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# The Effect of Social Studies Lessons on Citizenship Perceptions of 7th Grade Syrian Immigrant Students

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## Abstract

Providing people to acquire some skills and concepts, social studies lessons interact with various branches of science. One of them is citizenship education. When citizenship education is examined, it is seen that effective citizenship education comes to the forefront in present democracies. Concepts and issues such as respect for differences, empathy, globalization, cooperation, solidarity, identity, unity, and the feeling of togetherness are important considering immigrant students' acquiring citizenship awareness via intercultural interaction. The aim of this study is to determine the effect of social studies lessons on citizenship perceptions of 7<sup>th</sup> grade Syrian immigrant students. For this purpose, opinions of 14 Syrian immigrant students, who attended 7<sup>th</sup> grade in three different secondary schools in Hatay in 2019, were asked. The research was designed in qualitative design and phenomenology model. Purposive sampling method was used to determine Syrian immigrant students participating in the research. A semi-structured student interview form was used to collect data. It was found that, immigrant students in the study group of the research know their rights and responsibilities, respect the rights of others, feel responsible and have patriotism. They stated that citizenship education they received in social studies lessons contributed greatly to their acquisition of these values. Considering these findings, it was concluded that social studies lesson has an important effect on the formation of citizenship perceptions of Syrian immigrant students; enabling them to be connected with the environment they live in with a sense of belonging, while enabling them to become more sensitive and responsible citizens towards their environment.

**Keywords:** Social Studies, Citizenship, Citizenship Awareness, Immigration, Immigrant

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration, which has existed throughout the history of humanity, constitutes an important part of humans' struggle with themselves and the environment. People have constantly migrated to better places to live in a more peaceful and safer environment. The increasing continuation of these searches for the desire to reach better and more beautiful conditions indicates that the phenomenon of migration has sustained its effect and importance in every period of human history (Castles and Miller, 2008). As a result of migration movements, people and societies that come into contact with each other and unite form a multicultural structure. Accordingly, today it has become difficult to mention a social structure or a country made up of a single culture or a single ethnic

origin. Therefore, education comes to the forefront as the most important factor facilitating the coexistence of individuals and societies that have mingled with each other by immigrating. Education is a set of systems that ensures the continuity and development of a society's culture and helps the state to which it is affiliated to provide acquisition of citizenship characteristics. In today's modern societies, education has an important place in terms of the continuity of the order and especially in terms of individuals' absorbing citizenship consciousness and adapting it to their lives. One of the most basic functions of education is to raise qualified and beneficial individuals who know their citizenship rights and duties. Therefore, educators have important responsibilities providing students acquire these qualities and grow them as effective citizens. In many studies, the importance of citizenship and raising effective citizens is mentioned and it is stated that because of this importance it is extremely vital to transform an effective citizenship into a lifestyle. Education and training period has an important place in shaping the life of the individual. In this period, personality structures of individuals are also shaped. As the personality structures of individuals are shaped, the awareness of responsibility and citizenship also develops. The thoughts and skills they acquire in this process will help them in their future lives.

The necessary knowledge and skills related to citizenship can be acquired by the citizenship education, which is taught within the scope of the social studies lessons to the primary school Syrian immigrant students that live in Turkey. Social studies, which is a lesson for primary school students, aims to raise effective and productive citizens who know the traditions and customs of the society they live in, know their roles and responsibilities well (Demircioğlu, 2007). In addition, it is a teaching program that combines the knowledge and methods obtained from social and human sciences with the aim of raising effective citizens who can make decisions on the basis of knowledge of the conditions that differ in almost every aspect and overcome problems (Öztürk, 2006). It can also be defined as a citizenship education program that can combine the findings obtained from social sciences and reduce it to the level of the student, and that aims to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in order to adapt to social life and produce solutions for social problems by using these findings (Öztürk, Keskin, Otluoğlu, 2014). Social studies is a lesson based on scientific facts and aims to raise active citizens who have acquired skills, behaviors, positive attitudes and values instead of giving information to students concerning these scientific facts (Kuş, 2012). The most important feature that an active citizen must have is to adopt the values of citizenship and to live in line with these values. In order to achieve this, people must be given a good citizenship education. In Turkey, citizenship education is given to primary school students within the scope of social studies lessons. Therefore, subjects related to democracy and citizenship education have an important place in social studies lessons taught in primary schools. The purpose of teaching social studies as citizenship transfer is to convey the basic institutions, values, beliefs and teachings of the society in which they live. In this context, learning about the past, being proud of traditions, taking responsibility, showing appropriate behaviors and commitment are among the objectives to be conveyed (Öztürk, 2006).

Via this research, it is aimed to determine what Syrian immigrant students know and think about citizenship and the education they receive in Turkey, their tendencies and the variables that affect these ideas, in short, to determine their perceptions of citizenship. An important part of the knowledge, skills and values related to the life of the society is given to students studying in the Turkish education system via social studies lessons. Considering the development of the social studies lesson, which is seen as a tool in citizenship education, it is known that many values are involved in its content and these values are reflected in the curriculum. Therefore, what is the knowledge of Syrian immigrant students who came from abroad and continued their education taking social studies lessons at primary school level during their time in our country, about citizenship issues, and how is the importance they attribute to these issues, their perceptions of citizenship, and their citizenship behaviors?

In line with this problem, answers to the following questions were searched.

1. What are the expressions of Syrian immigrant students regarding citizenship concept considering what they learned from social studies lesson?
2. How do Syrian immigrant students express what their citizenship rights are considering their social studies lesson acquisitions?
3. How do Syrian immigrant students describe the characteristics that a good citizen must have today, considering the acquisitions in social studies lessons?

4. What are the opinions of Syrian immigrant students about being more sensitive and responsible citizens towards society?
5. What are the recommendations for solving problems related to the use of citizenship rights experienced by Syrian immigrant students?

## 2. Method

In this research, the phenomenology design, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was taken as the basis. The phenomenology design was used because it aims to reveal the citizenship perceptions of Syrian immigrant students, whether they can use their citizenship rights democratically, and their experiences and feelings regarding this issue. The phenomenological design focuses on the phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding. Phenomena can appear in various forms such as events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts and situations in the world we live in (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In addition, if the circumstances of the phenomenon under investigation are informative, in-depth information from a small group of people may be more valuable than limited information from a large sample. Slighter information obtained from a large number of people can be helpful in determining the boundaries of a phenomenon and examining different situations or understanding their changes (Bryman, 2007). In phenomenological research, sample selection and application strategies are in a quite narrow range, and all participants in the sample must have had experienced the phenomenon or had contact with people who have experienced the phenomenon being studied (Rolfe, 2006). Phenomenology samples are usually selected from a group with a certain characteristic (teachers, convicts, abused people, etc.) (Staruss & Corbin, 2014). If the characteristics of the participants are very different from each other, it will be difficult to determine the principles and main themes that will emerge from the experiences of research participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Researchers who conduct phenomenological research generally prefer the purposive sampling method, as they will need items that have experienced a certain phenomenon (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). In the literature it is stated that the number of items that will constitute the sample can vary between 5 and 25 (Creswell, 2013; Neuman, 2014; Patton, 2005; Rubin & Babbie, 2016).

### 2.1. Study Group

In phenomenological research, there are studies with samples that range from one person (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to 325 people (Neuman, 2014). The study group of the research consists of 14 Syrian immigrant students who were studying in 7<sup>th</sup> grade in three schools affiliated to Hatay Provincial Directorate of National Education between September 2019 and December 2019 and they voluntarily accepted to answer the questions. Purposive sampling method was used to determine Syrian immigrant students. Purposive sampling is the purposive classification of systematic and randomly selected case samples in line with the purpose of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). It is conducted in order to access richer data than the situations determined by sampling and to increase the credibility of the research (Flick, 2014). There are three factors in the purposive sampling selection approach used in qualitative research: (1) deciding who will be selected as the sample (or places) for the study, (2) the characteristic sampling methods, and (3) the size of the sample to be studied (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The reason why the research was preferred to be conducted with 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students is the presence of citizenship-related topics in social studies lessons in 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades and the knowledge and skills these students acquired in other lessons. Participants consist of 11 male and 3 female students. These students were between the ages of 13 and 15, and all of them were Syrian immigrant students who started school in Turkey. In addition, female students in the study group were coded as “F” and male students as “M” and their real names were kept confidential.

### 2.2. Data Collection Tools

In the study, semi-structured interviews were made with Syrian immigrant students to collect data. Semi-structured student interview form was used. At the beginning of the study, firstly, the literature revealing the connection among social studies, citizenship, immigration and citizenship education was scanned. After

examining studies in the related literature, a semi-structured student interview form was prepared by the researcher. The prepared interview form was examined by two academicians who are experts in the field of social studies and a Turkish educator, and the pilot study of the prepared interview form was carried out with two participants. The final form of the semi-structured interview form was prepared after pilot application was carried out. Students participating in the pilot application were not included in the study.

### *2.3. Data Collection Process*

In data collection step, the first interview was held when the participants agreed to be interviewed. The participants were informed that the study would be used for scientific purposes and their identities would be kept confidential. Preliminary interviews were conducted with 3 students studying in 7<sup>th</sup> grade of secondary school in order to understand whether they understood the questions correctly or not and after it was observed that the students correctly understood and answered the questions, interviews were held with other participants who agreed to be interviewed. In addition, these interviews were held in the most comfortable and quiet environment in schools where participants were attending.

### *2.4. Analysis of Data*

The data obtained from the interviews were reported by conducting descriptive analysis. Direct quotations from the participants' expressions were included while using descriptive approach.

### *2.5. Reliability and Validity in Research*

A common strategy for building reliability is member check or member questioning. This strategy, which is also called participant verification, predicts reaching some of the people interviewed or who was provided with the data and asking them for feedback regarding the findings that emerge (Merriam, 2013). While detailed descriptions were used in the analysis of raw data, direct quotations were frequently used in order to abide the data itself. By detailed description, readers will be allowed to picture the environment, in which the data was collected, in their minds. Considering validity of the research, data provided in interviews were evaluated and coding was made separately by the researcher and a lecturer who had comprehensive knowledge of qualitative research methods, consensus was considered in coding. For coding reliability calculation in the research reliability formula,  $[\text{Reliability} = \text{Agreement} / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement})]$  which was prepared by Miles and Huberman (1994) for qualitative studies, was used. Data obtained via interviews and coding are kept by the researcher for providing the opportunity for whom it may concern in order to be examined.

### *2.6 Assumption and Limitations*

It is suggested that Syrian immigrant students who participated in this research answered the measurement tool correctly, sources used in relevant literature section of the research are valid and reliable, validity and reliability of data obtained from semi-structured interview form that was used as data collection tool in the research is high, and Syrian immigrant students who participated in the research had a good command of Turkish. In addition, this research is limited to the interviews made with 14 Syrian immigrant students studying in 7<sup>th</sup> grade between September 2019 and December 2019, and also information and sharing including their experiences, perspectives, thoughts and evaluations. It is expected that the results will guide educators, families and researchers studying in this field.

## **3. Findings**

At the end of the interview data analysis, detailed information was obtained regarding citizenship perceptions of Syrian immigrant students of social studies education. Descriptive analysis was used in the analysis of the data obtained from the experiences and opinions of participants. Sub-categories formed as a result of the analysis are

presented below. The categories are; definition of citizenship concept, citizenship rights, good citizenship, adaptation to social environment as a citizen, suggestions for solving violations of citizenship rights.

### *3.1. Findings and Comments Regarding the Expressions of Syrian Immigrant Students About Citizenship Concept Considering What They Learned in Social Studies Lesson*

The analysis of the students' views regarding citizenship concept, considering their acquisitions in the environment they live after they emigrated from their country is given under this headline. The students evaluated citizenship concept in terms of universal values. Social studies education also emphasizes universal values in terms of its content. Citizenship values indicate universal characteristics although slight changes can be seen in some cases according to circumstances. Social studies education is directly related to the concept of citizenship. To put it more explicitly, conscious citizens can be raised when students are enabled to comprehend the concept of citizenship effectively in social studies teaching. All of the students, who participated in the interviews, emphasized universal values in terms of citizenship concept. Using similar expressions in terms of universal values of citizenship M-3, M-6, M-7, M-8, M-10, M-11, M-12, M-13, emphasized the concepts of respect, honesty, helpfulness, tolerance, freedom of thought and equality. Emphasizing the concept of peace, which is universally accepted for the whole world M-9 stated that *"I came to Turkey with my family from Syria because of war. We want to be citizens here, it would be better if people were more attentive to their surroundings. If they pay attention to traffic rules, if they pay attention to each other, the whole world will live in peace and no one will hurt each other."* Emphasizing the equality of men and women, which is a different dimension of the concept of equality, and the right to vote F-1 stated that *"Women must be given the right to vote, there must be no such thing as discrimination between people, and everyone must have rights: women and men must be equal."*

F-2, emphasized the right to education, which is the most natural right of people who have had an impact on people in political and social problems *"The right is not given to a woman in Syria, if given it is only 50%. Families would not send their children to school because there was terror there (in Syria). But everyone must be given rights."* Considering the quotation it is seen that people come from a social structure where even the most basic rights of women and girls are not exercised, and that this social structure can be improved with equality and education. While the concept of citizenship is used as a legal term, expressing that the concept of citizenship is not only a legal concept, but also a bond F-14 defined the concept of citizenship *"My future, my school, my family, my mother, my father it means everything; most importantly our home."* The concept of citizenship, which has an important place in social studies education, is important in terms of showing that it creates a sense of belonging to one's country and society, and how strong citizenship is considering geography.

### *3.2. Findings And Comments On The Citizenship Rights Of Syrian Immigrant Students According To Their Social Studies Lesson Acquisitions*

Considering the students' views, the answers given to the question of what their rights are according to their acquisitions in the social studies lesson are analyzed in this part. M-11, M-12, and M-13 use similar expressions and consider the right to citizenship as the right to education and the right to freedom. In the changing world, internet and social media networks are now accepted as citizenship rights. F-1 stated that *"I log on to Internet networks, for example Facebook, 1 hour a day, to talk to my friends, etc."* and F-2 stated that *"I don't use social media, but I log on conversation rooms, log on Whatsapp or Viber, look at my friends' pages and talk."* By means of social media networks that have entered our life, people can make friends in many different parts of the world; they can exchange information share common feelings, hobbies, fun activities and different cultures. In short, this situation can be called globalization in social media.

Individuals have private and indispensable rights that they have since birth. These are the rights that protect individuals against society and state. Different from these, individuals have rights that make it possible to demand certain things and attitudes from the society and state. The answer given by M-7, who is Syrian but came to Turkey from Jordan, to this question about human rights is very meaningful; *"Even though we were of*

*the same religion, they were oppressing us, so people must be free. We were illegally watching movies that were banned in Syria. That's why people couldn't have their basic rights. We had to cut our hair the way they wanted, we must wear freely.*” Demanding rights can be seen as individual's doing something and asking others to do something. However it can only be achieved by law. F-14 stated that *“Going to school, the state must listen to us. We must also fulfill our responsibilities towards our homeland.”* As F-14 expressed, both the state and the citizens have responsibilities and duties towards each other. These duties are regulated by the constitution, which forms the basis of the countries, and the constitution guarantees the rights and duties of individuals towards the state and the state's duties towards the individual. M-6 stated that *“People must participate in social activities, do activities at school, read the books they want, there must be no sectarian discrimination, but they threatened us. Because we are Sunni, we could not live comfortably and freely in our country.”* There are values that originate from humanity. Identities and differences of human beings must not be considered as a means of exclusion, but as the richness of common life. If individuals can create common grounds built around common values, freedom can be protected and sustained. If there is no freedom, there is no country, and no citizenship. It can be stated that if there is no citizenship, there is no right.

### *3.3. Findings and Comments Regarding the Characteristics of a Good Citizen Today According to Acquisitions of Syrian Immigrant Students in Social Studies Lesson*

Almost all of the students participating in the research emphasized social and moral dimensions of citizenship. Few students mentioned the sectarian discrimination and patriotism dimension of citizenship. M-6, who left his country because of the war, stated that, *“There must be love for the state, no war and poverty, no sectarian separation. There is war in Syria, we escaped from war. I don't want to go back to Syria anymore. I want to go to Europe or America with my family.”* In this way, he revealed the extent of the sectarian discrimination he experienced in his country. M-3 stated that *“It must be a person who can share everything with everyone and must not consider himself or herself superior. It must be a social person and must be patriotic. He must fulfill duties.”* M-4 stated that *“He must be honest, fair, respectful, and aware of his responsibilities.”* M-5 stated that *“Must be honest, fair, see everyone equally, and respect.”* M-9 stated that *“He must be careful, smart, respectful, clean and meticulous outside in the street as he is at home and he must obey the rules. He must take care of others as he protects his brother, mother, and father.”* M-10 stated that *“He must be respectful, must help everyone and fulfill his duties.”* F-1 stated that *“He has to be respectful. He mustn't kill anyone. He must do his duty.”* F-2 stated that *“To be a good citizen, one must not swear, must be respectful, fair and tolerant.”*

Considering these findings, it can be suggested that students primarily perceive people that adopt social and moral values approved by society as good citizens. Most of the students participating in the research consider people who have basic moral values accepted by the society as good citizens. Most of the students emphasized the basic values that a good citizen must have as honesty, responsibility, justice, tolerance, respect and loyalty to the country. In addition, very few students consider people who can share with their environment and keep their environment clean as good citizens. Most of the students emphasized that a good citizen must be honest, respectful and tolerant. The second emphasized fundamental value is responsibility and equality.

### *3.4. Findings and Comments Regarding the Opinions of Syrian Immigrant Students on Being a More Sensitive and Responsible Citizen Towards the Society*

Social studies education provides awareness. Our prejudices result from interpreting the situations we encounter from our own perspective. When we recognize a phenomenon and have a detailed knowledge of it, our prejudices about that phenomenon may disappear. Elimination of prejudices creates tolerance among students. In this context, being aware of differences and accepting them as natural reinforce the bond among students. Similarities and differences between cultures are revealed more easily. From this point of view, while similarities connect students and reduce differences among them, recognizing cultural differences makes people respect these differences. This strengthens the friendship among students. It creates unity and solidarity among students. Citizenship education is important in terms of reducing these differences and strengthening the bond among students. In other words, one of the aims of citizenship education, which has an important place in social

studies lesson, is to bring together the differences and to synthesize different cultural components on a common ground. Information that will reveal the analysis given above is expressed by student M-4: *"I spend time playing basketball, volleyball, jumping rope, football, games we play in the classroom, and have barbecue with my friends."* M-7 stated that *"I have internet at home. I see my school mates on SKYPE, I play football with my friends, and we go outside."* F-14 *"I just came here, but I want to participate in sports activities at school. I want to learn Turkish better. I want to go to Turkish language lesson."*

It is seen that by actively participating in social environment of school via activities they join at school and social media, Syrian immigrant students are not different from other students and they can meet at a common point by doing the same activities. Everyone is free in democratic communities, but this freedom is not infinite. In other words, every freedom has a limit and in democratic communities these limits are provided by rules. As long as these rules are followed, the peace and welfare of the society will increase and it will be easier and faster to tolerate, accept and socialize the differences among people. Supporting this analysis, participant M-6 expressed that *"I am reading books to learn Turkish. I am trying to learn the rules in Turkey. I get information from my friends about rules in Turkey; I learn the rules at school."* Almost half of the students emphasized that adapting to social environment consists of behaviors such as helping each other, cultural awareness among people, responsibility, equality, honesty and being respectful. It is seen that they feel responsible towards society and try to adapt by acting in line with these principles in adapting to social environment. M-9 stated that *"If all people treat each other well, there will be no problem. I help my friend with lessons, we plant flowers in our garden, and we water the flowers."* M-12 stated that *"I don't throw away garbage; I throw it in the trash bin. I help my friends with their homework that they cannot do."* F-1 stated that *"A person who helps everyone, I mean helpful. He or she has to be responsible."* M-8 stated that *"Respectful, honest, helpful. He or she must not consider himself or herself superior to others. It must not be forgotten that everyone is equal."* M-11 stated that *"I treat my friends well, I help people. I keep my environment clean."* M-10 stated that *"I have to work hard for education. I must get along better with my family. I treat the people around me respectfully; people must treat well and love each other. They must be helpful."*

### *3.5 Findings and Comments Regarding the Recommendations of Syrian Immigrant Students to Solve the Problems About the Use of Right to Citizenship*

Syrian immigrant students F-14, M-13, M-11, M-6, M-5 F-1 and F-2, who participated in the interview, stated that they had language problems in their first year in Turkey and that they went to language lessons to overcome this problem. They also expressed that they received help from the translators at school. F-2 *"I would like to stay in Turkey and vote like others. I would like to study and have a profession. Newly arrived Syrian citizens must attend a lesson to learn Turkish. I would like an interpreter for newcomers in hospitals, schools, police stations, so their problems can be solved."*

Another problem is the issue of respect among students. Being a stranger to the culture in the geography where one lives is the cause of this problem. Even if people are created equally, the most important factor that separates people from each other is their cultural differences. These differences cause undesirable behaviors among students. M-4 stated that *"First, people can be respectful to each other. There must be love also otherwise there will always be trouble. Everyone must be equal in school."* It is seen that there is a problem of respect among students and this situation can be resolved by providing equality among students. Among students who participated in the interview, problems such as economic and education constitute a great source of concern for the future lives of students. In order to overcome this problem, it is essential to provide financial support and a good education. M-8 stated that *"Our house was sold, we had to move out of the house and the United Nations did not help us."* M-12 stated that *"I want to get a good education and become an engineer, for this I want to get a good education. I want to be given a good education."*



#### 4. Results and Recommendations

The results and recommendations about the effect of social studies lesson regarding citizenship perceptions of Syrian immigrant students are given under this headline.

##### *4.1. Syrian Immigrant Students' Expression Results Regarding Citizenship Concept According to What They Learned in Social Studies Lesson*

Syrian immigrant students considered neighborhood relations within the concept of citizenship in Syria. In addition, it is observed that there is a relationship between the problems students encounter in the country they come from and the answers they give, accordingly they emphasized the concepts of patriotism, love and peace. When the findings were examined, it was seen that the values that participants acquired in social studies lesson were universal, that active participation in society change in parallel with the needs of age, and participation in society occurs with the innovations brought by technology gradually getting rid of traditional methods. In the study of Göz (2010), it was concluded that the category in which teachers have the most knowledge and behavior is concepts such as "Democracy: Respect and Equality." On the other hand in this research considering the students' acquisitions in social studies lessons it is seen that students emphasized concepts such as peace, war, honesty, and respect in their answers to the question what must be the qualities that a good citizen must have today. It was observed that participant students had difficulty expressing themselves and taking advantage of their rights in acquiring citizenship awareness. In this respect, it was concluded that these difficulties can be resolved with an effective social studies education. Ersoy and Öztürk, (2015) examined the perception of patriotism as a citizenship value by social studies teacher candidates in terms of democracy and human rights, and it was seen that the importance of equality and tolerance concepts was emphasized. As a result of the research, it was determined that the concepts such as tolerance, equality, the right to elect and be elected, respect and love, which are universally common values, were emphasized in students' definitions of citizenship concept. In this respect, it was concluded that universal values are common in different cultures in both studies.

##### *4.2. Results Regarding What Citizenship Rights Are According to Syrian Immigrant Students' Social Studies Lesson Outcomes and How They Exemplify*

Social studies education, which has a relationship with different disciplines, has a great role in raising conscious, sensitive and responsible citizens. Culture is the most important element that shapes a society. In addition, the form of life and elements, attitudes and values while acquiring this form may be common among cultures (Kösoğlu, 1997). In today's multicultural societies, students need to adopt the cultural values of the society. Social studies lesson is important in terms of learning citizenship rights and duties. Korkmaz, (2015) stated that social media, which emerged as a new media understanding, has increased communication and interaction between people. It has also removed the limitation of time and space between people. In their study, Christakis and Fowler (2012) stated that face-to-face communication was used in social relations for thousands of years, however technology has changed this situation via inventions such as letters, telegraph and telephone calls, various ways of disseminating information and ways of communicating among people at long distances. In this study, results that were similar to the findings of Korkmaz, Christakis, and Fowler were obtained. It was observed that foreign students use social networks. People around us, such as relatives, reference groups, friends and teachers, also have an important place in the formation and preservation of people's attitudes (Sakallı, 2001). Similar results were obtained in this study. It was observed that Syrian immigrant students are influenced by the people around them. Syrian immigrant students, who have been in our country for a long time, have established friendships with Turkish students and made themselves accepted in the school environment.

##### *4.3. Results Regarding How Syrian Immigrant Students Explain the Characteristics of a Good Citizen Based on the Acquisitions of Social Studies Lesson*

Social studies lesson aims to eliminate the adaptation problem of students. It guides students for solving the problems they encountered and aims to prepare students for the future and to raise effective citizens who are

sensitive to events that occur around them. It is possible to define an effective citizen as a thinking, sensitive and competent citizen (Öztürk & Dilek, 2004). It was determined that majority of the participants generally emphasized differences, respect, to elect and be elected, and doing favors regarding citizenship rights in Syria. Some of the participants stated that they came to Turkey through a second country and that they were not respected in the countries they came from. In this way, it was concluded that they have no sense of belonging to these second countries mentioned. These emotional and relational commitments, which increase or decrease in parallel thanks to mutual interactions, are important for societies and cultures (Alptekin, 2011). It can be stated that this opinion was confirmed in this study. When the participants were asked about their citizenship opinion after they came to our country, they emphasized universal values such as love, equality, and the right to elect and be elected. Raising good citizens has been the general aim of the education system implemented by countries (Safran, 2014). While the aims of social studies programs implemented in Turkey are evaluated as being suitable for the purpose of raising global citizens; schools and teachers need to be renewed more in the education system in order to raise global citizen awareness (Kan, 2009). When the research findings were examined, it was concluded that Syrian immigrant students were willing to try to overcome adaptation problem in society with citizenship education systematically given at school. Aydın (2011) states that a human is a social being and he or she needs to experience a regular socialization process in order to continue his or her life in a healthy way, and family is the first step of this process. In the research, it was seen that students had difficulties in socializing, the families' inability to socialize at the desired level negatively affected the children attending school, and Syrian students remained shy in the society. Thanks to developing technology, our world has now turned into a "digital village". People have contacted with different cultures. Accordingly, universal values that are accepted all over the world have emerged. In order to teach these universal values, citizenship education has great importance within the scope of social studies lesson. Citizenship education globally means raising individuals, who aware of intercultural interaction by tolerating and accepting differences among cultures, acting with a sense of devotion to whole world and to whole humanity as well as to their own country without losing their identity and self, in order to overcome global problems being aware of the fact that with responsibility their little effort can reach great results (Çolak, 2015). Raising citizens with a sense of responsibility is among the objectives of social studies lessons. However, Syrian immigrant students are slower to acquire this awareness compared to Turkish students due to both physical conditions of schools and social prejudices. Considering the findings of the research, it can be stated that there is need for social awareness in overcoming prejudices and raising awareness regarding this issue by reaching the large mass of the society via media publications. The basic characteristic that a good citizen must have is respecting the rights and freedoms of others as much as himself or herself and sustaining it for life. Social studies education must prevent the formation of prejudices by raising awareness of different cultures, and religious, sectarian and ethnic conflicts by bringing individuals together while revealing the common points of citizens in the society.

#### *4.4. Results of Syrian Immigrant Students' Opinions Regarding Being a More Sensitive and Responsible Citizen Towards Society*

It was observed that Syrian immigrant students participating in the research were not actively involved in non-governmental organizations and did not mention this issue. The lack of participation of Syrian immigrant students in non-governmental organizations indicates that the concept of active citizenship has not developed. The solidarity of the people who constitute communities has emerged with a shared value and belief, and it is the common design of both commitment to the land and the country (Duverger, 2011). In the research, it was concluded that Syrian immigrant students see their future in Turkey, adapt to community, adopt the culture and want to stay in Turkey. It is seen that recognizing the similarities and differences between the society and individuals of Syrian immigrant students will provide an environment of solidarity and tolerance. It was concluded that an immigrant student who adapts to social environment will contribute more to society in the future. In parallel with the ability of countries to examine beliefs and values, some affective purposes have been attributed to citizenship education. Development of national pride and patriotism is the primary purpose (Öztürk, Keskin, Otluoğlu, 2014).

Hereby, especially the effective citizenship and patriotism qualification acquired by students will be protecting the rights and freedoms of others as well as themselves and maintaining an effective understanding of democracy. The meaning attributed to social studies education in contemporary communities is not to transfer the knowledge to students via statements, on the contrary, it is aimed to raise students who can reach information and use the information they reach (Demircioğlu, 2007). Providing citizenship awareness and patriotism to be acquired by students is important for the future of Turkey. As long as the war and turmoil in Turkey's neighboring countries continue, the search for a country where people can feel safe will continue. Providing a good education for the children of these immigrants is important in order to enable them to acquire citizenship awareness and develop their sense of belonging. The contribution of citizenship acquired in social studies lessons must prevent the formation of prejudices by creating awareness among students. It must bring students closer to each other while revealing the different and similar characteristics of societies. People must respect differences. Religious, sectarian and ethnic conflicts must be avoided. This is only possible when students respect the rights and freedoms of other people in the society. It is important for the peace of society that students live with these acquired values. In the research findings, it was concluded that Syrian immigrant students respect the rights and freedoms of other citizens in the society, they know the similarities and differences among students from different cultures, and so there is an atmosphere of tolerance at school.

#### *4.5. Conclusions Regarding the Recommendations of Syrian Immigrant Students for Solving the Problems Regarding the Use of Right to Citizenship*

Some Syrian immigrant students stated that when they first came to Turkey, they had difficulties in making friends, adapting to social environment, and language, in addition because of prejudices in society they had very few friends and did not like being alone. In the light of these findings, it was concluded that Syrian immigrant students had difficulties in adapting to social environment when they first came to Turkey. In Bilgili's (2016) study, which is titled "Being a Foreign Student at İnönü University: An Ethnographic Research," it was stated that foreign students who have not adapted to social environment yet have difficulties in making friendship and prefer to be together with students coming from their own countries. These results are in line with the results of this study. In addition, it was concluded that male students preferred sports in order to socialize and make themselves accepted among their friends, but they did not engage in social activities. In the study of Talimciler (2012) it was stated that sports teaches people to obey rules, fulfill the given responsibilities, team spirit, working in cooperation and solidarity, competition, respect to the opponent and self at a young age and in addition it was found that when the sport is performed in groups it is an important activity in terms of belonging, social environment and indicating how power relations works. Similar results were found in this study. Participants complained about the prejudiced approaches towards immigrants. It is emphasized that being well-intentioned is a must for social harmony, and when there is no respect and tolerance, the feeling of alienation from the society will emerge. The idea that trust, respect and tolerance must be considered as the basis for an equal society has gained importance. Together with participatory democracy, which has developed in Turkey and in the world in recent years, the concept of civil society has also been discussed and the importance of these organizations has gradually increased. Non-governmental organizations, which are among the actors of participatory democracy and active citizenship, act as a bridge between the state and the citizen. Non-governmental organizations play an intermediary role in conveying the opinions and thoughts of society to the state and in conveying the policies implemented or desired by the state to the public (Usta, 2006).

The majority of the participants emphasized that they had language problems in the first years they came to Turkey and emphasized the importance of language learning. Being in contact with people provides intercultural interaction. While the participants emphasized language, they also expressed the opinion that Turkish must be learned in order to ensure the continuity of daily life and to adapt to social life. As a matter of fact, in Er, Biçer and Bozkırlı's (2012) study, which is titled "Evaluation Of The Problems Encountered In Teaching Turkish To Foreigners In The Light Of The Relevant Literature" it was found that the existence of problems such as lack of equipment, insufficient program, problems regarding students and lecturer in training Turkish teachers, technological handicaps, and the limitation of resources that can be used in teaching as a language were mentioned, and it was concluded that the difficulties in teaching Turkish and the problems of immigrants who

learn Turkish are similar. In İbrahimoglu's (2014) study which is titled "Citizenship and Citizenship Education in Turkey According to Non-Muslim Minorities" it was found that in Turkey while there are practices that help minorities to learn their first language, there are also countries where the situation is just the opposite. It was concluded that in addition to their first language education Syrian immigrant students must have the opportunity to learn the official language well in the country they live in, in order to have a proper and permanent harmony with the society they live in. In addition, in the study it was seen that Syrian immigrant students were willing to learn Turkish. In the study of Arslan (2014), which examined the opinions of teachers and students regarding citizenship education in multicultural societies, it was seen that the language in which the education is given at schools is very important in terms of realizing target behaviors in classrooms where students from different cultures are educated. In the study, it was concluded that Syrian immigrant students have language problems in and out of school. From this point of view, the findings of both studies indicate overlapping qualities.

Recommendations made based on the results of the research:

1. In-school and out-of-school activities must be organized to activate the knowledge and skills that will create citizenship awareness in Social Studies lessons.
2. Studies must be carried out to gain awareness, tolerance, respect and understanding that other people can be different by getting to know people from different cultures.
3. Seminars must be organized to inform teachers and teacher candidates about the phenomenon of multiculturalism so that students with different cultural backgrounds living in Turkey do not feel excluded.
4. Language lessons can be opened for students studying at schools via public education centers and schools.
5. Publications must be made in the written and visual media creating awareness that people from different cultures exist.
6. This study can be repeated by being supported by quantitative findings.

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