social studies course to produce solutions to the global problems were presented in Table 5 with the created code and frequency values.

Table 5

Views on the Suitability of Social Studies Course to Produce Solutions to the Global Problems

Category	Code	Participant	F
Suitability to produce solutions to the global problems	Yes	PT-1, PT-2, PT-3, PT-4, PT-5, PT-10, PT-11, PT-17, PT-18	9
	No	PT-7, PT-8, PT-9, PT-12, PT-13, PT-14, PT-15, PT-16	8
	Partially	PT-6	1

*PT: Participant Teacher

As far as Table 5 is concerned, it is evident that 9 participants thought that the social studies course provided the students with the skills to produce solutions to the global problems. While 8 teachers believed that the social studies course did not equip students with the skills to develop solutions to global problems, 1 teacher thought that it offered these skills partially. Some of the teachers believed that the social studies course content created knowledge and awareness about global problems and provided the students with prior knowledge. The teachers who disagreed with this view stated that the course content and curriculum should be adapted to keep pace with the rapidly developing world. On the other hand, they criticized the intensity of lectures that failed to materialize for this course and the inability to reach a solution-oriented result in terms of insufficient steps to generate solutions to the global problems. In the partial response, the programme was assessed with an approach such as yes in theory but no in practice. Some of the salient teacher statements regarding this question are as follows:

PT-1: *"I think the course helps the students to acquire the skills in question. It is simply because this course allows them to recognize the global problems better and to conduct studies and research on how to find solutions to these global problems."*

PT-2: *"In theory, yes, in practice it helps because the world has been developing rapidly. Students need to keep up with the developing world."*

PT-3: *"Although it seems it provide capability and skills regarding the theoretical part, it is not possible to say that it provides much regarding the practical part."*

PT-5: *"I think it does help. We don't spoon-feed the children. We make sure they themselves find the information. We explain the global problems or universal issues like these in theory and help children to feel them. Then we make sure the child finds the necessary solutions to these problems. Admittedly, sometimes we hear really great answers."*

PT-10: *"Although there may be some setbacks in some parts, the social studies course generally enhances students' sensitivity to the global issues."*

PT-15: *"I don't think the social studies course adequate enough to educate individuals at a level where they can produce solutions to the world problems. Our main goal is to create awareness and raise consciousness, but eliminating the problem or making solution-oriented progress is insufficient."*

Discussion and Conclusion

In the present study, the views of social studies teachers on today's world problems were investigated based on their assessments on the social studies course curriculum, textbooks, and in-class practices. As far the results obtained are concerned, the teachers first stated that global warming was the most important one amongst today's world problems. Global warming was one of the most significant global problems, as it caused various natural degradations such as desertification, forest fires, and floods in different parts of the world (Akın, 2017). Therefore, considering the unpredictability in seasonal temperature values available in the world, the decrease in precipitation, and the disastrous consequences of forest fires, it is possible to conclude that the observations made in recent years have been effective. Surely, in the study of Mercan and Sari

(2020) and Uymaz (2021) the social studies teacher candidates similarly pointed to global warming as the most important problem for today's world.

In the present study, social studies teachers also considered wars, population growth, deforestation, terrorism, technology addiction and epidemics as threats to the world and humanity. This result indicated that the teacher awareness of ecological and social threats was high. It is important to note here that the teachers had a basic insight of sustainability at the environmental level. The studies examining the social studies curriculum and textbooks states that the social studies curriculum had social and economic sustainability content in addition to the environmental sustainability in terms of its objectives (Kardaş-İşler, 2023) and that the curriculum coincided with the sustainable development goals of the United Nations (Yalçın, 2022). Nonetheless, Bayram and Çengelci-Köse (2023) stated that the social studies textbooks were not sufficient for the subjects that led the students to take responsibility for the environment. Regarding the pre-service education, a high sustainable environmental attitude was encountered in a study conducted with the pre-service social studies teachers (Uyanık, 2021).

When the literature studies on the subject are reviewed, it is evident that there are studies that revealed the awareness of pre-service social studies teachers for today's world problems was quite high (Avcı & Gümüş, 2017; Öksüzöğlu, 2022; Şimşir, 2023). The scale developed by Kılıçoğlu et al. (2012) aimed to identify the perceptions of pre-service teachers toward today's world problems, focusing on their attitudes toward environmental, ecological, social, economic, and political issues. Öztaşkın (2014), who examined the relationship between different variables on this subject, found significant relationships between social studies teacher candidates' attitudes toward peace and their attitudes toward today's world problems. Meanwhile, Yıldız et al. (2021) concluded that teacher candidates from the social studies and science branches exhibited greater sensitivity to today's world problems compared to those from other branches. In another study in which the attitudes teacher candidates towards global climate change were examined, it was revealed that the teachers were tended to be egocentric, suspicious, and indifferent (Varela-Losada et al., 2021). Amongst today's world problems, environmental degradation and disasters are regarded as a more recurrently mentioned problem for teachers and teacher candidates (Özmen, 2015; Sever, 2013; Şeyihoğlu et al., 2018; Şimşir, 2023; Wong, 2003; Yalçınkaya, 2013; Yiğit, 2022). The strong relationship between humans and the environment, which provided them with the opportunity to live, protected them, supplied food, and was essential for the continuation of their generation (Akın, 2017), can be interpreted as an expression of deeper feelings and thoughts on this issue. Nevertheless, Yazıcı (2013), who studied secondary school students' attitudes toward today's world problems, stated that the students were more sensitive to "social" issues such as hunger, violence, gender discrimination, and poverty. This particular result can be associated with the fact that textbooks focused more on human problems and these problems were expressed as the current problems (Yiğit, 2022).

Some teachers who stated that social studies textbooks did not fully address today's world problems mentioned that the subjects were covered superficially in the curriculum and that the number of lessons was insufficient. There were also views that the subjects in the textbooks were sufficient but that current issues should be addressed more comprehensively. The teachers mainly emphasized the necessity of current events, learning by doing and experiencing, and activities such as watching videos while covering topics related to today's world problems in social studies lessons. Hicks and Bord (2001), who highlighted the complexity of sustainability-related issues, argued that effective teaching about global issues was much more complex, holistic, and required

personal effort than it might initially appear. Meanwhile, Dönmez and Yel (2022) stated that teaching methods that utilized current events were effective in enhancing the knowledge and skill levels of both teachers and students. Consequently, it should be remembered that critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to global issues are acquired by students through the social studies course (Demir & Özyurt, 2021), and a teaching process that actively engages students should be strongly emphasized.

The use of current events with active learning techniques in social studies courses allowed students to actively participate in the lesson, engage with both the lesson and the current events, prepare for real life, and develop the habit of following emerging daily events and incidents (Sağlamgöncü & Deveci, 2023). Furthermore, another method suitable for the topic of global climate change, which is one of the most important global problems, was the animation films. These films increased the environmental awareness by deepening the conceptual understanding (Özkara, 2024). Akçay and Palaz (2024), who emphasized the importance of innovative thinking skills, stated that placing greater emphasis on these skills and related concepts in social studies textbooks would enable students to approach challenges encountered in daily life from different perspectives and develop creative solutions. Receptoğlu (2022), who examined today's world problems through global literacy skills, indicated that the social studies teachers included the subjects related to global literacy in the content of the social studies programme and that the reflections of global literacy on the programme were evaluated positively. As far as the teaching method is concerned, addressing global literacy skills with teaching methods and techniques for research and practice innately supported more permanent learning (Öztürk & Akıncı, 2023).

Another notable result obtained in the study was that the teachers generally stated that the social studies course equipped students with the skills to develop solutions to global problems. The teachers who believed that the social studies course did not equip students with the skills to develop solutions to global problems stated that the global issues included in the curriculum were primarily theoretical, causing students to fail in internalizing the problems. Besides the different studies supporting this particular result (Demir & Özyurt, 2021; Yiğit, 2022), there are also results revealed by some social studies experts that social studies curricula needed to be improved in terms of global literacy education (Bulut & Çakmak, 2019). Therefore, it is vitally imperative that the curricula are compatible with the beliefs and opinions of teachers (Cotton, 2019). Sarıkoca and Topçu (2024), who examined social studies textbooks in relation to global problems through the lens of natural disasters, argued that although the textbooks and curriculum required partial updating, they contained sufficient content on natural disasters. Uluçınar-Sağır and Gökrem (2024), on the other hand, highlighted the importance of disaster education programs and projects in which students actively participate, particularly for enhancing the understanding of climate change and its consequences as a natural disaster. For instance, it was revealed that various global problems, especially environmental problems, were addressed in the preparatory studies, text, activity and assessment and evaluation sections of Turkish textbooks (Önal & Maden, 2024).

Consequently, many global problems are experienced in the world every year and the results of these problems are felt much more in some countries (such as lack of water, war, hunger, and inequality). People's stance to these problems is also related to how they construe the world from their own perspective. In this study, it was revealed that the social studies teachers regarded today's world problems on a global scale and felt deeper concerns about the environmental and social problems. Overall, the ecological, political, demographic, and technological problems become prominent in teachers' views. Nevertheless, it is not possible to talk about a mutual

agreement for the curriculum and in-class practices. Specifically, the in-class practices that are only theoretical, textbooks and insufficiency of class hours were among the issues that some social studies teachers were unsatisfied with. Eventually, Bursa and Ersoy (2020), who highlighted the importance of pre-service education on contemporary world problems, reported that 'contemporary world problems,' 'environmental education,' globalization, and society were the most essential field education elective courses for prospective social studies teachers. Education, in general, and social studies education, in particular, play a key role in the process of transferring knowledge, raising awareness, teaching attitudinal skills, and developing solutions to many global problems. For instance, using education as a tool to enable positive social change in the face of climate change is a significantly critical step (Uyar & Uyar, 2023). Therefore, bringing a deeper perspective to the problems that threaten the world and humanity can help to strengthen the tendency of teachers and prospective teachers regarding this issue. Furthermore, the use of richer and more practical teaching methods for the social studies course will involve the students in an active and highly interactive learning process. In reality, the construction of a livable future in the world we live in is only possible with today's educational insight, teachers, and students.

Suggestions

In order to build a more foreseeable, humane, fair, and sustainable future in the world (Veselinovska et al., 2011), the suggestions that stood out as general views included increasing individuals' awareness of global problems from an early age, using the curriculum and class hours more efficiently on this issue, and enhancing in-class practices and activities. Furthermore, it is possible to suggest that different studies be conducted on the possible reasons why the social studies teachers regard the global problems more comprehensively within an environmental and social context. Moreover, it is possible to say how the views on today's world problems described by teachers are defined by students, parents and administrators and multi-dimensional studies on the reasons and their consequences will contribute to the relevant literature.

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Geniş Özet

Giriş

Günümüz dünya sorunları “dünyayı ve dünya üzerindeki canlıların hayatını olumsuz yönde etkileyen olaylar” anlamını taşır (Özey, 2006). Günümüz dünya sorunları arasında yer alan başlıca konular arasında iklim değişimi, nüfus artışı, uluslararası göç ve mülteciler, yoksulluk ve kıtlık, su kaynaklarının yetersizliği ve çeşitli çevre problemleri sıralanabilir (Kan, 2009; Kışlalıoğlu & Berkeş, 1993; Özgen, 2012). Dünyanın yaşadığı sorunlar ve olası tehditlere karşı çözüm geliştirmek var olan sorunların kaynağını bilmeyi gerektirir. Bu bağlamda küresel sorunların ulusal ve uluslararası düzeyde bireylere tanıtılması ve çözüm üretilebilmesi adına bilgi tutum ve farkındalığın geliştirilmesi oldukça önemlidir. Hem yerel hem ulusal hem de küresel ölçekte görev ve sorumluluklarını bilen küresel farkındalığa sahip bir vatandaş profili, bu vatandaşları yetiştirecek yüksek küresel bilgi tutum ve farkındalığa sahip öğretmenlerin varlığı ile ilişkilidir. Bu kapsamda ele alınan çalışmada sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin günümüz dünya sorunlarına olan bakışı ve sosyal bilgiler öğretim programı ve uygulamalarını değerlendirme biçimleri üzerinde durulmuştur. Araştırmamızın temel problem cümlesini sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin günümüz dünya sorunları ve öğretim uygulamalarına ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir? sorusu oluşturmaktadır. Bu temel problem cümlesi ışığında araştırmada yanıt aranan sorular şöyledir:

1. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri günümüz dünya sorunları hakkında neler düşünmektedirler?
2. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri günümüz dünya sorunları konularının öğretim programı ve ders içi uygulamalarını nasıl değerlendirmektedir?

Yöntem

Bu çalışma, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin günümüz dünya sorunları ve öğretim uygulamalarına yönelik algı ve anlamlarını keşfetmeyi amaçladığından nitel araştırma desenlerinden fenomenoloji yöntemi ile tasarlanmıştır (Merriam, 2018, s. 9). Araştırmamızın çalışma

grubunu, 2023-2024 eğitim-öğretim yılı bahar döneminde Ağrı'nın Doğubayazıt ilçesine bağlı resmi devlet okullarında görev yapan 18 sosyal bilgiler öğretmeni (10 kadın - 8 erkek) oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma grubunun seçiminde amaçlı örnekleme türlerinden ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak yapılandırılmış görüşme sorularına yer verilmiş ve veriler, içerik analizi tekniği ile analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular

Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin günümüz dünya sorunları ve öğretim uygulamalarına ilişkin görüşlerinin incelendiği bu çalışmada ulaşılan bulgular; a) günümüz dünya sorunlarına ilişkin görüşler, b) öğretim programına ilişkin görüşler, c) etkinliklere ilişkin görüşler ve d) sosyal bilgiler dersinin küresel sorunlara çözüm üretebilme yeterliliğine ilişkin görüşler çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Ulaşılan bulgularda öğretmenlerin çoğunlukla (f=6) dünyayı ve insanlığı tehdit eden sorunların başında *küresel ısınmanın* olduğunu dile getirdikleri belirlenmiştir. Öğretmenler küresel ısınmanın ardından *savaşlar* (f=4), *nüfus artışı* (f=3), *orman tahribi* (f=3), *terör* (f=3), *teknoloji bağımlılığı* (f=3), *salgın hastalıklar* (f=3), *mülteciler* (f=1), *ahlaki yoksunluk* (f=1) ve *cehaleti* (f=1) dünya ve insanlık için başlıca tehdit unsuru olarak ifade etmişlerdir. Sosyal bilgiler öğretim programının günümüz dünya sorunlarını karşılama durumunu yetersiz gören 10 öğretmen öne çıkmıştır. Programın konuları yeterince kapsadığını düşünen öğretmen sayısı ise 8'dir. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin derslerinde günümüz dünya sorunlarına ilişkin daha çok *güncel olaylara* (f=5), *yaparak-yaşayarak öğrenme etkinliklerine* (f=5), *videolara* (f=3), *görsel öğelere* (f=2), *sınıf içi tartışma etkinliklerine* (f=2) ve *projelere* (f=1) yer verdikleri anlaşılmaktadır. Katılımcılardan 9'u sosyal bilgiler dersinin küresel problemlere çözüm üretebilecek beceriyi öğrencilere kazandırdığını düşünürken 8 katılımcı ise bu yeterliliği kazandırmadığını, 1 katılımcı ise kısmen yeterlilik kazandırdığını ifade etmiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Elde edilen sonuçlarda öğretmenler ilk olarak günümüz dünya sorunlarının başında küresel ısınmanın olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri ayrıca savaş, nüfus artışı, orman tahribi, terör, teknoloji bağımlılığı ve salgın hastalıkları da dünya ve insanlık için tehdit unsuru olarak görmüşlerdir. Bu sonuç bizlere ekolojik ve toplumsal tehditlere yönelik öğretmen farkındalığının yüksek olduğunu işaret etmektedir. Öğretmenler bu noktada çevresel düzeyde temel bir sürdürülebilirlik anlayışına sahiptirler. İlgili alan yazına bakıldığında sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarının günümüz dünya sorunları için farkındalıklarını oldukça yüksek bulan araştırmalar mevcuttur (Avcı & Gümüş, 2017; Şimşir, 2023; Öksüzoğlu, 2022). Sosyal bilgiler ders kitaplarının günümüz dünya sorunlarını tam olarak karşılamadığını ifade eden bazı öğretmenler, öğretim programında konuların yüzeysel ele alındığı ve ders sayısının yetersiz kaldığını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu noktada küresel sorunlara karşı eleştirel düşünme ve problem çözme becerisinin sosyal bilgiler dersi sayesinde öğrenciye kazandırıldığı dikkate alınmalı (Demir & Özyurt, 2021) ve öğrencileri etkin kılacak bir öğretim süreci üzerinde durulmalıdır. Araştırmada ulaşılan bir başka sonuç, öğretmenlerin genel olarak, sosyal bilgiler dersinin küresel problemlere çözüm üretebilecek beceriyi öğrencilere kazandırdığını ifade etmesi üzerinedir. Sosyal bilgiler dersinin küresel problemlere çözüm üretebilme yeterliliğini öğrencilere kazandırmadığını düşünen öğretmenler ise öğretim programında yer alan küresel sorunların teori üzerinde kaldığı ve öğrencilerin bu nedenle sorunları benimseyemediklerini söylemiştir.

Sonuç olarak dünyada her yıl pek çok küresel problem yaşanmakta (susuzluk, savaş, açlık ve eşitsizlik gibi) ancak bu problemlerin sonuçları bazı ülkelerde daha fazla hissedilmektedir. İnsanların bu sorunlara olan yaklaşımı aynı zamanda dünyayı kendi penceresinden nasıl yorumladığı ile ilişkilidir. Bu çalışmada sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin günümüz dünya sorunlarına küresel ölçekte baktığı, çevresel ve toplumsal sorunlara yönelik daha derin kaygılar hissettiği tespit edilmiştir. Öğretmen görüşlerinde genel olarak ekolojik, siyasi, demografik ve teknolojik sorunlar öne çıkmıştır. Öğretim programı ve ders içi uygulamalar için ise ortak bir yargıdan söz etmek pek mümkün değildir. Özellikle teorik çerçevede kalan ders içi uygulamalar, ders kitapları ve ders saatinin yetersizliği bir kısım sosyal bilgiler öğretmenin memnun olmadığı konular arasındadır. İlgili çalışma sonuçları ışığında, öğretmenler tarafından tanımlanan günümüz dünya sorunlarına yönelik görüşlerin öğrenciler, veliler ve yöneticiler tarafından nasıl algılandığı ve olası nedenleri üzerine yapılacak çok boyutlu çalışmaların alan yazına katkı sunacağı söylenebilir.