



## How Do the Teachers Define Social Studies Course?

Ersin TOPÇU<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Kastamonu University Faculty of Education, Kastamonu, Turkey  
Email: [ertopcu@gmail.com](mailto:ertopcu@gmail.com) Tel: 0546 506 0545



### Abstract

In this research, the aim is to determine what the social studies teachers think about the interdisciplinary structure of the social studies course and the educational situation. Likert type questionnaire and semi-structured interview form were used as data collection tools. The questionnaire was applied to 150 teachers working in 58 secondary schools in 27 provinces in Turkey. The form was applied to 10 teachers from the same group. The data was interpreted by descriptive analysis. When the results were evaluated, it was determined that the teachers had some problems arising from the multidisciplinary nature of the course and thought that the interdisciplinary connections between different disciplines could not be done well. There is no consensus among the teachers about the nature of the social studies course, and some teachers especially think that history and geography should be given as separate courses.

**Keywords:** Social studies teacher, Program, Functionality.

**JEL Classification:** I20, I21, I28.

**Citation** | Ersin TOPÇU (2017). How Do the Teachers Define Social Studies Course? *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 4(4): 139-153.

**History:**

Received: 11 July 2017

Revised: 17 November 2017

Accepted: 27 November 2017

Published: 6 December 2017

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**Publisher:** Asian Online Journal Publishing Group

**Funding:** This study received no specific financial support.

**Competing Interests:** The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

**Transparency:** The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study was reported; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained.

**Ethical:** This study follows all ethical practices during writing.

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## 1. Introduction

The term "Social Studies" was first revised, in the year 1892 by The National Council of the United States of America which collected and organized it in order to form the understanding of national society. The Social Studies course curriculum; consists of history, geography and civics classes and its contents have been revised to meet the needs of the society (Güngördü, 2001). When it came to 1916, the concept of Social Studies was put forward by the Social Studies Committee of the Commission for the Reorganization of the Middle School of the National Education Department of the United States and from this day on taught with this name in the USA. The purpose of the Social Studies course, which is defined by the National Council for the Social Studies- NCSS as "information directly related to the organization and evolution of human society and of these human beings as a component of human beings"; is to raise good citizens who know the importance of democratic life and to provide the evolution of social opinions in order to broaden the understanding of the world and the people in which human communities live (Moffatt, 1957; Sever, 2015). The main reason for the emergence of this course was the increasing social, cultural and economic problems in American society at the end of the 19th century. Particularly as a result of migration to the city, starting with industrialization and increasing rapidly in that period, the new social structure that emerged in the cities brought many problems with it. Because until now the villagers could move freely without interfering with each other's space, were living in their own detached house and by coming to the cities had to live in apartments or in adjacent houses. What's worse was that people who were the bosses of their own business, now started to work as paid workers in factories where strict rules were applied.

This and many other reasons were the main obstacle for people whose life suddenly and drastically changed, hindering them from living a hassle-free life in the same environment with others. This course aims to teach children how to cope with problems in the direction of active democratic citizenship in the increasingly complex world and how to live side by side without problems (Barth, 1991).

The social studies program that was created, when first started being taught, was done so under the "citizenship transmission" model. In this approach, the aim is not to educate citizens who question but to educate citizens who have existing cultural values, who are faithfully attached to beliefs and who fulfill all their duties and responsibilities. One of the most important criticisms of this approach is to ignore skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and decision making in order to keep the culture standing, and to convey the chosen ideas and beliefs without criticism. It is also possible to see traces from this understanding in the current US social studies program (Barth, 1991; Barth and Demirtaş, 1997). Negativity and wickedness in American life including topics such as racial inequality, crime, violence, class conflict, revolution in sexual ethics, which are tried to be led to a minimum, have been processed in this course (Barth, 1991).

In time "teaching social studies as social sciences" started. Although the purpose was again to educate a good citizen, differences in method were present. For example, values in citizenship transmission, while being transferred from the teachers to the students, the approach here was the discovery of information through the students proper use of methods for each discipline by invention. Through this they would have fully learned the way social science scientists think, and the upbringing of necessary future citizens would be possible (Barth, 1991). The approach emerging and still dominant from this is the teaching of "social studies as an area of reflective research". This approach is also targeting for the good / effective citizen, but the method is further differentiated and adopts a situation in which students can solve problems with their own research (Erden, 2000). What is required of the students here is to develop the ability to analyze and make decisions in the face of the problems that they face (Barth, 1991).

The definition of citizenship of all these approaches, whose main purposes are to educate good citizens, is also different. Example being the citizenship transmission approach, appropriate inclusion and righteous views equalize the internalization of certain beliefs and loyalties with citizenship; social science approach however, sees this method as a way of brainwashing, and regards the citizen as someone who can use the social science branches way of thinking well and thus bring solutions to problems. With this, in reflective thinking, only people who are able to make logical, well thought and careful decisions are seen as citizens (Barth, 1991).

Despite the methodological differences, these approaches aimed at raising good citizens based on the expectations of their own time and have tried to increase the functionality of this course by producing new solutions only at points where they fell short at. Because the approach of citizenship transfer is more effective than the others in the realization of affective goals, the reflective research field approach can be more effective for the development of research and problem-solving skills (Merey and Kılıçoğlu, 2014). Since the approaches are preferred according to the acquisitions, the use of the three approaches at the same time becomes compulsory in some cases.

The Social Studies lesson, which was first taught in the United States in 1916, has been taught in Turkey permanently under this name since 1998 (Sever, 2015). This course is also aimed at educating the basic concepts of economics, professions, virtuous and moral individuals who have national spiritual values, adopt contemporary values, know the geographical and historical characteristics of the world and the world that they live in (URL 1,2). In order to accomplish all these aims, the social studies lesson combines various disciplines such as history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, political science and law under one roof and a multi-disciplinary structure, to be fully embodied in the framework of the constructivist approach reflected in the 2005 program. According to this, in an era where information is changing rapidly and accumulation is accelerating, the persistence and usefulness of existing information became shorter and shorter, now that postmodernism has brought a wind of production into every area, education was no exception at joining it. It is also seen that, in this process, the social studies course tries to get itself accepted. Because this is the first interdisciplinary course only in the United States, it is still taught to this day in some European countries (some states of Germany and Finland, Czech Republic, England, Ireland, partly Canada, Japan and Greece) through history, geography, in separate classes and single disciplinary (Öztürk and Deveci, 2011).

In fact, this course never had a stable structure in the history of Turkish education. Because, in the programs of 1926, 1930, 1936 and 1948, the courses of history, geography and civic knowledge were given instead of social studies. In the 1962 primary school program proposal, these disciplines were merged for the first time under the

name of "Society and School Review". In the primary school program published in 1968, it started to be taught as "social studies". It continued until 1985, and from 1998 until this year, it was taught at secondary schools in three different courses as "National History, National Geography and Citizenship". Since 1998, these courses have been recombined under the roof of Social Studies course (Aslan, 2016). Continuously changing the structure of a course like a puzzle is an indication of the ambiguity about what is still the ideal. The fact that this course/courses are given separately in some of the developed European countries and in some cases under one roof is in fact one of the great reasons why this ambiguity couldn't be completely solved yet. That is why it is most important that the existing structure of this course is firstly accepted in the minds of teachers. Only like this the doubts of the teachers, if present, will be removed and thus the efficiency of the course will increase. Because there are a lot of expectations from these courses where structural differences are seen from country to country. In order for these expectations to be realized, the existence of teachers who believe in the benefit of this lesson as it is (in any way) is needed. It is for this reason that the social studies course, which takes up very comprehensive and important disciplines and takes up very serious purposes as its duty, is thought to be given in a single disciplinary way in some developed countries, and whether it is sufficient to achieve the goals set in itself by its structure and content, can only be evaluated by the teachers who have it directly under their thumb. In this framework, the aim is to determine what social studies teachers think about the structure of the social studies course and its educational status. Within this scope, the answers to the following questions were searched:

- 1.) What do social science teachers think about the structure of the social studies course?
- 2.) What do social science teachers think about the functionality of the social studies course?
- 3.) What do social science teachers think about the social studies curriculum?
- 4.) What do social science teachers think about learning-teaching process of the social studies lessons?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Model**

The research adopts a mixed methodology in which qualitative and quantitative methods are used together. The Karma method, which is the method by which quantitative and qualitative data are combined and interpreted in the shortest way, is in fact intertwined with its meaning. In this study, it has been found that the data obtained from a single data source (quantitative) is not enough to explain the existing problem in terms of the aim, and therefore the second qualitative method was applied in order to obtain a more explanatory and in-depth information (Creswell and Clark, 2014). The advantage of the "number of participants" of the quantitative method and the advantage of "in-depth data acquisition" in the qualitative method is combined and it is possible to mutually confirm the findings obtained by closing each other's deficiencies, to explain each other and to generalize the analysis results. This work was carried out in the form of an exploratory sequence. In this framework, primarily quantitative data was collected and analyzed. In order to understand the obtained data in a better and deeper way, interview form questions were created and applied. It was possible to process the findings of two separate data combined in this way in more detail (Creswell and Clark, 2014; Patton, 2014).

### **2.2. Study Group (Population and Sample)**

The universe of the research consists of all social studies teachers working in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. The sample is a total of 150 social studies teachers working in 58 secondary schools in 27 different provinces of Turkey in the fall semester of the 2015-2016 academic year and they were determined through unselected sampling. The research form was prepared via the Google Docs program and the link was requested to be filled out by sending it to the e-mail addresses of randomly selected teachers in Turkey. In this way, it has become possible for those who teach in different socio-economic and cultural levels to contribute to equal opportunity and to better represent the universe (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005; Özen and Gül, 2007). 74.7% (n = 112) of the study group were male and 25.3% (n = 38) were female teachers.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to analyze and interpret the findings of the study in depth. The study group for the qualitative data was determined according to the maximum diversity sample from the purposeful sampling methods. Preferably, the main factor is determining whether there are common points between the rich information obtained, by increasing the diversity of the data obtained from the teachers working in different socio-economic level and cultures (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). In this context, the semi-structured interview form, which is the qualitative dimension of the research, has been applied to 10 social studies teachers, 5 of which are female and 5 of which are male. 27 different teachers were identified as participants and tried to strengthen the validity and credibility of the participants in order to cover all regions in the country without being within a specific region or province.

### **2.3. Data Collection Tools and Collection of Data**

The data collection tools of the study are the survey developed by the researchers and the semi-structured interview form. The questionnaire used to collect quantitative data was developed as a 3-point likert type. In the process of developing the questionnaire, literature review was done first, then the original version of the questionnaire was presented to the expert opinion. In this context, opinions of 3 researchers and 5 social studies teachers, engaged in academic studies in the field of social studies education, were taken. 90% of the items that the experts said should stay in the form, were kept in the questionnaire. Pilot scheme of the prepared form was carried out in the first week of February 2016 with 13 teachers in total at 3 different provinces. As a result of these processes, 4 items were removed from the form in the pilot scheme, in line with the opinions of the participants and experts, and 2 items were made more understandable by making changes. A total of 27 measurement instruments including the structure of the social studies course, the functioning, the social studies curriculum and the statements about the educational status were finalized. Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be ,820 within the reliability of the questionnaire. This metrics tool was quantified during the first two weeks of March 2016 by applying to the participant via the Google Docs program.

In order to be able to examine the findings from the questionnaire in depth and to be able to see participants' personal perspectives and the terminology they used, semi-structured interview form selected by objective method was applied to a smaller group. This form has been developed in consideration of the research objectives and the related literature. While the semi-structured interview form was being developed, three expert opinions were used, two questions were removed from the form and one question was changed. This form was finalized and qualitative data of the survey were collected by applying to the participants during the first week of April 2016.

### 3. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Quantitative data of this study was obtained using a survey. The data obtained by the questionnaire was first classified according to the research purposes. In this context, the data obtained by the questionnaire was classified into four dimensions; the structure of the social studies course (11 items), the functionality of the social studies course (5 items), the social studies course curriculum (4 items) and the learning-teaching process of the social studies lessons (7 items). Frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of expressions in each dimension are presented and interpreted.

The qualitative data of the study was obtained by semi-structured interview form. The obtained data was analyzed by means of descriptive analysis because the themes were determined at the pre-made quantitative application stage. Attempts have been made to validate the results of the participants in the study by making direct quotations. In order to ensure the reliability of the qualitative data in the study, the data obtained was analyzed by two different social studies education experts and the findings were compared (Patton, 2014; Miles and Huberman, 2015). Stemler (2001) suggests that the higher the percentage of alignment between encoder / encoders than the measurement reliability formula, the higher the measurement reliability. In this study, the consensus percentage of the opinion of two coders was used. For this, Miles and Huberman (2015)  $P$  (Consensus percentage) =  $N_a$  (Opinion Union) /  $N_a$  (Opinion Union) +  $N_d$  (Opinion Separation)  $\times 100$  reliability formula was used. As a result of the calculations, the reliability was 91% and the qualitative dimension of the research was considered reliable. When the findings were interpreted in the study, the data obtained by the semi-structured interview technique was compared with the data collected from the questionnaires. In this process, firstly the quantitative findings related to the aim were given in consideration of the research purposes.

Subsequently, relevant qualitative findings were presented for the same purpose. The results were analyzed in terms of similarities and differences.

### 4. Findings and Comments

The findings of this study obtained from quantitative and qualitative data collected are detailed below for research purposes. In this frame quantitative findings were given before qualitative findings.

#### 4.1. Findings about the Structure of Social Studies Course

The findings of the questionnaire for this dimension of the survey are given in Table 1

Table-1. Social Studies teachers' views on the structure of social studies course

Dimension	Item No	Statement	%			$\bar{x}$	S
			Agree	Disagree	Uncertain		
Structure	6	I have difficulties in the structure of the social studies course while teaching.	54	31,4	14,6	2,75	1,183
	7	The history topics in the social studies course are sufficient for the purpose of the course.	21,3	64,7	14	2,34	1,092
	9	The geography subjects in the social studies course are sufficient for the purpose of the course.	30,7	50,6	18,7	2,69	1,099
	10	Citizenship topics in the social studies course are sufficient to accomplish the objectives of the course.	30,7	51,4	17,9	2,65	1,081
	11	Giving different disciplines together in the social studies course is not suitable for the general purpose of the course.	38	44,7	17,3	3,00	1,198
	13	The subjects in social studies are not scientific enough.	35,3	36,7	28	3,02	1,052
	15	I am having difficulty in teaching subjects outside my branch of graduation.	27,3	57,3	15,4	3,43	1,089
	17	I think the constructivism approach is suitable for the structure of social studies.	66,7	14	19,3	3,65	1,062
	22	While teaching different subjects (history, geography, etc.), I have difficulties scientifically.	20,6	68	11,4	3,58	1,095
	23	I do not think the purpose suits the content of this course.	33,4	44	22,6	3,14	1,123
	24	What is expected from the Social Studies course overlaps with the Citizenship and Democracy Education course.	54,7	25,4	19,9	3,31	1,024

Source: Analyzed by the researcher

The participation rates of the social studies teachers regarding the statements prepared for the social studies course are evaluated in Table 1. According to this; 54% of the teachers agree and 31,4% of the teachers disagree to the statement: "I have difficulties in the structure of the social studies course while teaching." It is possible to say that when the average score taken from this statement is 2.75, it is clear that the teachers are indecisive about the existence of the specifics of the course structure. Another item on the survey is "The history topics in the social studies course are sufficient for the purpose of the course.", to which 21.3% of the teachers agree and 64.7% of them disagree. It

is seen that the mean score obtained from this statement is 2.34, so teachers think that the history topics are not enough for the general purposes of the course. There is a similar situation with the geography topics. Because 30.7% of the teachers agree and 50.6% disagree to the statement: *"The geography subjects in the social studies course are sufficient for the purpose of the course."* The average score obtained from this statement is 2.34, thereby it seems that the teachers are indifferent about the adequacy of geography subjects for the courses general purpose.

When we examine the values given in Table 1, we can say that citizenship topics have a result similar to the situation in history and geography. 30.7% of the participants agree and 51.4% disagree to the statement that emphasizes achievements related to citizenship that is, *"Citizenship topics in the social studies course are sufficient to accomplish the objectives of the course."* It is seen that the mean score taken from this statement is 2.65, so the teachers are undecided about the adequacy of citizenship topics for the courses general purpose. In addition, it was determined that more than half of the participants thought that they were trying to give similar qualities with social studies lessons and citizenship and democracy lessons. In this context *"What is expected from the Social Studies course overlaps with the Citizenship and Democracy Education course."* it was calculated that 50.7% agree to this statement, 25.4% disagree and 20% are uncertain.

In this survey, *"Giving different disciplines together in the social studies course is not suitable for the general purpose of the course."* 38% of the participants agree and 44.7% disagree to the statement. When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the average score obtained from this statement is 3.00. Because of these ratios we can say that participants are indifferent about how the inclusion of different disciplines in the social studies course will affect the overall achievement of the course. It has been determined that a similar situation exists in terms of purpose-content coherence. In this respect, it is seen that 33.4% of the teachers, 44% of the teachers do not participate and 22.7% of the teachers are indecisive in the statement *"I do not think the purpose suits the content of this course"*.

In the study, data was collected about the science of social studies courses' content and the conformity of the constructivist approach. In this context, 35.3% of the teachers agree and 36.7% of the teachers disagree in the statement *"The subjects in social studies are not scientific enough."* 28% are uncertain. When the above table is examined, it is seen that the mean score obtained from this statement is 3.02, so that the teachers are indecisive about the sufficiency of the subjects in the social studies course in terms of science. 66.7% of the teachers agree, 14% disagree and 19.3% are uncertain about the statement *"I think the constructivism approach is suitable for the structure of social studies"*. The mean score of this expression is 3.65, so it is seen that the teachers think that the constructivist approach is suitable for the social studies course.

Since the social studies course was given by the graduates of history and geography departments besides the teachers who graduated from the social studies department, data was gathered in order to determine how this situation affects the process of the course. In this context, 27.3% of the teachers disagree in the statement *"I am having difficulty in teaching subjects outside my branch of graduation"* and 57.3% of them disagree. When the above table is examined, it is seen that the mean score obtained from this expression is 3.43, so that it is seen that the teachers do not have difficulty in handling the subjects outside the branch they graduated from. Again, 20.6% of the teachers agree in the statement *"While teaching different subjects (history, geography, etc.), I have difficulties scientifically"*, and 68% of them disagree. When the above table is examined, it is seen that the mean score obtained from the statement is 3.58, thereby the teachers do not have difficulty in handling different subjects.

When the findings obtained from the quantitative data of the research are evaluated in general, it is seen that the subjects of the seminar are more than half of the participant teachers, who are experiencing specific problems and that the history, geography and citizenship topics in the social studies course are inadequate for the purposes of the course. Qualitative data was also collected in order to support the quantitative findings of the social studies course in the research. In this framework, it was determined what participants thought about the problems arising from the structure of the social studies course, the content adaptation of the social studies course, the qualification of the undergraduate education, and the history, geography and citizenship being utilized as separate courses.

In order to collect the qualitative data about the structure of the social studies course, participants were asked *"What kind of troubles do you live with in which subjects or areas? (Due to the fact that history, geography, citizenship etc are together) about the structure of social studies?"*. By analyzing the answers given to this question, it was seen that the participants had problems arising from the multidisciplinary nature of the social studies course. Participants were found to have problems in relating achievements related to history, geography and citizenship in relation to prior knowledge. In this context, he said, *"There are problems at the point of bringing extremely broad purposes of social information to the students"*. He pointed out that social information is experiencing problems due to the wide scope of the course. Participant K2 stated that it is difficult to make sufficient correlations between the topics because of the sorting of the contents of the social studies course. He expressed his opinions as follows: *"There is no connection between the lessons because the topics are different from each other during the subject expression."*

In the study, some participants stressed that they had problems arising from undergraduate education. Participants in this emphasis were K7: *"In my undergraduate education, we have dealt with issues of social content. However, we did not receive much training on how to transfer the content to the students under different circumstances. I am having problems because of this."* he said, because the undergraduate education has not developed practical skills. Participant K3 established the following statement to express the problems he experienced: *"Although I had difficulty in getting down to the level of children in the first place in terms of my history education, I think that I have overcome this problem over the years. Social information affects negatively the teachers who are not graduated from social studies in the first stage of history, geography and citizenship issues."* When we examine the direct quote from participant K3, we can state that K3 is having problems due to not having graduated from social studies teacher education (history education at the level of high school teacher) when K3 started to work.

Some participants in the survey were found to have problems in getting achievements related to history, geography and citizenship. Participants who stated that they are experiencing difficulties in achieving their historical achievements in this context expressed the following opinions: *"Due to the intensive curriculum in the history units, it can be both difficult to reach the subject and the students can be stressed."* As can be understood from these expressions, participant K6 thinks that the achievements are not fully realized because the history subjects are very intense and that the course is boring for the students. K1, another participant who relates the problem he has

experienced to his achievements in history, commented: *"I especially think that history topics have been passed over a lot. I think that these issues should be given more room for their purposes."* When we examine these cues, participant K1 seems to be experiencing problems because history is not included as content in proportion to its purpose. On the other hand, participants who stated that they had difficulty in realizing their geographical achievements expressed their opinions as follows:

K9: *"I see that geography knowledge is not given to students at the desired level. Although the topics are too many, the lesson time is very short."*

K10: *"Of course there are problematic points. So now when you can't set some bases in geography problems in the next years geography topics arise which is another loss of time where the lesson time already is short for example; in the 6th grade the part with the maps can be short. The next topic is about history, you can't go back to it yeah but you can give information in maps about it, you can do this if you show maps in Central Asia or something, but you can not spare more time to it, so there are these kinds of problems."*

It can also be seen from the direct citations given by participants who have problems in attaining geographical achievements, because of the inadequacy of the course hours that are reserved for the achievements and the presentation of the contents required by the structure in the social studies course, the achievements for the geography course can not be realized completely.

Participant K8 who explains the problem they are experiencing in the realization of the citizenship achievements by linking them to constant repetition, *"I experienced more problems with the citizenship topics. You get bored after a while explaining the same topics again and again since its generally explained with the same topics in civics."* explained it with these enunciations. On the other hand, Participant K4, explained the problems he faced with citizenship achievements by linking it to the multidisciplinary nature of the social studies course, expressing his views as follows:

*"Social studies consists, due to its structure, of many disciplines. However, the gains can not be given to the students equally. Especially in the subjects of citizenship, it isn't possible to teach the lesson according to the level of each student. Because concepts of citizenship (rights, law, justice, etc.) are extremely difficult concepts to gain without a specific foundation. Many students do not earn enough of these concepts in primary school. In this case it makes it difficult to understand citizenship topics"*.

The purpose of the survey was to determine what participants thought about the purpose-content of social studies and asked the question "How do you evaluate the compatibility between the purpose of social studies course and its content?". When the answers to this question were analyzed, it was seen that some of the participants thought that the purpose-content coherence was not wholly existent and some participants thought that the coherence was sufficient. Direct citations from the views of the participants who do not see the purpose-content fit enough are given below:

K1: *"I especially think that in history topics the purpose-content coherence couldn't be achieved."*

K6: *"Since the purpose of the social studies course is very broad, every objective is not fully met."*

K7: *"There are problems in terms of aim-content. Social information will be much more useful when these problems are overcome."*

K8: *"It is one of the lessons that are very appropriate and necessary for their purposes. But I do not think the content is perfect for the purposes."*

K9: *"I do not think that the topics in the social studies course reflect the goals exactly or reflect at all."*

K10: *"I think that aims should be reduced."*

When we examine the direct quotations given above, we can say that participants think that the aim-content coherence is not fully achieved, especially because of the excess of goals. Participants' opinions, which consider the coherence between the aims of the social studies course and the content, are given directly below:

K2: *"I think that the aims and content are enough to prepare students for social life."*

K3: *"I think that the topics covered in the social studies course are appropriate for its purposes."*

K4: *"I think the aims of the course are consistent with its content."*

K5: *"I think that the social studies course is in line with the goals of the social studies course."*

In the quantitative findings of the survey, it was determined that more than half of the participants thought that the social studies lessons and the expectations of the Citizenship and Democracy Education lessons overlap with each other. Qualitative data has also been collected in this study. In order to collect these data, participants were asked "What do you think about the aims of social studies and citizenship and democracy education course?". By analyzing the answers given to this question, it was seen that a significant part of the participants thought that the aims of the two lessons were significantly similar to each other, and that the social studies course even included the Citizenship and Democracy Education course. Participants expressing opinions in this context are given as direct quotations below:

K1: *"Citizenship and Democracy lessons and Social Studies lessons show similarities in many ways. Citizenship course aims to educate more effective citizens, social studies course, on the other hand, aims to educate citizens who have a better knowledge of history, culture and environment."*

K3: *"The social studies course includes citizenship and democracy courses in terms of objectives."*

K4: *"The topics learned in citizenship are also taught in social studies. In social studies, there are also other topics such as history geography."*

K5: *"I do not see much distinction between the aim of the courses of Citizenship and Democracy and the Social Studies course."*

K6: *"The aims of the citizenship course represent some of the aims of the social studies course."*

K8: *"In terms of achievements they are similar. While there are rights and responsibilities in citizenship, additionally there are also history and geography lessons in social."*

K9: *"Citizenship and democracy is taught in the 4th grade. Removed in the 8th grade. The aims of the two lessons are consistent. The aims of the social studies course include the aims of citizenship and democracy."*

K10: *"There are similarities between the purposes of citizenship and the aims of Social Studies, and the difference probably is that social studies is more likely to aim towards other social sciences."*

When we examine the participants' expressions given above, we can say that the participants think that the social science lessons and the Citizenship and Democracy Education lesson are very similar to each other in terms of purpose and achievement and are trying to give similar qualities to the students through these two courses. Furthermore, based on participant statements, we can say that the qualifications required to be given to the students through Citizenship and Democracy Education lesson are also given in the social studies course and that the social studies course is broader in scope. However, it was seen that the participants (K2 and K7) thought that the Social Studies course and the Citizenship and Democracy Education course were similar to each other in terms of aims but not exactly in terms of content. In this context, participant K2 explains the opinions of "Citizenship and democracy education lesson and different subjects are taught to students in social studies lesson" while participant K7 explains his thoughts in, "Although the aims of both courses are similar to one another, actually, there are similar points for the purposes of all lessons, but the content is different."

In the quantitative findings of the study, it was determined that about 70% of the participating teachers were not compelled scientifically to handle different subjects (history, geography, etc.). In relation to this, the participants were asked this question in the interview, *"Do you think that the education you receive from university is sufficient for teaching social studies?"*. By analyzing the answers given to this question, participants generally did not see enough undergraduate education to teach social studies. In this context, the views of the participants who see the undergraduate education as inadequate due to lack of implementation are given below as direct excerpts:

K1: *"You receive a more scientific undergraduate education. Most of the information you learn in college you don't use at schools."*

K4: *"Undergraduate education is more about the information they want to do, that is, about the theory part, but the conditions for applying the education are different."*

K7: *"In my undergraduate education, we have dealt with topics about the contents of social studies. However, we did not receive much training on how to transfer the content to the students under different circumstances."*

K8: *"It was not enough. Because we didn't have the opportunity to practice what we had learned."*

K9: *"It was normal. However, higher-level skills could be developed if we were to receive practice-oriented training."*

Based on the phrases highlighted in the above cited excerpts, we can state that the participants see the training they receive in university as inadequate, especially because of lack of practice, and that they couldn't put the full acquis into practice during their undergraduate studies. On the other hand, it was seen that some of the participants considered the undergraduate education they received because they did not graduate from social studies teacher education as inadequate for teaching social studies. His views in this framework are: *"Inadequate. I mainly received physiography as education, but I used it very little in my lessons."* K6 emphasized that the education he received did not cover the entire social studies course. K3's opinion however was this: *"I do not think it is enough. I had difficulty in going down to the level of children in the first place in terms of my history education."* From the participants, K10 expressed their views with these sentences: *"It was not enough. Due to the quality of the training. I also think that being treated ideologically was the case."* Participant K10 underlines that, unlike other participants, he did not receive a satisfactory undergraduate education due to ideological attitudes and qualitative insufficiency, and therefore sees undergraduate education as inadequate for the social studies course.

It was found in the survey that only participant K2 and K5 thought their undergraduate education as sufficient to teach social studies. In this context, participant K2 very plainly said: *"I think the education I received in college is sufficient for social studies."* Participant K5, who considers college education adequate for teaching social studies, emphasized constantly updating his thoughts as follows: *"... I see it as enough. The reason is that I think that my teachers are competent enough people in their fields and they can reflect this competency. But you always have to update yourself in terms of knowledge, so in the end it is up to you."*

In the quantitative findings of the study, it was determined that more than half of the participating teachers did not find it positive that different disciplines were given together in the social studies course. Participants were also found to be uncertain in terms of the adequacy of the topics covered in the social studies course for being scientific enough. These results show that this union can not get itself fully accepted yet. To collect qualitative data on this aspect of the study, the following question was asked in the interview done with the participants: *"How do you evaluate the social studies course as being taught separately through history, geography and citizenship?"* When the answers given to this question were analyzed, it was seen that some participants supported the idea of giving separate courses, while some participants defended the preservation of the existing structure. Within this framework, participants who defended the idea of "given separately", had given the assumption "gains from the disciplines can be absorbed more effectively" as their main reason. K3, from the participants who think that way, has been found approaching this situation cautiously, stating that it may be boring for the students either way. K10, from the participants who defends this opinion, stated that the programs to be prepared shouldn't encourage students to memorize. Participant statements, which find it positive that history, geography and citizenship to be taught separately, were given below as direct excerpts:

K1: *"It can be given separately. However, the positive aspects of giving it together should not be forgotten ..."*

K2: *"I think that the connections between topics and units can be better provided when given separately."*

K3: *"Yes it can be better. But it can be boring for students too. Seeing the subjects change in the form of geography, history units can also be good for the students."*

K7: *"When the students reach the 8th grade, they only get to see History of Revolution course as history. Likewise, in the last year, the 8th grade "Citizenship and Democracy Education" was taught as a single discipline. I think it is more efficient for the students be taught the subjects of citizenship and history as separate courses. This can also be adapted to social studies."*

K9: *"If it is aimed to acquire the information in these branches at the desired level, the social studies course should be divided into these branches. Thus individuals who are more sensitive to their environment, past and future can be raised."*

K10: *"It can be more effective. But I never learned the history subjects when I was studying in middle school between 1989-1992. Maybe because of the teacher or maybe it didn't interest me or maybe because of the program and it being based on memorization. If it is going to be like this again it won't be effective."*

It has been determined that some participants from the qualitative data of the study thought that the current structure of the social studies course should continue. In this framework, it was seen that participants thought that

the current structure of the social studies course should continue by showing the student qualifications, especially cognitive capacities of the students and leaving the courses in the high school curriculum. Views of participants who approach the topic like this are given as direct quotations below:

K4: *“Social sciences are interdependent. You have to say that civilization established in Anatolia is influenced by the climate and earth shapes here. Courses are divided in the upcoming years anyway.*

K5: *“This is already given at the secondary level I do not think it would be very accurate within these age groups to be given separately. In this course both geography and history are included, time comes you talk about history in history and geography, frankly I do not think it will be very effective in that level.*

K6: *“I think that the mental structure of the students is not appropriate for this. They can still perceive it as a whole. “*

K8: *“Yes for high school, but it would be more correct to teach it as a whole for the middle school level.”*

We can say that more than half of the respondents think that the achievements of history, geography and citizenship should be given as a separate lesson, especially when they evaluate the findings of the survey based on the data obtained from the questionnaire and interview form on the multidisciplinary nature of the social studies course.

#### 4.2. Findings about the Functioning of the Social Studies Course

There are 5 statements in the questionnaire about this aspect of the research.

The participation rates of social studies teachers for these statements are given in [Table 2](#).

**Table-2.** Social Studies teachers' views on the functionality of the social studies course

Dimension	Item No	Statement	%			$\bar{x}$	S
			Agree	Disagree	Uncertain		
Usefulness	12	Social studies course is an indispensable course for its purposes.	92	3,4	4,6	4,47	,841
	14	Students use the information they learn in social studies course in their daily lives.	70,6	10	19,4	3,77	,951
	19	Students acquire information about real life in the social studies course.	90	4,7	5,3	4,13	,816
	20	The social studies course is necessary for the social development of the students.	92,7	2,7	4,6	4,41	,734
	27	The social studies course is necessary for the academic development of the students.	91,3	4	4,7	4,35	,851

Source: Analyzed by the researcher

When the findings given in [Table 2](#) are examined, it is seen that 92% of the teachers agree and 3.4% of the teachers disagree with the expression *“Social studies course is indispensable for its purposes”*. It is seen that the mean score in this expression is 4.47, so teachers think that the social studies course is an indispensable lesson for its purposes. Furthermore, 70.6% of the teachers agree and 10% of the teachers disagree in the statement *“Students use the information they learn in social studies course in their daily lives”*. The mean score obtained from this statement is 3.77, so it appears that teachers generally believe that what is taught in social studies can be used in everyday life. On the other hand, 90% of the teachers agree in the statement *“Students learn about real life in social studies lessons”*, which emphasizes real life, while 4.7% of them disagree on it. It is seen that the mean score taken from this statement is 4.13, so teachers believe that the content of the social studies course is related to real life.

92.7% of the participants agree and 2.7% disagree on the statement *“The social studies course is necessary for the social development of the students”* given in [Table 2](#) which emphasizes on the social development of the students, however 91.3% of the participants agree and only 4% disagree on the statement *“The social studies course is necessary for the academic development of the students”* which emphasizes cognitive development. As the average scores of both items are higher than four, we can say that teachers think social studies is necessary for the social and academic development of the students.

In [Table 2](#), when the findings of the social studies lesson are examined, it is seen that most of the teachers think that the students can use the information they learned in the social studies lessons in their daily life. However, another important finding is that almost all of the teachers are convinced that the social studies course contains information about everyday life and that it is a necessary and indispensable course for students' academic and social development.

Qualitative data related to the functionality of the social studies course were also collected in the study. In order to collect the qualitative data of the research participants were asked this question *“How do you think there is a relationship between social studies class and everyday life?”*. When the answers to this question were analyzed, it was seen that the participants' opinions generally supported the qualitative findings. In other words, participants generally emphasize that they benefit from the gains they receive in social studies class in everyday life. Only participant K5 and participant K8 stated that the subjects given in the social studies course did not exactly coincide with daily life. Participant K5 mentions his considerations: *“In the aims of social studies everyday life is being talked about. But I think that there is very little information in it available to the student for everyday life. More emphasis is held on history and geography.”* and participant K8 also stated: *“I do not think that the information given about everyday life in social studies class is sufficient.”* Participants who think that the relationship between social studies lessons and everyday life is sufficient and affects the lives of students positively is given below as a direct quotations:

K1: *They see many of the information they use in daily life. Especially geography. They learn their rights and responsibilities in citizenship lessons.”*

K2: *There is a positive relationship between them. The subjects are given intertwined with daily life. So when you look at it you teach a child its role in the society, in the family, etc. at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Social studies prepares the child for the society as desired. There is really no other explanation for this.”*

K3: "There is a direct relationship between the two. Events and situations in everyday life are related to the subjects of social studies."

K4: "Students learn the society they live in best in the social studies course."

K6: "Social science is necessary for students because it prepares them to life."

K7: "Unlike other courses, social studies has a direct impact on the life of the student. In other words, a student who has gone out of the social studies course can use the things he learned directly right after leaving school. This is a feature not found in other lessons."

K9: "Students will use what they learn in their social studies course throughout their lives. Because in this course they learn about the society they live in."

K10: "In fact, it is suitable for everyday life. However, students are discussed in terms of their ability to apply them to their daily lives because they can be different."

#### 4.3. Findings about the Social Studies Curriculum

There are 4 items in the questionnaire related to this dimension of the research. The values indicating the participation levels of Social Studies teachers in these statements are given in Table 3.

Table-3. Social Studies teachers' views on the social studies curriculum

Dimension	Item No	Statement	%			$\bar{x}$	S
			Agree	Disagree	Uncertain		
PROGRAM	1	I read the social studies course curriculum.	75,3	9,4	15,3	4,29	1,058
	2	I know the purposes of the social studies course in the program.	93,3	2	4,7	4,67	,719
	3	I do not think that the purpose of the social studies course is sufficient in the program.	44,6	27,4	28	2,84	,905
	2	The weekly hour of the social studies course is not enough for the	96,7	1,03	2,3	1,03	,180
	5	achievements to happen.					

Source: Analyzed by the researcher

While 75.3% of the teachers agree, 9.4% disagree and 15.3% are uncertain about the statement related to the cognitive status of the teachers in the social studies curriculum given in Table 3, "I read the social studies course curriculum." Only 93.3% of participants agree, 2% disagree and 15.3% are uncertain about, "I know the purposes of the social studies course in the program." We can say that the teachers' cognitive levels for the social studies course curriculum are very high, as these are above the average scores for the two items. By looking at this state, we can say that social science teachers are aware of what goals they will achieve in their lessons. On the other hand, 44.6% of the teachers agree in the statement "I do not think that the purpose of the social studies course is sufficient in the program." given in Table 3, 27.4% are uncertain and 28% disagree. When we look at the same table, we can say that the mean score of this expression is 2.84, and thus the teachers are uncertain about the sufficiency of their purposes in the program. It is seen that the participants agreed in a very high rate (96.7%) to the statement "The weekly hour of the social studies course is not enough for the achievements to happen" in Table 3. Based on this, we can say that the teachers think that the weekly hour of the social studies course is not enough for the achievements to take place. When the answers are evaluated in general, it is seen that the vast majority of the teachers read the program of Social Studies course and that the ratio of those who know the aims of the program is much higher than those who didn't read the program.

Almost half of the teachers, however, seem to think that these goals are not enough and almost all of them think that the weekly course hours are insufficient.

Qualitative data related to the curriculum of social studies course were also collected in the research. To collect the data in this context participants were asked this question: "If you were a member of the commission which determines the primary school courses and curricula; What kind of savings would you have for the social studies course?". By analyzing the answers given to this question, it was seen that the participants especially thought that the course hours had to be increased and some participants also thought that some corrections should be made in the content. In this scope, the participant's views that emphasize the increase of the number of course hours are cited below directly:

K1: "The course hours is definitely not enough. Especially 6th and 7th grade history and geography subjects do not finish. In order to get it done, we have to explain them in general without entering the details. For this reason, it is hard to have a student-centered teaching."

K2: "I think the course hours are not enough. Especially in history. As social studies teachers we have a responsibility in raising a generation in helping them understand their today, tomorrow and past."

K4: "Especially history and geography topics can't be completed. If I were to prepare the program I would increase the course hours."

K7: "The course hours are not sufficient. Especially history and geography are taught shallowly because of the lack of time. If more time is given, activities for a more constructive teaching could be done easier."

K8: "Social studies course should be at least 4 hours meaning it should be increased. Especially topics about geography can take a very long time. It definitely and certainly is not enough, especially history, geography and citizenship topics never get to be finished in time."

K10: "Well I guess I would increase the hours of the social studies course probably. If you ask me of course the program could be improved but more importantly I think the class hour should be increased by an hour."

When we analyze the participant opinions given above, we can say that the participants think that the history, geography and citizenship gains can not be achieved to the current number of hours and that the number of course hours should be increased. It is also seen that participant K1 and participant K7 stated that in addition to not being able to transfer the achievements, the existing course hours must be increased in order to be able to operate a

student-centered and constructivist approach-based course. By analyzing qualitative data, it was seen that some participants emphasized the addition of course hours as well as the revision of course content. In this context, he commented: "I would reduce the number of topics so that they could be understood better and be taught in time. I would increase course hours. I would care to choose the subjects from within life." K5 emphasized the importance of reducing the subjects in general and choosing the topics from everyday life without mentioning any specific subject name. Participant K9 and participant K6 expressed the subject directly by giving the its name. In this context, participant K9 explained his view in "There is no integrity in 7th grade Ottoman history and I would work on that.", participant K6 however said: "I would focus more on citizenship topics and country geography, and I would reduce the topics of human geography. I would reduce 7th grade classes history units. For example, in the topic of the transnational bridges, I would take out World War 1." On the other hand, participant K3 unlike other participants emphasized that textbooks are inadequate. In this framework, participant K3 expressed his thoughts as follows: "First of all I would increase the hours of social studies course. Later, I would re-prepare the textbooks in accordance with the purposes of social studies. Because textbooks are not suited to the multidisciplinary nature of social studies."

When we evaluate together qualitative findings about the savings they will make towards the social studies course, we see that the participants agree that the current course hours are insufficient and that the course time is increased in the program especially for the completion of history and geography subjects.

#### 4.4. Findings about the Learning-Teaching Process

There are 7 items in the questionnaire related to this dimension of the survey. Findings showing the participation status of social studies teachers for these statements related to the learning teaching process of social studies course are given in Table 4.

Table-4. Social Studies teachers' views on social studies teaching and learning process

Dimension	Statement No	Statement	%			$\bar{x}$	S
			Agree	Disagree	Uncertain		
Learning-Teaching Process	4	I teach the social studies course efficiently.	74,7	12	13,3	3,77	,930
	5	I am having difficulty in achieving the goals set out in the social studies course.	30,6	46,7	22,7	3,21	1,038
	8	Being a social studies teacher doesn't make me happy.	34	57,3	8,7	3,31	1,390
	16	I believe that students like this lesson.	72	8,7	19,3	3,80	,912
	18	I'm not satisfied with being a social studies teacher.	74	14,6	11,4	3,94	1,171
	21	I do not feel sufficient enough to accomplish all the goals of this course.	24,7	60	15,3	3,49	1,145
	26	I get bored while teaching this lesson.	10	80,6	9,4	4,04	1,035

Source: Analyzed by the researcher

When we examine Table 4, we see the participants' analysis of the views of the social studies course on the teaching-learning process. According to this; 74.7% of the teachers agree and 12% do not agree in the statement: "I teach the social studies course efficiently". When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the average score obtained from this statement is 3.77, which means that the teachers believe that they teach the social studies course efficiently. "I am having difficulty in achieving the goals set out in the social studies course." teachers agreeing to this statement are 30.6% and teachers disagreeing are 46.7 %. When the same table is examined, it is seen that the mean score obtained from this expression is 3.21, so that the teachers are indifferent to whether they social have difficulty in achieving the courses goals. On the other hand, 24.7% of the teachers agree and 60% do disagree in the statement "I do not feel sufficient enough to accomplish all the goals of this course". The average score on this item is 3.39, so teachers seem to feel that they are adequately self-sufficient in fulfilling the goals of the course. On the other hand, it is seen that teachers think differently of being content and happy in being a social studies teacher. In this context, 34% of the teachers agree in the statement "Being a social studies teacher doesn't make me happy." and 57.3% disagree. It is seen that the mean score obtained from this statement is 3.31, so that the teachers are undecided about whether they are happy to be social studies teachers or not. When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the proportion of the teachers agreeing in "I am not satisfied with teaching social studies" is 74% and those who are disagreeing is 14,6%. Since the average score of participants is 3.94, we can say that teachers are generally satisfied with teaching social studies.

It was determined that the social studies teachers were not bored during the course. Because 10% of the teachers agree in the statement "I get bored while teaching this lesson. " and 80.6% of the teachers disagree. It is seen that the average score obtained from this item is 4.04, so teachers are not bored while teaching social studies. It was also found that teachers believed that students liked the social studies course. The reason for making this identification is that 72% of the teachers agree and 8.7% of the teachers say they disagree to the statement "I believe that students like this lesson".

When the answers given to the questionnaire are examined, it is seen that most of the teachers feel that they are qualified enough for this lesson, that they work lessons with efficiency and as a result they think that they like this lesson and that the students like it too, thus they are happy because of it. Nevertheless, it is also an important result that less than half of the teachers are not forcing themselves while trying to achieve the goals of the lesson. This situation is understandable when nearly all the teachers point out the inconvenience of the inadequacy of the teaching hours to realize the goals. Despite all this, it is understood from the statements that the two sides (student-teacher) are mutually happy and have a productive course.

Qualitative data related to the teaching learning process of the social studies course were also collected in the study. Especially to attain data to learn if the course achieved its goals, participants were asked the question, "Can the aims of different disciplines in the social studies course be completely accomplished? And Why?". By analyzing

the answers given to this question, it was seen that all the participants thought that the aims to be achieved with the social studies course could not be reached completely. In this context, participant K2 comments: *"No, more schools are trying to fulfill the curriculum,"* while participant K3 said: *"There is no time for purposes other than academic purposes."* Another participant who emphasized his thoughts on the same subject was K4: *"No, more often exam subjects are trying to be finished."* Participant K9 explained his thoughts with this sentence: *"Since we have time issues we can only teach the cognitive parts."* When we evaluate the direct quotations from participants K2, K3, K4 and K9, we can say that the social studies class is focused on more cognitive purposes because of the inadequate teaching time and that there is not enough time for the aims of affective purposes.

In the survey, participant K5 stated that due to the lack of lesson time, social studies could not meet its goals exactly. In this sense participant K5 said: *"You can't really make it happen. The reason for this is the insufficiency of course hours."* Another participant K6 who also empathized that like K5 goals can not be met said: *"Since we have time shortage goals don't really happen."*, participant K1 however: *"Doesn't really happen. This mostly is the reason of the reducing of course hours."* Aside from having not enough time, purpose-content incoherence also hinders from goals being met stated like this:

*"Although social studies contains many disciplines, disciplines outside of history, geography and citizenship are not really attained by the students. Because the content of the topics does not really address much of the disciplines outside of history, geography and citizenship. Time isn't enough for these anyways."*

In qualitative data K8's thoughts were: *"Can't be met completely. Either by the floods of aims or physical reasons."* Participant K10 however stated: *"Not fully. Because of teacher sufficiency."* On the basis of these expressions, we can say that, unlike the other participants, the Participant K8 achievement intensity and physical conditions, participant K10 think that the purpose of the lesson is not realized due to teacher inadequacy.

When examining these data from the interview form, they show that not all of the participants are able to fully realize the aims of the different disciplines in this course, and the common reason is that the course hours are inadequate due to the multiplicity of gains to be given. This result also coincides with the most common desire, that is to increase the course hours of the program. Similarly, when analyzed the answers given by teachers in relation to this dimension, *"Are you happy to be a social science teacher?"*, It was seen that the participants were generally more than happy to be a social studies teacher. It was determined that the participants thought that the content of the lesson, the positive communication with the students, and the students' academic relevance and the dimensions of the academic satisfaction, made them happy to be a social science teacher. In this context, participant opinions are directly cited below:

K1: *"Yes it makes me very happy to be a social science teacher. Because I love this lesson, I enjoy teaching it."*

K2: *"Yes because I think as a social studies teacher we have an important role in society because we educate generations that love their society, protect their values and are aware of their duties in the advancement of society."*

K3: *"I love my course and I'm happy."*

K: *"I think students like to partake in this course. Knowing this makes me happy."*

K6: *"Yes it makes me happy. Although not with all subjects in most of them i see their use in everyday life."*

K7: *"Social studies is the course id be the happiest to do among all of them. Because it is the only one that contains the courses I have most interest in (history and geography)."*

K8: *"Yes because unlike many other lessons I am in more contact with my students in this. Also since social studies is the course that is closest to real life it makes me happy to be doing this job."*

K10: *"I'm satisfied academically, and I improve myself daily. I like this field because of it. Philosophy, geography, history, you can learn a little bit of everything. If you want more and know how to do what, then there's no problem. This field actually raises and intellectual. For example, you already know the information you want to give to the child, I mean general stuff, what is important here though is in terms of pedagogical sense. You can't know as much as a historian, but you can give a general opinion and you can have information about other subjects too. I think its a good field, I mean I'm happy."*

Participants K5 and K9 showed a different approach from other participants. In this scope the participant K5 said this about the topic: *"No because students are more protected but if the teacher has problems there's no one standing behind them."* As can be seen from this direct quote, participant K5 gave a very meaningful answer by comparing his position with the students, emphasizing that there was in a sense no assurance as the teacher. Participant K9 expressed the following views, emphasizing that being a social science teacher does not affect his or her happiness level positively: *"I do not think that students really care about the lesson, so being a teacher of social studies doesn't have a positive contribution to my happiness."* On the other hand, when the above findings of the research are examined, it is seen that the teachers are generally happy to teach social studies. The main reason of this happiness is the enjoyment the students get from this course, the main reason of the course being the raising of a generation with values the society needs and raising of intellectual students and its closeness and practicality of use in real life.

## **5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this study, which is aimed to determine what social studies teachers think about the structure and educational situation of social studies course, important results have been achieved by analyzing the obtained data. In this framework, it is seen that the participants in the social studies lesson, the geography and the citizenship gains are inadequate for the purposes of the course, and this inadequacy is felt mostly in the history acquisitions. With the data obtained from the interview form the reasons for these problems are; not being able to make connections between the achievements of different disciplines, the fact that similar qualities are tried to be gained by the students within the context of citizenship gains becoming boring after a while, not being to attain achievements completely because of lack of time (especially history lessons number of achievements available) and disproportionate distribution of content of different disciplines. This result in the research supports some research results in the literature. In this context, when we look at the general objectives of the 2005 social studies program according to the results obtained from Akpınar and Kaymakçı (2012) working together, we see that 11.76% of all objectives are in history, 11.76% are geography, while 41% are of citizenship purposes.

According to the results obtained from [Yılmaz and Kaya \(2011\)](#) study, the teachers reported that there is an accumulation in the history subjects in social studies course, that these subjects are not sufficiently given and that the subjects are handled in a superficial and simplified way. Moreover, it was concluded that topics are generally not distributed equally and that the course hours aren't enough for the constructivists approaches' applications. In the study conducted by [Akpınar and Ayvacı \(2003\)](#) it is seen that the teacher candidates are concerned that they do not accept the social studies program as a specific branch, they want to branch out in one of the disciplines of social sciences and can not show the same success in different disciplines which constitute social sciences when they are teaching social sciences in the future. Similarly, in the study conducted by [Kaymakçı and Akbaba \(2014\)](#) 98.4% of the social studies teacher candidates were found to have problems in learning about the three main fields of social science - history, geography and civics. One problem for this course, where different disciplines are being taught under the same course roof, is the insufficiency of the course hours. As a result of the work that [Kuş and Çelikkaya \(2010\)](#) did together, Social Studies teachers seem to complain mostly about the shortage of teaching hours. However, there are other problems expressed by teachers that state that history topics are inadequate and superficial, and national history and culture are not adequately included in books. It is also seen that in the studies of [Çakmak and Aslan \(2016\)](#) and [Arslantaş \(2006\)](#) the contents of teachers' social studies curriculum is very intensive.

According to the data obtained from the quantitative dimension of the research, it is seen that more than half of the participating teachers do not think that it is appropriate to give different disciplines together in the social studies course. It was also determined that participants were highly uncertain about the adequacy of the topics covered in social studies in terms of their scientific relevance. These results can also be interpreted as a sign that the social studies course is not fully accepted by teachers as the ink structure of different disciplines. Qualitative findings of the research also support this view. Because the data obtained from the interview form, it has been found out that when the participants are given these disciplines as separate lessons, that the lessons can be better provided for their purposes and therefore be more suitable for the students. In addition to this situation, some participants graduated from social studies education indicated that they did not find it appropriate to give the social studies course through separate courses in history, geography and citizenship, citing to the cognitive capacities of the students. However, in the qualitative findings of the study, it was concluded that the current multidisciplinary nature of the social studies course level was too high for more than half of the teachers and that giving the courses of history, geography, and citizenship separately would be more effective. This can lead to not being able to attain the achievements of the social studies course fully. Because teachers may not be able to realize some achievements due to the qualifications they have attached to the structural characteristics of the course. Some participants also stated that course acquisitions could not be fully gained.

In the survey, it was determined that a significant proportion of the participants expressed the expectation of the Social Studies course and the expectations of the Citizenship and Democracy Education course to be the same. In the data obtained from the interview form, it is seen that the participant teachers showed similarities in the aims of these two lessons in many ways, and that this similarity is in the order of repetition, rather than complementing each other. In other words, according to the participants, the social studies and citizenship lessons are two lessons that repeat each other rather than being two complementary ones. When we look at the aims and achievements of the course, which was taught in the 8th grade in the name of Citizenship and Democracy Education until 2015-2016 academic year and started to be taught in the 4th grade with the name of Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy from this date, we see that the main purpose of it is, to raise someone who knows his rights and duties, accepts the democratic values as effective citizens, the social studies course in this sense is very similar to each other and moreover if we look at the gains and purposes of the Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy class we can say that it just has a different name and saying that it actually serves as a smaller version of it wouldn't be wrong ([TTKB, 2016](#)).

It is also possible that the common purpose of the social studies and citizenship courses are considered, but the efficiency expected from the social studies course is not achieved. Because the results supporting this situation have been found in the work carried out by [Deveci and Selanik-Ay \(2014\)](#). In the study conducted by the mentioned researchers, it was determined that a considerable part of the participants thought that the subjects of citizenship included in the social studies course were inadequate in obtaining effective citizenship characteristics. On the other hand, the finding that the participants considered themselves adequate in giving social studies lessons is among the important results of this study. Only two of the participants think the undergraduate education given to them to be enough for them qualitatively. A similar result is obtained from the study of [Aydın \*et al.\* \(2007\)](#). The reason why the education given to the social science teacher candidates during the undergraduate education was not considered sufficient from the participants view was also found. In this way, participants see the undergraduate education as inadequate by emphasizing the theoretical perspectives and practice dimension. In addition to this negativity, there was a clear indication of the inefficiency of teaching practices and the weakness of cooperation between schools and the education faculties. This result is in agreement with the findings of studies done by [Eraslan \(2009\)](#); [Seçer \*et al.\* \(2010\)](#); [Anşın \(2003\)](#); [Aydın \*et al.\* \(2007\)](#) and [Göktaş and Şad \(2014\)](#). Because, in these studies, the lack of cooperation between the school and the faculty has been found to be a major problem. However, it is a fact that it is extremely important that co-ordination of faculty-school co-operation is very important for the application courses to be successful ([Burton, 1998](#); [Beck and Kosnik, 2002](#)).

Another conclusion reached in the survey is that more than half of the respondents stated that the purpose of the social studies course and the content prepared to carry out the objectives were not appropriate. With this finding, we can say that teachers do not have a common consensus on the purpose and content of the social studies course and when we study together the findings of this study we see that more than half of the teachers show a great similarity between the social studies course and the aims of the citizenship course. This result reached in the research overlaps with the findings of the study conducted by [Ünal and Başaran \(2010\)](#) but does not overlap with the result of the work carried out by [Arslantaş \(2006\)](#). In this context, only 21.2% of the participants in the study conducted by [Ünal and Başaran \(2010\)](#) were found to think that the subjects in social studies textbooks were

enough to fulfill the objectives of this course. In the study conducted by Arslantaş (2006) it has been determined by 71% of the teachers that the content of this course is directly related to its objectives.

One of the most important findings in this study is that the social studies teachers we mentioned above do not have a common opinion on the purpose and content dimensions of the social studies course. This situation shows itself both in this study findings and in studies carried out by different researchers (Arslantaş, 2006; Doğanay and Sarı, 2008). In this context, it can be seen that according to the findings obtained from the quantitative data of this study about the functionality of the social studies course, a large part of the teachers think that the students can use the information they learned in the social studies course in their daily life. Yet another important finding is that almost all of the teachers are convinced that the social studies course contains information about everyday life and that it is a necessary and indispensable course for students' academic and social development. It was found by the researches conducted that this course will contribute to the student academically with today's up-to-date teaching techniques (Özkal and Çetingöz, 2006; Kaymakçı, 2010; Karakuş and Tonga, 2012). In the data obtained from the interview form, it is shown that students learn many of the information they use in everyday life from the topics that are taught, that the topics are from life and that they can best recognize the society they live in with this lesson. In the work of Arın and Deveci (2008) it was also found that the students were effective in increasing the academic achievement and knowledge recall of the Social Studies course; and that it made it easier to learn and more enjoyable. In addition to these positive findings for the social studies course, negative results have also been found in some studies. In this framework, the study by Arslantaş (2006) found that social studies teachers did not find the contents of this course up-to-date and that it did not respond to the interests and needs of the students. However, it is also striking that only 42.9% think that the content is applicable. In Doğanay and Sarı (2008) joint work, two of the first three features that teachers have found negative about the achievements of the social studies program are expressed as not being able to integrate with the past and not to include features such as national and moral values in spite of not responding to daily life and the interests and needs of the students. In the same study, the first three characteristics that teachers found negative about the content of the social studies program are "the basic information is not given enough content", "the subject narration is not clear enough for the students" and "the content is not organized logically". However, the first three suggestions, which are repeated most frequently, are "more theoretical information should be contained".

We can say that the non-overlapping results of some of the researches came from the multidisciplinary nature of the social studies course. Because generally, teachers do not take the social studies course as a whole, but rather take the disciplines that make up the content of the course into a focus. In this idea-building process, if the discipline content that they receive is related to the most repetitive everyday life and citizenship skills of the course, it is judged that the purpose and content of the social studies course is appropriate. As a result, we can say that the research findings obtained for this dimension differ depending on the qualities of the study group. In this study, it is seen that in the data obtained by interviewing, the teachers didn't approach the social studies lesson as a whole but focused on the disciplines constituting the content of the social studies teaching program.

According to the quantitative findings on the social sciences curriculum, it is seen that the majority of the teachers read the social sciences curriculum and that the ratio of those who know the aims of the curriculum is much higher than those who read the program. However, almost half of the teachers seem to think that these goals are not enough and almost all of them think that the weekly course hours are insufficient. In the data obtained from the interview form, it was stated that the lesson time is definitely insufficient (especially for the history subjects) and therefore should be increased. In fact, it seems that the first thing teachers would do is to increase the number of course hours if they have an opportunity in their hands, then to make them more suitable for their purposes and give more importance to national and spiritual values.

These findings in the research support the findings of research conducted by different researchers. In this context, it is seen that the results of the study that Kuş and Çelikkaya (2010) worked together showed that the social sciences teachers mostly voiced problems with the inadequacies of the teaching hours, inadequate and superficial history topics, and lack of national history and culture in textbooks. In the study done by Bulut and Arslan (2010) it was concluded that the teachers were only moderately effective in the implementation of the social sciences program. In the same way, the inadequacy of the lecture hours is also the most present problem in Çakmak and Aslan (2016); Memişoğlu and Köylü (2015) and Arslantaş (2006) researches. Inadequacy of the classroom hours was seen to be highly emphasized by the participants in the interview to collect qualitative data for this study. It was determined that more than half of the participants in this framework were forced to fail to achieve the course due to lack of course hours. In addition, positive results were obtained regarding the learning-teaching process of the social studies course. It has been determined that a large part of the teachers in this framework felt that they felt sufficient for this course, that they worked efficiently without getting bored, and that students like them also liked this lesson. Similar results are supported by various studies showing that this lesson has become fun with different techniques and methods (Erdoğan, 2009; Kuyubaşoğlu, 2009; Ayva, 2010; Topçu and Katılmış, 2013; Topçu and Kaya, 2014).

In summary, the analysis of the data in this research reveals that there is not a common opinion among the teachers for the current structure of the social studies course, that the multidisciplinary structure of social studies is not adopted by the majority of the teachers, the content of the social studies curriculum is insufficient, the gains are not fully realized, the achievements of the lessons and the achievements of the citizenship and democracy education lessons are repeated and the cooperation of the faculties is not fully realized. Based on these general conclusions, it is necessary to establish cooperation between education faculties and schools in order to train teacher candidates as more qualified teachers and to increase the number and quality of applied courses in schools. In addition to this proposal, in line with the research results, two proposals have been developed considering the preferences of the relevant institutions:

The first possibility is that the current multidisciplinary nature of social studies course is to be maintained. If the current structure of the course is to be preserved, it is necessary to increase the number of weekly hours or decrease the number of gains. Because in this study it was determined that the gains were not fully realized due to the lack of course hours per week. However, increasing the number of weekly lectures can lead to inconveniences

such as an increase in the total number of weekly lectures or a decrease in the hours of other lectures. However, when we consider that teachers' social studies lessons are not sufficient particularly in terms of history and geographical achievements as a result of saving in order to reduce the gains, it is inevitable that more specific problems of this lesson will emerge. Again, it is necessary to make serious studies about social studies teachers for the understanding of the nature of social studies course in order to improve the current situation. This is because the survey did not reveal a common opinion about the nature of the social studies course and it was seen that the participants appreciated the disciplines preferred in the course of the course. In the joint work of [Kaymakçı and Ata \(2012\)](#) the results supporting this necessity have been reached.

The second possibility is to make a serious change in the structure and content of the existing social studies course. If significant changes are to be made in the multidisciplinary course of social studies, first of all, disciplines such as history and geography should be given as separate courses at secondary schools. Thus, the notion for these disciplines in students begins to arise at an early age. The necessity of such an application is supported by the data obtained in this study. This is because more than half of the participants in the research findings, who teach social studies, think that giving these courses separately will be more effective. In addition, such a method would be an answer to the criticism that the number of histories and geographical achievements in social studies lessons or content is not balanced. After these disciplines are designed as separate lessons, the social studies program will facilitate the continuation of the lives of the students in everyday life, the knowledge, attitude, concept for bringing the traditions, customs and cultural values of the society in neighborhoods, kitchen cultures, religious festivals, and values can be prepared as an more emotional field focused program. In other words, the key concept of a teaching program to be realized in this context is everyday life. For this reason, as the acquis required in the daily life of each settlement may be different, the general standards can be determined centrally and the contents can be formed in the national education units in each settlement unit. Such an application should not be considered regionally based on convenience and other motives. Because the elements of everyday life differ among the same region, even between the counties of the same province. In this way, the duality of the 4th class course with the title "Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy", which is briefly mentioned as "Citizenship" course, is removed.

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