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The Role and Importance of Social Studies in The Education of Gifted Students*

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Summary

The purpose of this research is to disclose the opinions of teachers who work in BILSEM about the importance and position of social studies education in gifted students' instruction. In this study phenomenology design from qualitative research methods is used. In the determination of the study's participants criterion sampling was grounded on. The research's participants consist of 19 teachers from varied branches who work in the subsidiary of Antalya Provincial Directorate of National Education, BILSEM. The research's data are gathered through semi-structured interviews and obtained data are analyzed with the thematic analysis technique. The opinions of the participant teachers about this research were analysed under various categories. In the research it was revealed that participating teachers think about social studies' place in society as an adaptation to social life, creating citizenship awareness, cultural values, teaching history and geography, and developing communication skills. They see the position of social studies in the instruction of gifted and talented students as creating citizenship awareness, socializing and developing verbal intelligence, improving skills of leadership and creativity and being an explorer-questioner, redounding and developing multiple perspectives. It was found that participating teachers evaluated the social studies' necessity in gifted student's instruction with regard to developing their interests and abilities, socializing and developing verbal intelligence, adaptation to social life, contribution to the learning of social science disciplines and developing high level cognitive qualities.

Keywords: Gifted students, Social studies, Learning-teaching process, BILSEM (Science and Arts Center).

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Introduction

Social studies has an important place in basic education regarding primarily preparing and adapting individuals to social life. It is a course that provides knowledge, skills, behavior and human values necessary for being an effective citizen who knows its social rights and responsibilities. Social studies covers many disciplines, especially the field of social sciences which is directly related to human life, and the disciplines of history, geography, philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, law, and citizenship are among the leading ones within social sciences. The necessity of addressing the subjects of social sciences with an interdisciplinary approach is highly emphasized in the Social Studies Curriculum of the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 2017).

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) defines social studies as "...The integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (NCSS,1993). Social studies educator's discussions in decades about defining social studies and purpose of social studies means that generalizations about the field can be elusive (Levstik & Tyson, 2008).

The social studies curriculum aims at developing students' generic skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, doing research, as well as their historical skills such as perception of time and chronology, perception of change and continuity, use of evidence, geographical skills with perception of space and observation, and understanding of essential approaches in this field (MEB, 2005). The social studies curriculum covers creative thinking, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, empathy, communication, problem-solving, and doing research. In addition, social studies, which includes values such as acting scientifically, diligence, justice, sensitivity, responsibility, and independence, has an important place in values education.

Before explaining the concept of giftedness, it should be noted that there is so much variation in the scope and extension of the definitions made for gifted students, and there is little agreement on a satisfactory definition. In this context, Gagne (1995) mentions that the concept of giftedness is difficult to be defined because it is always defined as too broad when measured in a very limited way. According to the definition in Marland's 1972 report, gifted children, identified by professionally qualified individuals, have high academic performance and outstanding talent. They are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those provided by regular school curricula to contribute to themselves and the community. According to the definition of Renzulli (2011), giftedness is the relationship between three sets of simple human traits. These sets are better than average (good or above average) generic skills, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Gifted children are those who have the composition of these traits or can develop them and can apply them to any potentially valuable field of human performance. In the Commission Report on Gifted Children and Their Education, The Ministry of Education Special Education Council held in 1991 defined gifted students as those whose higher-level performance thanks to their generic and/or special abilities than their peers were identified by the field experts (MEB, 1991). In general, all similar definitions agree that gifted children are more advanced children than their peers. The rate of gifted children is 2.5 - 3% of the world population. This figure does not differ between countries (Davaslıgil, 2004). The rate of the gifted in Turkey is 10%. The lack of institutions discovering genius scientists and intellectuals, who are 1% of the gifted individuals, and providing them special education, and the lack of educational programs for them are critical problems (Özcan & Mertol, 2015).

The characteristics and educational needs of gifted children are observed to show parallelism with the objectives of social studies. Taking into consideration the modern developments in education, the social studies curriculum adopts an approach based on using and producing knowledge instead of memorizing the information. The teaching methods and techniques proposed to be used in the curriculum are aimed at developing students' higher-order thinking skills, which are identification, classification, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Demirkaya, 2011). Hence, social studies provides various opportunities for the education of gifted people. It helps them establish a direct relationship with daily life regarding their educational needs and develop their higher-order thinking skills. In addition, social studies includes many disciplines of interest to gifted students, and its curriculum can offer and develop alternatives appropriate to the learning capacities of gifted students.

The relationship between the goals of education given according to the characteristics and needs of gifted children and the goals of social studies is essential. Steward (1985) emphasizes that these two fields overlap with each other in terms of questioning, critical thinking skills, creative thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and leadership skills. Breiter states that "social studies is an excellent tool for the education of gifted individuals because it offers unlimited diversity" (p.177) (as cited in Atalay, 2014, p.55).

It is important to educate gifted individuals, who constitute about 2% of societies. Also, it is needed to enable them to be productive and to use their potentials for social development in terms of determining the welfare, future, and place of society in the world. Gifted individuals are those who lead societies and accelerate development and change with their leadership characteristics, motivation, determination, quick-thinking and creative problem-solving abilities (ÖYBSUP, 2013). It is envisaged that gifted students will be future leaders, scientists, craftsmen, and intellectuals who will contribute to both the universal and national heritages and advance societies to the next level. For this reason, social studies, which addresses their higher-order cognitive skills by establishing interdisciplinary connections, and facilitates their personal development, is of great importance. It can be ensured that gifted students are sensitive to the problems of the society they live in through qualified social studies education. In addition, their skills and interests in the field of social sciences can be identified and developed.

Teachers and experts who teach the gifted have an important role in the education of them. Science and Art Centers (BILSEM) in Turkey is the most widely known institutions providing education to the gifted. The education in this institution includes preschool, primary, middle, and secondary education, and such institutions aim to provide education outside the formal class hours of the students in accordance with their interests and needs. It is needed to consult the views of all branch teachers who teach social studies to gifted students to identify the role and importance of this course. In the literature,

There are several studies such as Uzun's (2006) master's thesis titled "The Relationship Between the Attitudes of Gifted Students to Their Social Studies Course and Their Academic Achievement"; Aydın and Coşkun's (2011) article titled "Gifted Students' Opinions about Earthquake: A Qualitative Study"; Aydın, Coşkun, Kaya and Erdonmez's (2011) article titled "Gifted students' attitudes towards environment; A case study from Turkey"; Aydın and Coşkun's (2011) article titled "The Metaphoric Perceptions of Gifted Students towards "Environment" Concept"; Ocak, Yazıcı, Kısa and Dönmez's (2012) article titled "The Evaluation of the Attitudes of Gifted Students Towards Teaching of Social Sciences with Stories"; Atalay's (2014) doctoral dissertation titled "The Effect of Differentiated Social Studies Teaching on Academic Achievement, Attitude, Critical Thinking, and Creativity of Gifted Students"; Mertol, Doğdu and Yılar's (2013) article titled "Metaphoric Perceptions of Gifted Students Towards Social Studies Course"; Mertol's (2014) doctoral dissertation titled "The Views and Practices of Teachers Teaching Social Studies to Gifted Students in Turkey and the USA: The Case of the Project

Hope and BILSEM"; Ünal and Er's (2015) article titled "Assessment of the Opinions of Gifted Students About Social Studies Courses"; and Henry's (2015) doctoral dissertation "The Teachers' Perspective of Critical Thinking Skills Development in Middle School Gifted Students in the Social Studies Classroom Through the Use of Primary Sources". However, there are limited studies in literature especially on the importance of teaching social studies to gifted students. This qualitative study is considered important in terms of its contribution to the related literature and its originality in the field. In this context, the questions sought for answers are as follows:

1. What are the views of the teachers of gifted students regarding the role of social studies in education and community life?
2. What are the views of the teachers employed at BILSEM regarding the role of social studies in the education of gifted students?

Method

The phenomenological method was employed in this study, which aims to obtain the views of teachers employed in BILSEM regarding the importance and role of social studies in the education of gifted students. "Phenomenology focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have in-depth and detailed knowledge about" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p.72). Experience is important in phenomenological studies to identify how the individual makes sense of events to create a deep understanding of the phenomena. In the phenomenology design, the aim is to explain the meaning of perception and phenomenon, and in this pattern, the answers are sought for the basic questions, such as "What is the experience of the individual regarding the phenomenon?" and "What are the settings and conditions affecting the experience regarding this phenomenon?" (Creswell, 2007, p. 61-62).

Study Group

In this study, the non-probability (purposive) sampling method was used to determine the participants. The purposive sampling method includes different sampling techniques. In this study, the participants were determined with the criterion sampling technique. The primary criterion for determining the participant teachers is the participation of teachers who are employed in BILSEM and teach social studies to gifted students. The characteristics of the teachers participating in the study are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Characteristics of the Participants Regarding Gender, Education Status, Seniority and Branch

Code	Gender	Branch	Education Status	Seniority (year)	The Period of Teaching Gifted Students (year)
SBÖ1	Male	Social Studies	Master's	11-15	1-5
TAÖ1	Male	History	Master's	11-15	1-5
CRÖ1	Female	Geographic	Master's	21+	1-5
EDÖ1	Male	Literature	Bachelor's	21+	6-10
FZÖ1	Male	Physics	Master's	16-20	1-5

BYÖ1	Female	Biology	Master's	16-20	1-5
MÜÖ1	Female	Music	Bachelor's	11-15	1-5
MÜÖ2	Female	Music	Master's	6-10	1-5
GSÖ1	Male	Visual Arts	Bachelor's	11-15	1-5
GSÖ2	Female	Visual Arts	Master's	16-20	1-5
BTÖ1	Male	Information Technologies	Master's	6-10	1-5
TRÖ1	Female	Turkish	Master's	11-15	1-5
MAÖ1	Female	Mathematics	Bachelor's	16-20	1-5
MAÖ2	Male	Mathematics	Master's	11-15	1-5
İNÖ1	Male	English	Bachelor's	16-20	1-5
İNÖ2	Male	English	Bachelor's	11-15	1-5
RDÖ1	Female	PCG	Bachelor's	16-20	1-5
SNÖ1	Female	Classroom Teaching	Master's	11-15	1-5
SNÖ2	Male	Classroom Teaching	Master's	6-10	1-5

In Table 1, although the professional seniorities of the teachers vary, all the participating teachers' period of teaching to gifted students is between 1-5 years except for the literature teacher. While twelve of the participating teachers have master's degrees, seven of them have bachelor's degrees. In addition, two teachers are continuing their graduate education as Ph.D. students.

Data Collection

The data obtained in this study were collected with semi-structured interview questions. The questions in the interview form were developed by reviewing the relevant literature and taking into account the expert views. An interview guide was prepared to inform the participants about the research and to get their consent. Prior to the interviews, the participants were encouraged to read this guide explaining the content of the research and indicating that the interview would be recorded with a voice recorder and that no one except the researcher would play these records.

Interviews were held at the Antalya Science and Art Center and recorded with a voice recorder. Interviews were carried out branch teachers' workshops in the center to prevent any manipulation. The real names of the participants were kept confidential, and each participant was given a separate code. Questions were asked to the participants sequentially. Once the participant gave a superficial response to the interview question, the researcher repeated the question. In case of questions that the participant had difficulty understanding, alternative questions were asked instead of them.

Before starting the interviews, the participants read and signed the interview guide indicating that they voluntarily participated in this study.

Data Analysis

In this research, the thematic analysis technique was used in data analysis. In the first stage, a separate interview form was generated for each teacher, and the interviews were transcribed. Then, the relevant codes were identified by the researcher. In the next stage, the codes were extracted to empty descriptive index tables by consulting an expert. Expert opinions were obtained to increase the internal

validity of the study. A comparison was made between the codes of the researcher and the expert, and the reliability of the study was calculated. When the views of the participants were conveyed, the parts that were not related to the topic were not indicated using an ellipsis (...).

The findings are tried to be explained and interpreted within the framework of the themes generated in the phenomenology research design. The results of the study are presented in a descriptive narrative, and direct quotations are utilized (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p.75). In this research, direct quotations are used through the emerging themes. The findings of the interview were examined under seven groups, which are listed below:

1. Teachers' views on the place of social studies in social life,
2. Teachers' views on the role of social studies in the education of gifted students,
3. Teachers' views on the necessity of social studies in the education of gifted students,
4. Teachers' views on the adequacy of social studies in the acquisition of social knowledge and skills in the education of gifted students,
5. Teachers' views on the impact of social studies taught to gifted students on the development of social sciences in the future,
6. Teachers' views on how social studies affects gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena,
7. Teachers' views on the adequacy of social studies taught to gifted students in terms of values education.

Findings

1. Teachers' Views on the Place of Social Studies in Social Life

The views of the participating teachers employed in BİLSEM about the place and importance of social studies in social life were evaluated under three separate categories: adaptation to social life, citizenship awareness, communication skills, cultural values, and history-geography teaching.

1.1. Adaptation to Social Life

Six of the participating teachers agreed on the importance of social studies in social life. On the other hand, it was observed that some of the participating teachers of various branches stated that social studies was important for a student's adaptation to social life, while others expressed views emphasizing the importance of social studies in understanding society. The views of some of the participating teachers are as follows:

"Social studies helps people get prepared for life. It allows them to explore the place and the environment they live in. Apart from this, even in terms of this institution, it allows them to explore even outside of the world. That's it." (SBÖ1)

"Social studies is a course that enables them to understand and keep up with the society they live in." (İNÖ2)

1.2. Citizenship Awareness

Considering citizenship education within social studies, three of the participating teachers emphasized the role of social studies in citizenship knowledge and awareness, being an effective citizen, learning human rights, and fulfilling the responsibilities of citizenship. The views of some of the participating teachers are as follows:

"... It covers learning outcomes such as learning the responsibility, rights, and laws of being a citizen; protecting the environment; communicating to others; understanding the importance of cooperation and solidarity." (SNÖ1)

"In accordance with the needs of students, social studies has an important role in every level of education academically in terms of teaching social and cultural values and awareness of citizenship to students..." (RDÖ1)

"Social studies gives information about the environment in which we live and teaches the requirements of being a citizen..." (EDÖ1)

1.3. Cultural Values and History-Geography Teaching

It was found out that most of the teachers agreed on the importance of social studies in social life. The aspects of importance they frequently mention are geography education, learning and conservation of cultural values, and teaching of cultural heritage in the context of past-future. The views of some of the participating teachers are as follows:

"... It is important for a student to learn subjects like history, geography, etc., and to develop itself, and to express itself in society... It will be good to know the history, geography, human characteristics of the places we live in, to evaluate them by today's values, and to adapt them in our daily life." (GSÖ1)

"It enables us to know the place and geography of where we live and to realize the historical, national, and cultural values of our society..." (TRÖ1)

"This a field of science that all students should know about. We think that students should know history very well. At the same time, I think that all students should have geographic information. This is what all people should know, not just gifted ones..." (FZÖ1)

1.4. Communication Skills

The social studies curriculum includes units that include communication topics for different grades. Two of the teachers stated that social studies improves the communication skills of students. The views of the participating teachers are as follows:

"...Social studies regulates communication with others and increases the strength of cooperation and solidarity. In this sense, it is of great importance." (EDÖ1)

"...Social studies is required to provide effective communication with individuals in society." (BTÖ1)

2. Teachers' Views on the Role of Social Studies in the Education of Gifted Students

The responses of the participating teachers to the question "What is the role of social studies in the education of the gifted? " were evaluated under 4 categories: raising citizenship awareness, socialization and development of verbal intelligence, development of leadership and creativity, making explorer and inquisitive, and development of a multifaceted perspective.

2.1. Raising Citizenship Awareness

Some of the teachers emphasized citizenship education regarding the role of social studies in the education of the gifted. Therefore, they focused on the effectiveness of social studies in raising citizenship knowledge and awareness, being an effective citizen, and rights and responsibilities. The views of some of the participating teachers are as follows:

"For the reasons I mentioned in the other question, citizenship awareness, democratic attitude, human rights, and adaptation to social life are acquired through social studies..." (MÜZ1)

"... Social studies is an important awareness-raising tool for students who are interested in their environment, history, and national culture." (TRÖ1)

2.2. Socialization and Development of Verbal Intelligence

While some of the participating teachers explained the role of social studies in the education of gifted students, they stated that it played an important role in developing their socialization skills and their verbal intelligence. The views of some of the teachers are as follows:

"The socialization problems of these students can only be eliminated with the help of social studies, so social studies is important in their education. In the education of gifted students, the students of science classes do not speak much or express themselves, but this is not the case for the ones of social sciences classes. No matter they are very talented, I think it will be difficult for them to find a job because they cannot express themselves. I find it important to express themselves." (CRÖ1)

"Gifted people may display different thoughts and behaviors than others. They think more finely and in detail, but they are not separate from social life and society. It is important for the gifted individuals to engage in social life, to grow as conscious individuals, to see themselves as a part of society, and to ensure not to separate themselves from society. In this sense, social studies is critical in the education of the gifted. (EDÖ1)

2.3. Development of Leadership and Creativity

Some of the participants stated that social studies improved the creativity and leadership characteristics of gifted students. Examples of the statements of participants with this view are as follows:

"One of the most important points in the education of gifted students is to discover their interests and abilities and to support their creativity and development in this direction. Hence, social studies is an indispensable course in developing children's creativity and abilities." (RDÖ1)

"... The gifted will be the pioneers of society. This sector who has a leading position in society should have complete social studies education so that they can understand the sector they lead..." (BTÖ1)

2.4. Being Explorer and Inquisitive and Development of a Multifaceted Perspective

While locating the role of social studies in the education of gifted students, some of the participants revealed their views on the importance of social studies in enabling students to be explorer and inquisitive and to develop a multifaceted perspective. Examples of the statements of participants revealing such a view are as follows:

"...In the education of gifted students, it is aimed to carry out activities oriented at research skills, doing analysis, synthesis and evaluation, scientific literacy, and scientific process skills. ... In this respect, social studies aims to raise individuals who are open to new developments and able to solve problems..." (SNÖ1)

"... In social studies, they learn more about the subject comprehensively and try to make different interpretations and syntheses. Social studies enables the gifted to adopt different and comprehensive philosophy." (İNÖ2)

3. Teachers' Views on the Necessity of Social Studies in the Education of Gifted Students

The responses of the participating teachers to the question "Is social studies necessary in the education of the gifted?" were evaluated under 5 categories;

3.1. Development of Their Interests and Abilities

Some of the participants stated that social studies was necessary for gifted students to explore their interests and abilities. An example of such views of teachers as follows:

"... It is necessary for them to be socially sensitive individuals. It is also very important for the full discovery and development of their interests and talents. As a person working already in the field of social sciences and having enough experience, I assert that the children need it very much. They stick their hearts and souls. Emphasizing the role of social studies and considering that social studies is related to human qualities, such qualities of these children should be developed. I believe that human qualities can only be developed with the help of science. Social studies is also a very necessary field in this context." (TAÖ1)

3.2. Socialization and Development of Verbal Intelligence

Some of the participating teachers agreed that social studies taught to gifted students improved their social and verbal intelligence and enabled them to socialize. Examples of expressions of the teachers adopting such a view are as follows:

"...Social studies is the sine qua non of gifted education in order for socialization to be sufficient and balanced." (CRÖ1)

"Of course, it is necessary like every course. The gifted perception of our society is that such children are only successful if they are good at science - math-, but it isn't the case. Why is a child with a very high verbal intelligence assessed based on whether it is good at science? This country also needs students good at social sciences." (GSÖ2)

3.3. Adaptation to Social Life

Some of the participating teachers agreed that social studies taught to gifted students was necessary for their adaptation to social life. Examples of expressions of the teachers adopting such a view are as follows:

"Gifted students are the ones that may have difficulty in getting involved and adapting. Therefore, they should be educated to overcome such problems through social studies..." (BTÖ1)

"Necessary... outcomes such as citizenship awareness, democratic attitude, human rights, and adaptation to social life are the outcomes that gifted students will acquire them with social studies." (MÜÖ1)

3.4. Learning Social Sciences Disciplines

Some of the participant teachers agreed that there were many disciplines within social studies and that teaching of these disciplines was important in the education of gifted students. Therefore, social studies was necessary for such students. The views of some of the teachers are as follows:

"Social studies includes many disciplines. Starting from this point of view, the teaching of this course is essential to enable the gifted to respond to the questions in disciplines such as history, culture, and geography." (TRÖ1)

"It is necessary... Generating new ideas is not only about acquiring knowledge, but social studies require combining and using knowledge together with different disciplines." (İNÖ2)

"It is absolutely necessary. People and parents assume the gifted as the ones only good at science, but what about social sciences? Social studies carries students over the top with the help of disciplines such as history and geography. In other words, future historians, like Halil Inalcik and İlber Ortaylı, will show up from this field." (SBÖ1)

3.5. Development of Higher-Order Thinking Skills

In terms of the necessity of social studies in the education of gifted students, some of the participating teachers stated that it played an essential role in gaining them several skills such higher-order thinking, research, inquiry, problem-solving, analysis-synthesis, entrepreneurship, and leadership and allowing them to develop a multifaceted perspective. An example of the statements of teachers adopting such a view is as follows:

"It is absolutely necessary. As I said before, the more they are engaged in that course, the broader they adopt perspectives on other subjects. Their creativity also develops. They can take lots of lessons from their research on the past times. They think about "This is what they did, but how and why did they do it?". For example, we talk about insulation in physics class. Historically speaking, when they examine old buildings and mosques, they can see that the walls are very thick. They can relate the idea underlying such a building style with the concept of insulation, which is a good example of

interdisciplinary thinking. Students say directly "We have learned this in the social studies class," or "We have examined a mosque with very thick walls in the social studies class and this can be an example of applying insulation at that time." (FZÖ1)

4. Teachers' Views on the Adequacy of Social Studies in the Acquisition of Social Knowledge and Skills in the Education of Gifted Students

Five of the participating teachers employed in BILSEM stated that they did not have enough information about the adequacy of social studies in the acquisition of social knowledge and skills. Six participating teachers found it adequate, but four teachers did not. Four participant teachers stated that it depended on the teacher who teaches gifted students.

Some of the statements of teachers, who consider social studies is adequate to gain students social knowledge and skills, are as follows:

"... It is adequate. Gifted students are the ones who are already sensitive to social life, environment, and human rights..." (MÜÖ1)

"... I think it is adequate, but it needs further enrichment." (RDÖ1)

Some of the statements of teachers, who consider its adequacy depends on the teacher, are as follows:

"Our curriculum includes outcomes for gifted students, but the content of the courses is totally left to our initiative. In other words, the teacher should focus on its personal development first, then can help students develop themselves. We have just the curriculum, but we are responsible to help our students to reach learning objectives. So, the more the teacher develops itself, the more it can help its students. If the teacher cannot develop itself, the course will remain inadequate, which means all the eyes are on the teacher" (SBÖ1)

"Gifted individuals are bored with classical lecturing style... In order to make the course adequate, it is required to teach gifted students by using different methods and techniques." (İNÖ2)

Some of the statements of teachers, who consider it is not adequate, are as follows:

"No. Not enough, I think. They should be given assignments requiring more research, brainstorming, and, if necessary, making observation on site. Trips and observations should be performed more. A wide range of sources should be offered to students in this respect." (GSÖ1)

"I think there are shortcomings in the social studies curriculum of the gifted. We have no curricula designed by experts, but curriculum frameworks. In Science and Art Centers, for example, our curricula consist of examples of activities designed by teachers employed in such centers. For example, the social studies curriculum is not adequate in terms of social skills or there are inappropriate activities because I think they are not designed by experts and assessed well. In other words, these activities are not appropriate to the level of children and there are sometimes problematic and improper phrases. These need to be addressed carefully... For this reason, I think that curricula should be designed more carefully and involved by experts." (SNÖ2)

5. Teachers' Views on the Impact of Social Studies Taught to Gifted Students on the Development of Social Sciences in the Future

The views of the participating teachers employed in BILSEM were evaluated in line with their responses to the question "Does Social Studies Taught to Gifted Students Have an Impact on the Development of Social Sciences in The Future?" While the majority of the teachers compromised on the view that it would have an impact, four teachers argued that it would not. Two teachers stated that they could not express their views on the subject since they did not have any idea about the content of social studies.

Examples of the statements of teachers, who argued that social studies taught to gifted students would not have an impact on the development of social sciences, are as follows:

"In our country, gifted students are generally raised with the prejudice that they will be successful in science. Therefore, I do not think that these students will conduct studies in the scientific milieu that will influence the development of social sciences." (INÖ2)

"... I don't think it will affect the development of social sciences since our people consider the gifted students as the ones good at mathematics and science." (MAÖ1)

Examples of the statements of teachers, who asserted that social studies taught to gifted students would have an impact on the development of social sciences, are as follows:

"... Social studies can also support an individual's adventure of knowing itself. Individuals who feel close to social sciences will, of course, contribute to the development of social sciences in the future." (SNÖ1)

"Of course, it will... Gifted students can analyze, question, and interpret phenomena, participate in and dominate discussions, and present diverse ideas." (GSÖ1)

"Yeah, it will. I think that diverse perspectives of gifted students to life and phenomena also play a role in the development of social sciences." (MAÖ2)

6. Teachers' Views on How Social Studies Affects Gifted Students' Approaches to Social Problems and Phenomena

The teachers' views on how social studies affects gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena were evaluated under four different categories according to their responses to the question "How does social studies affect gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena?": establishing actual connections, increasing sensitivity to social problems and phenomena, development of problem-solving skills and gaining different perspectives, and learning history and culture.

6.1. Establishing Actual Connections

Three of the participating teachers stated that social studies had a positive effect on gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena in terms of establishing actual connections. An example of teacher expression with this view is given below.

"I think it will have a positive effect because we perform activities by establishing connections between current phenomena and the subjects in the course..." (SNÖ1)

6.2. Increasing Sensitivity to Social Problems and Phenomena

Seven of the participating teachers stated that social studies had a positive effect on gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena in terms of increasing their sensitivity. Examples of the statements of teachers adopting this view are given below:

"As far as I understand social studies is a course directly associated with social life. From this point of view, this course helps students acquire the necessary awareness and sensitivity to social problems and phenomena..." (INÖ1)

"... It contributes positively to adopt a fair, democratic, and sensitive approach to nature, human, and society." (MÜÖ1)

6.3. Development of Problem-Solving Skills and Gaining Different Perspectives

Five of the participating teachers stated that social studies had a positive effect on gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena. Development of higher-order skills such as problem-solving and gaining different perspectives are the leading aspects of importance. Examples of the statements of teachers adopting this view are given below:

“Social studies contributes to the development of emotional and social intelligence of gifted students, and this will enable students to use higher-order knowledge and skills in understanding and solving the problems they face in social life than their peers...” (RDÖ1)

6.4. Learning History and Culture

Five of the teachers asserted that social studies had a positive impact on gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena in terms of learning history, culture, and national values. Examples of the statements of teachers adopting this view are given below:

“This course cannot be imagined to be neutral to social phenomena since it deals with learning outcomes from a historical point of view. It enables the student to be aware of phenomena with the help of historical and national consciousness...” (TRÖ1)

7. Teachers' Views on the Adequacy of Social Studies Taught to Gifted Students in Terms of Values Education

The views of the participating teachers were evaluated under three categories in line with their responses to the question "Do you think social studies taught to the gifted is adequate in terms of values education?" These are considering it adequate, considering it inadequate, and dependence on teachers. In addition, five participating teachers stated that they did not know the learning outcomes and values of social studies, so they did not have an opinion on this issue.

Among those considering it adequate, while some evaluated it in terms of core values, some evaluated it in terms of citizenship values. Examples of the expressions of teachers adopting these views are given below:

“Values education has a direct effect on social studies in terms of the topics it covers... There is a direct correlation between values education and social sciences. It is adequate, but a little more effort is needed to improve it.” (TRÖ1)

“Social studies lays critical foundations for the gifted to acquire the values that they should adopt, which is an undeniable fact. This is, of course, the task of not only social studies but also all other fields. However, students can only be equipped with the most essential values with the help of social studies.” (RDÖ1)

“Yes. I consider it adequate. Social studies already covers 80% of values education. I think it is quite adequate in this regard.” (BYÖ1)

Some of the teachers argued that they did not consider social studies taught to gifted students adequate in terms of values education. Examples of the expressions of teachers adopting such a view are given below:

“In fact, it is not adequate in terms of values education. Resources should be enriched and tried to be accessible to satisfy the needs of gifted children.” (GSÖ1)

“Values education is embedded in our subjects and outcomes. I wish I could say it is adequate because we have less class hours. However, but it may be adequate in terms of its distribution to all branches. It may be given a little more space in social studies. So, while we are trying to educate scientists here, we may not have time to teach such values.” (SBÖ1)

“...There seems to be a systemic shortcoming in general. It is perhaps more adequate in BILSEM than in normal schools. However, if we asserted that it fully satisfied the need, we would be lying. I do not find it adequate.” (EDÖ1)

Two teachers stated that the adequacy of social studies taught to gifted students in terms of values education depends on the teacher. An example of the expression of the teacher adopting this view is given below:

“We really need to teach such values to our students... We are only given the list of values we will teach, but it is up to the teacher to learn how to teach them to students. The teacher can be very effective if it knows how to teach them. However, it doesn't make much sense if the teacher only gives information about them. The teacher needs to know how to teach which value in which subject... Our ministry has not designed a clear curriculum on this subject at the moment. There is nothing that will guide teachers on how to teach which value in which subjects and so on.” (FZÖ1)

Results and Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that six of the participants expressed that social studies had an important role in students' understanding the society and adapting to social life. It was determined that the majority of teachers pointed out the necessity of teaching social studies to students in the context of past and future with the help of teaching the features and conservation of the geography and cultural values of where we live and integrating it with history teaching.

In terms of the role of social studies in the education of gifted students, it was discovered based on the findings that the teachers adopted views that social studies helped the gifted develop their verbal intelligence, and allowed them to be socialized, develop their entrepreneurship and leadership skills, to be explorer-inquisitive and gain a multifaceted perspective.

Besides, in terms of the views of the teachers on the necessity of social studies for gifted students, it was found that the majority of the teachers stated that it was necessary. When these teachers were asked why social studies was necessary for the gifted, it was found out that the teachers mentioned the role of it in gifted students' discovering their own interests and abilities. In addition, they stated it helped students improve their verbal intelligence and develop social communication skills and emphasized the necessity of social studies in terms of adaptation of gifted students to social life. There are teachers' views on the fact that social studies helps gifted students develop higher-order cognitive skills such as research, questioning, problem-solving, and critical thinking, as well as some views indicating the importance of it in gaining leadership and multifaceted perspectives. Yıldız (2010) concluded that Science and Art Centers contributed to the creativity, communication, and problem-solving skills of gifted students at a high level according to teachers, students, and parents, which is supported by our study.

In terms of the adequacy of social studies in the acquisition of social knowledge and skills in the education of gifted students, it was found out that seven teachers thought it was adequate, but four teachers made an association with the teacher. Some of the teachers emphasized some shortcomings arising from the structured curriculum of BILSEM, and lack of a general curriculum framework and activities designed by experts. In this context, they underlined that teaching of some knowledge, abilities, and values were totally left to teachers' initiatives because of the activity- and project-oriented education according to BILSEM's instructions. There is a parallelism with such a finding and Mertol's (2015) doctoral thesis, which mentions a lack of formal resources from which teachers will benefit for differentiation activities in Turkey and reveals that there are lesson plans and activities designed for the gifted on the official website of the USA Department of Education from which the teachers of the gifted benefit. Four of the teachers stated that the BILSEM instructions were not adequate. Özkan (2009) concluded that it was a problem to carry out instruction-based education rather than regulation-based education in Science and Art Centers, and in order to be implemented in BILSEM, the MoNE needed to prepare a curriculum and the curriculum needed to be enriched and developed by field experts in universities and public institutions. The present findings are in parallel with the results of this study.

The teachers interpreted the impact of social studies on gifted students' approaches to social problems and phenomena in terms of establishing actual connections, increasing sensitivity to social problems and phenomena, problem-solving, gaining different perspectives, and history and culture learning. The

teachers' views on the impact of social studies on the development of social sciences revealed that the majority of teachers had a consensus that it would have an impact. When the findings of the teachers' views on the adequacy of social studies taught to gifted in terms of values education were examined, it was found that six teachers thought it was adequate, but five of them argued that it was inadequate. Interestingly, the social studies teacher was among those who adopted such a view, which is in parallel with the study of Mertol (2015) revealing that Turkish and American teachers who teach social studies to the gifted considered values education, which plays an important role in social studies, was inadequate.

To sum, some suggestions can be developed for research problems based on the views of teachers. First, a framework curriculum should be designed and enriched by field experts and academicians for social studies taught to gifted children in Science and Art Centers. Second, should be examples of up-to-date activities, which have been assessed and approved by experts, available to teachers in Science and Art Centers. Third, teachers employed in Science and Art Centers should be encouraged to develop themselves personally and academically. Fourth, gifted students and teachers should be encouraged to increase the number of social science projects in Science and Art Centers. Finally, the frequency of activities for improving social skills should be increased in social studies taught to gifted students in Science and Art Centers.

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