Pre-Service Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Social Problems

Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmen Adaylarının Sosyal Problem Algısı[1]

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Abstract

Purpose: The main purpose of this research is to understand pre-service social studies teachers' perceptions of social problems.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The phenomenological design was employed in order to investigate pre-service social studies teachers' perceptions of social problems. Participants are consisted of eight pre-service social studies teachers. Data was obtained in the fall semester in 2016-2017 academic year. Semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tool. The inductive analysis approach was adopted to analysis data.

Findings: As a result of the research, it was revealed that there are similarities between the pre-service social studies teachers' perceptions of social problems and functionalist (structuralist), confrontational, symbolic interactionist and social constructivist theories.

Highlights: It was concluded that pre-service social studies teachers' perceptions of social problem are shaped by different resources such as family, culture, political groups, and mass media. Besides, it was found that pre-service social studies teachers did not feel that they have enough skills and experiences about how to teach social problems in the courses.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Bu araştırmanın temel amacı sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarının sosyal problem algısının belirlenmesidir.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan fenomenoloji kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu sekiz sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adayı oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri 2016- 2017 eğitim öğretim yılı güz döneminde toplanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında elde edilen verilerin analizinde tümevarımsal analiz yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir.

Bulgular: Araştırmada sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarının sosyal problem algısı ile yapısalcı, sosyal yapılandırmacı, sembolik etkileşimci ve çatışmacı kuramlar arasında benzerlikler olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Önemli Vurgular: Araştırmada sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarının sosyal problem algısının aile, kültür ve kitle iletişim araçları gibi çeşitli kaynakların şekillendirdiği görülmüştür. Ayrıca sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarının sosyal problemlerin öğretimine ilişkin yeterli becerilere sahip olmadıklarını düşündüğü sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

[1] This study was presented as oral presentation at the V. International Symposium on Social Studies Education 2016 which was held in Pamukkale University on 28-30 April 2016, Denizli, Turkey.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many theories have been asserted trying to explain and make sense of the human mind and behavior. Cognitive theories defending the importance of cognitive structures in the human mind and behavior are at the top of these theories. On the other hand, many theories arguing that cognitive theories are insufficient have also been conducted. Social learning theory, suggested by Albert Bandura and attracting a lot of attention by many people, is one of these theories.

Social learning theory states that environmental factors are ignored in understanding human mind and behavior and that these factors are at least as important as cognitive structures of people (Bandura, 1985).Bandura argues that individuals learn by modeling the behaviors and thoughts of people they consider valuable in their environment, and that today's ideas, values, beliefs, perceptions, and perspectives on life are socially transmitted (Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 2011).Teachers are the leading individuals that individuals take as models (Bahn, 2001; Bandura, 2019).Therefore, on the basis of social learning theory, it can be said that the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors of teachers influence on the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviours that students acquire. Teachers' knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors are strongly related to their perception of the environment as everyone else does. Because people act according to their perceptions and their personal characteristics, which are shaped based on their perceptions (Efron, 1969; Takvam, 2010).

In Turkey, in primary school 4th grade and middle school 5th, 6th, and 7th grades social studies is taught, includes some issues based on the social sciences such as sociology and psychology, and it is a course that aims to raise active citizens by presenting these topics in accordance with the level of the target audience (Özturk, 2012). Hence, one of the most important aims of the social studies course is to educate students as citizens who are aware of and sensitive to social problems in their social environment. As a matter of fact, the statement "believing in the importance of participation and suggesting distinctive opinions to find solutions to personal and common problems," which is among the specific aims of the social studies curriculum, shows this position more clearly. In addition, the explanation as "They realize how to preserve individual rights and social order in regimes that the main source of sovereignty depends on the nation by understanding how to solve and how to maintain order," which is one of the learning fields in the curriculum, (for example, the social studies curriculum includes in "Active Citizenship" learning field) is clearly suggests that social studies has an important role in solving social problems (MoNE, 2018).

Social Problem

In literature, there is no consensus on the definition of nature of social problems. However, researchers tried to make definitions with different approaches, based on the main features of social problems. Macionis (2015) define social problem as generally disputable structured situation that damage the welfare of a part of or the whole society, while Alessio (2011) defines it as a situation that damages the one or more individual, or social institution; and has at least one social cause or social effect and has one or more social solution. On the other hand, Leon-Guerro (2005) defines the social problem as objective or subjective situations that affect the individuals, the social life, and the physical world negatively.

Although how social problems emerge is unknown, the researchers tried to understand and define the reasons for social problems with the various theories. For example; while the functionalists assert that the social problems emerge from the structure of the society that inflicted by the changing norms and values of the society (Scarpitti, et al,, 1997); Conflict Theory claims that social problems emerge from the desire of the social groups to create oppression and exploitation over each other. (Coleman, 1998). Apart from these, there are approaches as class theory, boundary theory, critical theory, feminist theory, minority group theory, moral panic theory, social control theory, social exchange theory, socialization theory, and just war theory to explain the reasons of the social problems (Burcu et al., 2014).

Importance of the Study

There are different definitions and different approaches to social problems in the literature. These definitions and approaches lead to the emergence of perceptual differences regarding social problems. Accordingly, it can be said that social problems are perceived and interpreted in different ways from society to society, from time to time, and even from person to person. Social studies teachers, like other individuals, can perceive social problems differently from each other. Since how social studies teachers perceive social problems will have an affect on their way of including and teaching social problems, it is extremely important to know teachers' perceptions of social problems.

In order for teachers to guide their students in a subject that concerns the whole world, such as social problems, and to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors, they must first have acquired these knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors before becoming a teacher. The acquisition of these skills can be achieved through teacher training in higher education. Therefore, it is important to understand how pre-service teachers' perceive social problems in order to provide the necessary training before they become teachers.

In the field of education, it is seen that there are studies trying to explain the social problem perception of professionals working in various branches in primary schools, pre-service teachers, high school, and university students. (Erwin, 2002; Voormann, 2005; Mora & Trujillo, 2007, Erdem, 2010; Pashkevich, 2011; Bautista Urrego & Parra Toro, 2016; Kurt, 2016). Also, it is seen that there are pre-service social studies teachers among the participants and researches aiming to determine the social problems and their opinions about the solution of these problems. (Koç & Palabıyık, 2012; İbret, Karasu Avcı & Recepoğlu, 2016).

However, when the related literature is examined, it is seen that there is no research that tries to understand and explain the social problem perception of pre-service social studies teachers by obtaining in-depth data. It is thought that this research will contribute to the literature in this sense and it is considered important. This research aims to understand and explain how pre-service social studies teachers perceive social problems. For this purpose, the following questions will be searched in this research:

1. What is the perception of social problem of pre-service social studies teachers?

2. How do pre-service social studies teachers explain the relationship between social studies education and social problems?

METHOD

This research, which aims to understand and explain the perceptions of pre-service social studies teachers on social problems, is designed by phenomenology from qualitative research methods. Researchers, in the phenomenological research design, try to explain how the phenomenon subject to research is structured and interpreted by individuals. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study, the phenomenology design was found appropriate for the nature of this research because of the attempt to explain how participants perceive, understand and experience social problems.

Participants of the Research

Depending upon the purpose of the research, the pre-service social studies teachers who took "Global World Problems" course as a compulsory course and "Global Education" course as an elective course in the social studies teacher education programs; are determined as the intentional participants in the research, during the study period. Because one of the focal points of Global World Problems and Global Education courses is social problems and debates on social problems; pre-service social studies teachers who took these courses were included in the study on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the participants of the research consists of eight volunteers as pre-service social studies teachers in the social studies teacher education program at a state university in Turkey who took "Global World Problems" and "Global Education" courses. The information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Information of Participants

Participants	Age	Sex	Hometown	Mother's Education Status	Father's Education Status	High School Type	Non Governmentl Organization Membership
Ömer	22	Male	Ağrı	Literate	University	Common High School	No
Ebru	22	Female	Eskişehir	Secondary School	Secondary School	Common High School	No
Ayhan	24	Male	Eskişehir	High School	Primary School	Common High School	No
Merve	22	Female	Ağrı, İstanbul	Illiterate	Primary School	Common High School	No
Kadir	24	Male	Kahramanmaraş, Aydın	Primary School	Primary School	Anatolian Vocational High School	Yes
Sena	22	Female	Mardin	Primary School	College	Anatolian High School	No
Arif	23	Male	Diyarbakır, İstanbul	Illiterate	Primary School	Common High School	No
Damla	25	Female	Artvin	Primary School	Primary School	Open Education High School	No

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted two times with the participants to obtain in-depth data on how participants perceived social problems in the fall semester in 2016-2017 academic year. Because the interviews allow the researcher to understand the whole complexity of a phenomenon by providing the opportunity to understand and explain what the participants think or feel about something and to capture that is not seen, it will not be seen or has to be seen (Glesne, 2014). Semi-structured interview questions were prepared considering the aim of the study and related literature. The draft interview questions were examined by two experts in the field of social studies education and necessary corrections and arrangements were made in line with the opinions of the experts. Thereafter the researchers conducted a pilot interview with a pre-service social studies teacher on the subject of global education and global world problems. This pre-service teacher was not included in the study. After the pilot interview, the questions were rearranged. For instance, some questions were combined in one question and some term preferences were changed according to feedbacks which were obtained from the pilot interview. Consequently, the semi-structured interview questions were finalized.

In pilot interviews, it was seen that using the concept of "common problem" rather than "social problem" was more understandable and the concept of "common problem" was used in the interviews. The semi-structured interviews with the participants were performed in the interview rooms where the sound insulation was made and recorded through two voice recorders. In addition to semi-structured interviews, the research logger was kept by the researcher both during the data collection process and in the data analysis process and these data were included in the analysis process.

In the study, participants were given information on how research data were stored and analysed, and what rights they had in the research process and verbal and written approvals of the participants were obtained. Table 2 shows the duration of the semistructured interviews with the participants.

Table 2. The Duration of The Semi-Structured Interviews

Participants	1. Duration of Interview (min: sec)	2.Duration of Interview (min: sec)
Ayhan	25:27	20:21
Neslihan	21:36	16:33
Damla	35:40	31:17
Kadir	33:43	25:32
Arif	30:48	34:36
Ebru	31:32	17:57
Ömer	32:52	10:16
Merve	31:37	18:46

Before the data is analysed, the semi-structured interviews were transcribed; after that, these texts were then transferred to the NVIVO 11 package program. The transferred data was first coded line by line before using the inductive analysis approach; from the codes to the themes and then the themes to the findings were found. In order to ensure trustworthiness of the study, peer-debriefing strategy was employed. In scope of the peer-debriefing sessions, a part of the data was given to independent field expert and re-analyzed by him. Analysis were compared and researchers and independent researcher discussed about analysis according to their codes and themes until a consensus was reached.

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained from the research data are presented under two headings: "Social Problem Perception" and "Social Problems and Social Studies Relationship". The themes obtained from the analysis of the research data are shown in Figure 1.
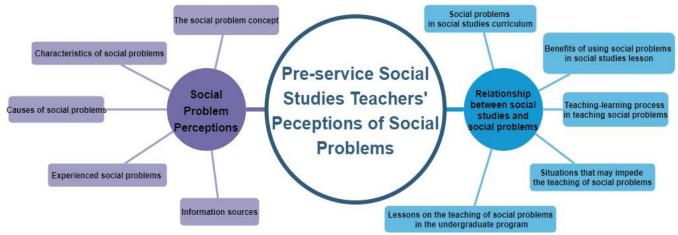

Figure 1. Pre-Service Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Social Problems

It is seen that the data obtained about the social problem perception of the pre-service teachers consist of five themes such as "the social problem concept", "the characteristics of social problems", "the reasons of social problems", "the experienced social problems" and "information sources". Findings on how these participants perceive social problems are also taken from these themes.

Concept of Social Problem

In the study, it was seen that the participants defined social problems as "the problems that disturb the general public", "common problem of a group" and "problems that violate personal rights and freedoms". It is understood that some of the pre-service teachers were looking at the effect of the problem and some of them were looking at the focus of the subject when they were trying to make a definition.

As one of the participants who define social problems as problems that disturb the general public, Damla explained as "I can say things that cause anxiety and problem in everyone".And she indicated that she sees; construction of hydroelectric power plants (HEPP), terrorist activities, violence against women and minorities, discrimination, refugees, skewed urbanization, environmental pollution, oppression of LGBT individuals and rape as social problems. Similarly, Ayhan who was born and raised in Eskisehir and never lived apart from her family for a long time; and defined social problem as "If there is something in society that many people don't want, I think this should be" and he gave, child abuse, gender inequality, and discrimination as examples of social problems. But Ayhan's examples of social problems were found to be quite low compared to the other participants. Ayhan's statements as "I can say...I don't see too much for living in Eskisehir. At least I don't encounter in my daily life. I read a lot in the news, but they are not the things I've seen around me (...) As I said, we learn more from news or people around us, from their lives" show that he has no social problems that affect him or he is aware of in his environment, but he has learned the existence of some social problems and heard some of them when he comes to university. As a matter of fact, from Ayhan's statement :

> For example, the concept of mores (moral laws). It's something we've heard so much, but something I've never seen, not in my life. This is something about where I live in and it's a social situation. There are no mores in Eskisehir. Because there are no family ties, or I should rather say the kinship ties are not very strong there aren't this type of things

It is understood that Ayhan, have become aware of the many social problems when he encounters and interacts with people from many different regions of Turkey.

Some of the participants stated that it was not necessary for an event or phenomenon to affect everyone to accept it as a social problem; they stated that the problems that affect certain segments of society may also be a social problem. For example, Neslihan was born and raised in Mardin in the Southeastern Anatolia Region, stated that the problems that are affected by a certain group of society can be accepted as a social problem by saying " a part of society must be disturbed by this thing". In addition, Neslihan stated that discrimination, environmental problems, terrorism, weakness of local administrations and compulsory religious education in schools are social problems. Similarly, Damla who was born and raised in Artvin in the Eastern Black Sea region explained that situations that affect a small group in a society can be called a social problem by saying "There are pathless villages and this is a common problem for them. There is no need to affect the whole region."

Some of the participants explained social problems as violations of personal rights and freedoms. During his undergraduate studies, Arif who took a part in critical theater plays explained the social problem by saying that "Social problem; If the rest of the country is disturbed by the practices of a certain segment, it is a social problem if it violates personal rights and freedoms". He gave discrimination, distorted urbanization, refugee problem, animal rights problem, unemployment, oppression on LGBT people, Cyprus problem, Israel-Palestine problem, foreign relations, gender inequality, education and freedom of belief as examples of social problems. Considering the examples given by Arif in parallel with the definition of social problems, it is understood that the governmental administration perceives the practices related to the policies implemented in both domestic and foreign relations as social problems. Apart from these definitions, one of the participants, Damla tried to make a certain definition, but she had difficulty in making a definition. And she explained that she did not think about what the social problem was before, but she encountered in her daily life. Based on all these discourses; the participants faced many social problems directly or indirectly in their daily lives; however, it can be said that they have problems in defining the social problem. On the other hand, it is among the findings of the study that the participants have an idea about social problems and explain these ideas with examples.

Characteristics of Social Problems Through the Eyes of the Participants

Another finding of the study is that the participants describe the characteristics of the social problem as is being relative, includes violence, affects people negatively, creates a restless environment and causes another social problem. Indicating that the social problems are relative, the pre-service teachers stated that the social problems vary from culture to culture, from society to society, and from time to time. And they explained that an event or phenomenon considered as a social problem in a certain time or society may not be seen as a social problem at another time or in another society. Merve, one of the participants, stated that violence against women is not accepted as a problem in ancient times because it was different from the conditions of today; as saying " For example, when we look at ancient times, there were matriarchal societies. Then it changed to the patriarchal society. That's why the woman has just started to make a little bit of voice. Violence has begun to be used because of that." Similarly, Merve stated that a problem as a social problem could change from one society to another by saying " Social problems may vary according to me (...) Something that is not a problem for me could be a problem for another society. I think this is a very subjective

situation." Damla who also thinks social problems may vary in different cultures, tried to explain this changing situation by saying "We are growing from childhood to youth, so we face the social problems that way. We encounter the experience of living and can be the views of the family on the basis. It can be culture, traditions, customs. In other words, they may affect our perspective on social problems".

Finally, the participants stated that social problems can cause other social problems and they are among the features of social problems. Saying that "Robbery, I don't know, rape or other things. It's a social problem, I mean (…) these things cause other problems",Merve stated that the policies carried out for the refugees under the protection of the state in Turkey, caused a number of social problems (theft, rape, etc.) and that she believed these problems would lead to other social problems in the future.

For social problems, a pre-service social studies teacher stated that, unlike her friends, another characteristic of social problems is that they contain violence. One of the participants Damla stated that physical and emotional violence situations can be considered as social problems by saying "I think it's a problem when a situation turns into violence. Violence is not necessarily to be physical violence. It can be language, insult or exclusion from the society". Based on all these discourses; It can be said that pre-service social studies teachers interpret the characteristics of social problems in terms of the affected party more and think and evaluate them more at the national level.

Causes of Social Problems in the Eyes of the Participants

The pre-service teachers stated that the state practices made for the benefit of society can be misunderstood by people sometimes, due to the social change, social structure, and the perception created by the media and also miscommunication and misunderstanding could cause social problems.

Some of the participants pointed to issues such as social justice, law, protection of personal rights and freedoms, and stated that experienced practices that they thought had a negative impact on these elements could cause a social problem. Ayhan, one of the participants :

> When you open the news, you see that a woman was killed. The judge has sentenced him to 10 years. His prison time got shorter and shorter because of good conduct abatement. The sentence has dropped to very disparaging figures. I think it doesn't really affect people. Even in the simplest case, someone can commit a crime by thinking that the punishment is small. I think there's a bit of trouble in the law.

He emphasized the application of the rules of law to ensure social justice and explained that the sense of injustice not only causes social problems but also increases them.

Some of the participants stated that social problems are caused by people's insensitivity, lack of empathy and inability to tolerate. Some of the pre-service teachers stated that people do not make a sound if the problem does not affect them and that if they do, they accept it and make it logical for them as unilateral and cannot have empathy on this issue and this leads to social problems. Neslihan stated that she believed that not having empathy triggered social problems by saying; "Violence against women. Killings of women. Racism. There's no empathy. That's why these things happen."

Similarly, Damla explained that the constraints caused by the effects of gender roles and the lack of empathy caused social problems:

> The thought of the educated or the uneducated person is the same. In fact, it gets ugly. People are trying, to make sense of it. For example, at 3:00 a.m., what was she doing on the street? , they say. Does this require him to rape? What kind of perspective is this? Or rape is the event there, but the problem is that the woman has gone out at night.

In her statements, Damla also stated that she believed that realization was made more by women, and that this was due to the women feeling weak because of the lack of economic freedom in society. One of the participants, Ömer, from another perspective, emphasized the conflicts between ethnic groups and explained that such problems stem from the fact that people do not tolerate each other:

> We live in Turkey. There are different groups. Of course, this is normal. The fact that being different makes society more beautiful. Tolerance is needed for this society to live together. Without tolerance, these people cannot live together. The common points are tolerance and patience. Intolerant groups do not agree with each other.

Participants stated that behaviors such as lack of empathy, insensitivity, and inability to tolerate were caused by the lack of cultivation and reading habits. One of the participants Arif believed that empathy and respect for different cultures were not achieved because of the family education or the inadequacy of education on this subject:

> I think that is something comes from the family. Let's consider a high school student. The child sees that from the family until that time. For example, when we look at the past we see the oppression on different cultures. In Turkey, the mainstream is emphasizing the culture and cultural glorification. And that actually prevents respect for different cultures. From an early age, the child learns that and behaves like that.

Damla stated that the reason behind the lack of empathy is that people do not have reading habits, as saying "We can also learn a lot from the books. There is only one right for a person who doesn't read a book, and this one believes in that one truth. This person learns what serves her/his purpose"

In addition, the participants stated that the lack of communication among the people caused social problems. One of the participants Ayhan stated that people do not interact with each other, make comments without knowing them and try not to

understand each other because they are different from oneself cause social problems. Ayhan also added that "I think the media is effective in this. Because when you open the news, there's a lot of things that can disturb people all the time". And he stated that the media is effective on the occurrence of social problems. Similarly, Merve stated that social problems arise "because people do not listen to each other". Also, Merve added "We are not open to development. We can't keep up with the age. As we know, we have blinkers on. We're not looking around. People who perceive the Westernization as language only." and she emphasized that the emergence of social problems in societies which are not open to change is also natural.

Kadir, being the only participant who is an active member of an NGO, stated that the only reason behind the social problems is the conflicts in society, and he explained that by saying; "Social problems actually arise from people's conflicts within society. We see this in many civilizations, in many countries, whether in the past or not. Cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious conflicts are in fact social problems. There are conflicts on the basis. Everything actually stems from here". Also, he emphasized that the struggle for power that people tried to establish on each other caused conflicts by saying: "Why do people clash? From the power struggle. I'm not tying it to politics. There may also be a power struggle within a small institution (…) Even a rebellion against a mother or a father is a social problem. Because we live in a patriarchal society. [Rebellion against the father] is a social uprising". One of the participants, Damla explained that it is inevitable to have social problems in societies where different cultures live together, by saying: "It can be natural. Because people have very different opinions. Lifestyles, geographies, the language they speak, the society in which they live, and the culture are different. I think they affect"

Most of the participants stated that social problems stemmed from the social structure and they indicated that patriarchal structures that maintain its presence in Turkey as in many societies created pressure on people and this situation creates a number of problems. Neslihan gave an example to the problem of violence against women "We are coming from a patriarchal society. This is reflected in everything because we are a society founded on this basis" and explained that the most problems, especially violence against women, stem from this structure. On the other hand, she added "We are not a very democratic society either. We have no tradition as democracy. For example, people, states, peoples have achieved something by fighting; but In Turkey, we had [many things] without fighting for them [with the law] so we were unable to internalize them well". And Neslihan emphasized that the inability to fully achieve the democratic structure leads up to different social problems.

Among the participants of the study, there is a pre-service social studies teacher who thinks that social change causes social problems. Merve tried to explain that the emergence of social problems in the societies in which people are closed to change is natural by saying "We are not open to development. We can't keep up with the age. As we know, we have blinkers on. We're not looking around. People who perceive the Westernization as language only."

Based on all these discourses; the reasons underlying the social problems of the participants are insensitivity, lack of communication, interpersonal conflict, social polarization and cultural differences, the perception created by the media, social change, social structure and democracy problem. And it is seen that these participants generally explained these problems thinking Turkey and its borders in particular. Although interpersonal conflict, social change, etc. are seen among social problems, not only in Turkey but also in other countries; descriptions of the participants have been involved in their environment or borders of Turkey. On the other hand, although the participants tried to explain the reasons for the social problems from different points, they mentioned violence against women as a serious social problem and they mentioned in their examples. This situation shows that violence against women is a social problem regardless of the perspective.

Social Problems Experienced by Participants

Findings related to social problems experienced by pre-service teachers were also found among the findings of the study. Participants also stated that they personally experienced social problems such as discrimination, identity problem, unemployment, bureaucracy, gender inequality, and traffic. However, it was observed that there were quantitative differences between the social problems that the participants experienced or affected and the social problems they exemplified. In addition, it was understood that the participants did not see the problems experienced in the society such as environmental pollution, migration, economy as direct or indirect problems in daily life, but did not see them as experienced problems. The social problems experienced by the pre-service teachers are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Examples of Participants Related to Social Problems and Social Problems They Experienced

Participant	Social Problem Examples		Experienced Social Problems
Merve	• Unemployment, • Environmental pollution, • Gender inequality • Rape • Mores • Slavery	• Violence against women • Communication • Immigration • Using internet unconsciously • Discrimination • Thievery	• Unemployment, • Gender inequality • Discrimination

Arif	• Gender inequality • Cyprus issue • Israel-Palestine issue • Foreign affairs • The Arab Spring • Economical Problems • LGBT	• Unemployment, • Violation of Animal Rights • Education • Violation of freedom of religion and belief • Unplanned urbanization • Discrimination	• Unemployment • Discrimination
Neslihan	• The weakness of local administrations • Terrorism • LGBT • Violence against women • HEPP	• Economical Problems • Compulsory Religion Lesson • Environmental pollution • Discrimination	• Violence against women
Kadir	• Domestic problems, • Democracy • Gender inequality, • Rape • LGBT • Violence against women • Unemployment	• Worker Deaths • The first Turkish States • Everything • Discrimination • The Rights of Academicians • Bureaucratic barrier • Suicide bombers	• Democracy • Discrimination • Bureaucratic barrier
Damla	• The weakness of local administrations • Rape • Zika virus • Ebola • LGBT • Vendetta • Violence against women • HEPP	• Immigration • Economical Problems • Environmental pollution, • Unplanned urbanization • Violence against minorities • Discrimination • Public security • Suicide bombers	• Discrimination • HEPP • Violence against women • Transportation
Ebru	• Presidential system • Abuse • People don't line up • Abortion Law • Fear • Violation of animal rights	• Immigration • Tension • Compulsory Religion Lesson • Environmental pollution, • Discrimination	• Fear • Tension • Immigration
Ayhan	• Gender inequality • Terrorism • Mores	• Violence against women • Child abuse • Discrimination	• Gender inequality
Ömer	• Fascism • Drugs • Gender inequality • LGBT • Vendetta • Violence against women	• Unemployment • Intolerance • Immigration • Compulsory Religion Lesson • Coup • Discrimination	• Discrimination • Identity • Gender inequality

Information Sources of the Participants

The participants stated that they learned the information about social problems from the circle of friends, the lessons taken in undergraduate education, written sources such as magazines, newspapers and books, visual media such as social media, internet sites, and television programs and they experienced some social problems by experiencing them personally. Neslihan stated that her sources of information were books, television programs and friends; "I'm trying to read books. I have friends, some of them are more knowledgeable than me. I sometimes try to follow discussion programs to learn what's going on and what do they think". Kadir, who thinks that there are conflicts and violence on the basis of social problems, explains that he has learned by experiencing

them as saying "I live. So no need to learn. In Suruc, 33 people died. I know them all. We were together a week before we died. I was drinking tea at the same table as I am now and I lost 33 of them". Among these courses, prospective teachers mostly stated that they had acquired information about global education, current world problems, special teaching methods and social problems in the teaching of controversial and contemporary subjects.

Participants indicated that they learned in-depth information on social problems, mostly from their undergraduate courses such as social psychology, philosophy, sociology, fundamentals of social studies, special teaching methods, introduction to political science, contemporary world problems in mandatory courses as History of Republic of Turkey and global education, discussion of controversial and current issues as elective courses. The participants stated that the presentations, the films they followed and the discussions were effective in these courses.

Relationship Between Social Studies and Social Problems in the Eyes of the Participants

Based on the data on the social problems and social problems obtained from pre-service teachers, five themes were reached ; "social studies in social studies teaching curriculum", "teaching-learning process in teaching social problems", "benefits of including social problems in social studies" and "lectures on teaching social problems in the undergraduate program". From these themes, it was found that how pre-service teachers perceive and explain the relationship between social studies and social problems.

Social Problems in Social Studies Curriculum

Pre-service teachers indicate that there are gains or information on social problems in the social studies, but they also stated that social problems subjects such as gender inequality and violence against women are not included in the program. In addition, pre-service teachers explained that many social problems, although not directly related, could be explained by associating them with an appropriate acquisition of the social studies course. Neslihan has tried to explain that the social studies course includes current issues and that social problems are among the current issues and therefore the social studies course also includes social problems by saying "The Social studies course is already a lesson on this basis. It includes topics such as history, geography, and citizenship. All of them are current, issues related to society (...)" and "of course we have social events in what we live". Also, Neslihan added that "As far as we have examined in the lessons, there is not much about women's rights. Even in very few ways, the woman's name goes by. But this issue is an important issue in our society" and she emphasized that the current position of women and women's rights in Turkey is quite an important social problem; however, this subject was not included in the social studies curriculum. Similarly, Ayhan also stated that there are no learning outcomes directly related to gender inequality in the Social studies Curriculum; In fact, he explained that there are few learning outcomes that might be indirectly related:

> In many of our lessons, we examined all the learning outcomes. Well, at least we haven't studied it all. We're talking about sexism, and we're already talking about it as a lesson. In the global education course, we examined the learning outcomes of all 4 years as the title of sexism. There is not a direct line, even the outcomes didn't exceed 10. Maybe it was less.

Benefits of Including Social Problems in Social Studies Course

Pre-service teachers stated that it is important to give social problems in social studies lessons to gain some skills and values such as empathy, respect for differences and sensitivity in students. Ebru stated that when social problems are included in a social studies lesson, students may become sensitive to social problems as saying "It seems to be better for them to articulate such problems in classes where children may be sensitive to social problems such as social studies lessons". In addition to that, she emphasized that social problems can be utilized in creating active citizenship. Ebru "In a social studies lesson, social problems and current problems can be discussed. The subjects of citizenship, especially social studies lessons, are one of the courses where children can learn their rights and responsibilities, at the same time they can protect them, internalize them and take the decision-making process." and stated that social problems in a social studies lesson would be useful for students to gain active citizenship awareness. While explaining the importance of social problems in social studies, participants mentioned only critical thinking and empathy skills from the skills to be gained in the curriculum, and values of respect and equality for differences.

Teaching-Learning Process in Teaching Social Problems

The pre-service teachers focused on the role of teachers in the teaching-learning process of teaching social problems. They also stated that social studies teachers must objective about their roles in this process. Omer, one of these pre-service teachers:

> I don't know teachers must leave their thoughts. If there are 30 people in the class, they must be equal, fair, respectful to 30 people. They must show this affection to everyone at the same rate. A teacher has no right to give her/his student a high score for having a similar view or label the student if he/she thinks different or for being naughty. You know, a teacher must be equal to everyone.

With this statement, he stated that teachers should behave fairly, respectfully and be respectful both in this process and against students. In addition, pre-service social studies teachers stated that social studies teachers should be sensitive to social problems because the personality traits of the teachers will be reflected in the teaching-learning process. Damla, for this subject:

> Our attitude towards social problems, whether we are sensitive or not, will affect their past perspective or thought structure. Because the teacher wants to be as objective as he /she wants, subjective emotions will affect the students and will try to direct them. Somehow you try to give them a sense of sensitivity, you try to win, or you make them very insensitive.

With these statements, she explained that if the social studies teacher is sensitive to social problems, students will also be sensitive. In this process, pre-service teachers stated that social studies teachers should give importance to critical thinking, prepare for class, be role model, create a free environment and if necessary they should step out of the social studies lesson and they also said that a number of teaching principles such as actuality and vitality should be in the teaching of social problems. Neslihan stated that the teacher should give importance to the principles of timeliness and vitality in teaching social problems by saying " Here you can go through more current events. Because s/he sees it, s/he watches it on the news. S/he can hear it from around. It can be more effective. It can be told that way". Similarly, Kadir supported Neslihan with the words "S/he should bind life, the current". In addition, it was seen that pre-service teachers emphasized the principles of learning in education, abstract to the concrete, close to far and by doing and experiencing, however, it was found that they did not establish a connection with the principles of integrity, knownness to the unknown and clarity and economy. In addition, the participants stated that social studies teachers may benefit from some methods and techniques such as discussion and case study in the process of teaching social problems. Neslihan stated that the case could be used to emphasize social problems by saying " I don't know, something about racism. For example, we can give an example case. A case from the country, then we can try to make the student find the right thing". Participants also advocated that family involvement, theater practices and, in particular, encouraging boys and girls to play more often together may be useful in the teaching-learning process.

Situations that may Impede the Teaching of Social Problems

Although the participants stated that social problems should be addressed in a social studies lesson and out-of-class teaching, they think that the attitudes of the school administration and the parents of the students can be an obstacle in teaching social problems. Pre-service teachers explained these thoughts considering the observations in the schools where they do their internship and their own educational experiences. Ayhan, one of the participants, explained that the attitudes and different expectations of parents can be an obstacle in teaching social problems with telling one of the events that happened when he was an intern teacher:

> A representative from MHP, not a well-known person, had a beautiful word. And the teacher had added that word to his slides. One of the kids got up. And said, "Isn't that a representative's word?". "Well done, you are interested in politics at this age. Well, do you know which party it is?" said the teacher. "I know MHP.," said the student. [Teacher] "Well done, sit down". That is the whole of the dialogue. The next day, at the school there were three parents asking teacher questions like "Do you do the advocacy of the MHP? Are you making propaganda?" I was in the scene, it was really nothing. Even the simplest things can be a problem at school.

Arif explained that there are a number of question marks in the conversion of theoretical knowledge into practice in teaching social problems ; "In fact, it is easy to say, for example, when I talk about the concept of sexism or a religion, do I encounter things like parents saying 'you are washing this child's brain' or his/her family making a complaint about me." Ebru stated that the support of parents and the school principal in favor of education within the framework of their wishes and goals could cause problems in teaching social problems by saying "Parents can ask for lessons that they see more important(…) Social problems may be a bit off by them (…) The fact that the manager can be in the same way, s/he can think the successes in the exams as more important". In addition, the participants think that the cultural structure of the region, the school administration, colleagues, administrative officers or fear of being blacklisted, the sensitive structure of social problems, the reaction of students and society, and also the indifference of the teacher may be impeded in teaching social problems.

Lessons on the Teaching of Social Problems in the Undergraduate Program

In the undergraduate program of social studies teacher education program, pre-service teachers have obtained information from social psychology, philosophy, sociology, fundamentals of social studies, special teaching methods, introduction to political science, contemporary world problems in mandatory courses as History of Republic of Turkey and global education, discussion of controversial and current issues as elective courses. However, pre-service teachers were informed about the teaching of social problems only in the special education methods as a compulsory course and global education and the teaching of controversial and contemporary subjects as elective courses. In addition, it has seen that information is given about social problems and teaching of social problems in global education and teaching of controversial and current subjects, but it is seen that pre-service teachers cannot adapt their knowledge acquired in these courses to the teaching of social problems. For example, Neslihan stated that social problems were included in the global education course, but how these topics should be explained in the lessons and the points about how they should be transferred to the students were not sufficiently addressed ; "In Global Education lesson empathy was told a little, but we didn't discuss what would we do in this subject or how it is told there was no such thing as that. Similarly, Damla stated that these courses were not sufficient for teaching social problems and she said: "It's not exactly enough, but it's better than nothing".

Considering the findings related to the sources of pre-service teachers' learning and teaching of social problems in the undergraduate program, it was seen that the pre-service teachers had high command and motivation for teaching, but on the other hand, their pedagogical knowledge about teaching social problems was quite shallow.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that pre-service social studies teachers could not provide an inclusive and in-depth explanation of the concept of social problems, and some of the participants stated that they talked about social problems many times every day, but that they never thought about what social problems meant, and that they felt a bit strange. However, when the data were analyzed and interpreted in more depth, it was concluded that the perceptions of the social problems varied according to the pre-service teachers, although they could not make a clear definition. For example, some of the participants

stated that the causes of social problems were conflicts in different contexts, while others stated that there were social changes in society. In addition, some participants stated that the meanings attributed to concepts, events, phenomena and some symbols were different, and thus, the failure of disagreement and non-communication gave rise to social problems. In addition, some of the pre-service teachers stated that in order to accept a problem as a social problem, a section of society should accept the problem as a social problem and the other sections of the society must accept that the problem is a social problem. From the results of the study, it is seen that there are similarities between the perceptions of prospective teachers on the functionalist (structuralist), confrontational, symbolic interactionist and social constructivist theories about social problems in the literature. In other words, although the pre-service teachers are not knowledgeable about these theories, it is seen that their perceptions are gathered and resembled around these four theories in the literature. Moskalewicz and Swiatkiewicz (1998) concluded that the social problem perceptions of individuals aged 18-55 living in Gdansk in Poland were more related to (social) constructivist and functionalist theories. Hunter and horse-Twaijir (1996) in their research the social perceptions of American citizens of Saudi Arabian citizens related to the social problems have reached the conclusion that accommodates three elements. These; ashamed by society, incidence and common perception. These results are mostly related to social constructivism theory. Kusayanagi (2013) also tried to explain with the evidence from newspaper news, how an event that occurred in Japan was not seen as a social problem and how social perceptions of individuals change with Social Constructivism theory. Research shows that similar results with the results of other relevant studies.

Another result of the research is that the social groups the pre-service social studies teachers participate in pre-university and pre-university education and the activities they participate in shape the social problem perceptions. For example, It is concluded that the participant who plays theater plays on social criticism has similarities with the symbolic Interactionist theory, while a participant who has a political understanding that is a member of a more minority ethnic group and who is actively participating in activities in this direction is closer to the concept of social problem than to the conflict theory. In addition, it was concluded that the diversity of the cities where the participants live has shaped their perceptions of social problems. It is seen that the concept of social problems, the examples they give about the social problems, the explanation about the characteristics of social problems and the social problems they experienced of the pre-service teachers who are born and raised in different cities and who are studying in a different cities are very different and they are also aware of these. For example, one of the participants living in an area where water resources and forests are dense stated that HEPPs is a social problem. On the other hand, It was observed that the participant's examples, who was born and raised in the city where s/he was studying, were not as diverse as the other participants. Koc and Palabiyik (2012) concluded that the pre-service teachers' political identities and the regions where they live played a decisive role in evaluating social problems. In his study, Wilson (1981) concluded that students with disabilities and non-disabled faced the same social problems, but the social problem perceptions of the students in the school in the rural area and in the school in the city center differed. In the study conducted by Kurtdede Fidan (2016), it was concluded that fourth-grade students had an impact on their sensitivity to social problems, and that family members' occupational backgrounds and educational backgrounds were effective on their sensitivity to social problems. The results of this study and the results of other researches are similar to each other. In addition, Voorman (2005) concluded that gender was an important factor in shaping the perceptions of individuals about social problems. In contrast to the results of this study, Parmee (1966) concluded that the inclusion of ethnic groups with different cultures had no effect on students 'social problem perception but the mainstream culture shaped students' perception of social problems. Another finding of the research is that the pre-service teachers think about the reasons of social problems in the context of the practices of the people and the structure of the society and the policies implemented in the country. Driedger (1974) in his study with the US preachers, he concluded preachers of the power of the country to control the society applied to control the censorship, interventions and personal freedoms were factors triggering social problems. The results of other studies with similar results show that social environment is very important in pre-service social studies teachers' knowledge and perceptions about social problem, so this situation can be explained by Bandura's social learning theory.

In addition, it was seen that the pre-service teachers' explanations about the causes of social problems were in the axis of human-human and human-state interaction, but they did not make a statement about state-state interaction. In addition to these, there were participants who stated that the causes of social problems were not one-dimensional, one of the social problems was the result of another social problem, and even this social problem was the result of another social problem. Kızılçelik (1991) also found that social problems such as squattering, unemployment, rapid population growth, cultural decay, alienation, anomy and deviation caused by industrialization and urbanization increase crime events. In addition, in the study conducted by Komurcu and Avşar Negiz (2016), it was concluded that the causes of child labor, which is a social problem, were migration, education, and financial income. The results of the research conducted by Kızılçelik (1991) and Kömürcü and Avşar (2016) are similar to the results of a social problem.

When we look at the examples of pre-service teachers about social problems, the meanings they give to the concept of social problems, their thoughts on the characteristics of social problems, based upon the examples they give to social problems are in national sense, they make an assessment in terms of international or global, and therefore social problems occurring on a global scale were shown overlooked. Günel (2016) concluded in his study that social studies have limited global views of prospective teachers. Günel's (2016) research with the conclusions of these results appears to be similar. Similarly, Özturk and Günel (2016) concluded that social studies teachers have an ambiguous perception of global systems. In addition, in the study where Günel and Pehlivan (2016) investigated the perceptions of pre-service social studies teachers about global citizenship education, it was seen that the participants had a very limited definition of global citizenship and had many misconceptions.

Another important finding of the research is that the pre-service teachers are not aware that they are experiencing some social problems encountered in their social lives. For example, environmental pollution, seen in almost every region and even more felt in cities in Turkey, no participant has identified it among the social problems they experienced. Even the participants, who thought that environmental pollution was a social problem, did not show environmental pollution among the social problems they experienced. Besides, they did not specify the distorted urbanization in which they live, the failure of drivers and pedestrians not obeying the traffic rules, among the social problems they experience. Therefore, it was observed that the participants were aware of some social problems but their awareness of the social problems they experienced was quite limited. In the research, it was found that the pre-service teachers got information about the social problems in many ways from the discussions they had with their friends to the books they read, from undergraduate courses to social media, from discussion programs to newspapers. Based on this finding, it has been concluded that the sources of information that shape the social problem perception of pre-service teachers are quite diverse but not profound. However, it was observed that pre-service teachers did not specify the experience which is the most effective and permanent source of information among the sources of social problems. Yan and Liu (2016) concluded in their study that the media has an impact on the social problem perception of individuals. Kaufman, Huss, and Segal-Engelchin (2011) concluded in their study that undergraduate students interacted with society for a year to change and shape their social problem perceptions. This result of the study and the results of other related researches are similar to each other.

In the study, it was determined that pre-service social studies teachers thought that including social problems in social studies lesson contributed to the development of many skills and values in the curriculum. Similarly, many studies reveal that dealing with current issues and social problems in social studies course contributes to the development of values and skills in the curriculum. (Baloğlu Uğurlu and Doğan, 2016; Copur and Demirel, 2016; Kruger, 2012; Kuş, 2015; Kuş and Öztürk, 2019; Linowes, Misco, Ho and Sthalsmith, 2019; Misco, 2014; Misco, Kuwabara, Ogawa and Lyons, 2018). Hence, it can be said that including social problems in social studies lessons and discussing them in-class can be one of the effective ways to reach the goals of the course.

As a result of the study, it was seen that the pre-service social studies teachers received a lot of information about the social problems in the courses they took in the training, but their knowledge, skills and experience related to the teaching of social problems were quite limited. In other words, pre-service social studies teachers feel that they have sufficient knowledge and motivation about social problems but do not have an understanding of how to teach these subjects. This lack of skills and knowledge how to teach social problems and current and controversial issues were concluded in the many studies (Busey and Mooney, 2014; Camicia; 2008; Clabough et al., 2010; Demircioğlu, 2016; Hessi 2001; Hung, 2018; Journell, 2011; İbret, Karasu Avcı and Recepoğlu, 2016; Segall and Gaudelli, 2007; Yılmaz, 2012). Based on these results of the studies, it can be said that courses in the undergraduate program related to the teaching of social problems are quite inadequate or that the lecturers of the course do not function effectively and efficiently in the teaching of social problems. As a matter of fact, studies have indicated that the inadequacy in teaching social problems and controversial issues is due to the limited training provided in pre-service training (Holden and Hicks, 2007; Kuş and Öztürk, 2019; Misco and Patterson, 2007; Oulton et al., 2004).

At the end of the research, the following suggestions can be taken:

- In order to contribute positively to the perception of pre-service social studies teacher candidates regarding social problems, sources with different views on social problems can be used in lessons and discussions can be made around these views. Thus, faculty members should try to present as many different perspectives on social problems as possible during the lessons. They can apply different approaches, methods, and techniques that can improve the critical thinking skills of pre-service social studies teachers. In order to deepen the perceptions of pre-service teachers on social problems, discussions should be conducted with the guidance of experienced faculty members. Beside this, faculty members should provide opportunites to pre-service social studies teachers to talk about social problems in the lectures. There are several lectures in the undergraduate program where this kind of problems can easily and possibly evaluated.

- Issues related to social problems in pre-service education should be addressed not only on a national context, but also on a global context, and the awareness of pre-service teachers about the social problems that may or may be experienced on a national and global scale should be increased. Teacher education should be reviewed and updated on this issue. If deemed necessary, a different course in this sense should be added to undergraduate programs.

- In order to increase the awareness of the pre-service teachers about the social problems they are experiencing, the pre-service teachers should be compared with the social problems seen in the region they live in in the context of compulsory and elective courses and the effects of these problems should be felt more. It is thought that service learning will be an effective way to improve understanding of social problems by social studies teachers. Pre-service social studies teachers can both better understand social problems and learn by experiencing them with the service learning approach. Therefore, faculty members should use this kind of teaching methods as much as possible. In addition, pre-service social studies teachers could directed to NGOs working on social problems to increase their awareness of the social problems they experience, or they should cooperate with NGOs in pre-service training.

- Pre-service social studies teachers should be given more effective pedagogical knowledge about teaching social problems and related methods and techniques should be taught. In addition, pre-service teachers' skills for teaching social problems can be improved by making micro-teaching and internship practices in pre-service education.
- Pre-service teachers should be directed to NGOs working on social problems to increase their awareness of the social problems they experience, or they should cooperate with NGOs in pre-service training.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, author-ship, and/or publication of this article.

Statements of publication ethics

We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Researchers' contrubution rate

All authors contributed to the concept and design of the study. Önder Eryılmaz and Ayşegül Pehlivan Yılmaz collaborated on the conceptual framework, literature review and method of the study. Önder Eryılmaz analyzed the data and reported findings. Elvan Günel supervised other authors mainly in auditing findings and results of the study. Besides, Elvan Günel dealt with the translation and proofreading of the manuscript. Results, conclusion and recommendations section discussed and reported by collaboration of all authors.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research and Publication Committee on Ethics at Anadolu University (Protocol Number: 26558, Date: 25.03.2016).

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