

Social Studies Teacher Candidates' Opinions about Digital Citizenship and its Place in Social Studies Teacher Training Program: A Comparison between the USA and Turkey*

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine and compare what social studies teacher candidates living in two different countries think about digital citizenship and its place within social studies and social studies teacher training program and to produce suggestions concerning digital citizenship education. Having a descriptive design, this research has employed a data collection tool developed in accordance with qualitative research method and consisting of open and closed-end questions directed to figure out teacher candidates' opinions about digital citizenship and its place in both social studies and social studies teacher training programs. The participants of the study are a total of 14 American (7 females-7 males) senior teacher candidates studying at Social Studies Teacher Training Program of a university located in East North Central region of the Midwestern United States and 51 Turkish (28 females-23 males) senior teacher candidates studying at Social Studies Teacher Training Program of a university located in the Central Anatolian Region of Turkey. Data collection took place in the spring term of 2012-2013 in both universities simultaneously. Research data has been analyzed through content analysis. Research findings have yielded that social studies teacher candidates participating from two different countries think that social studies course holds a major position with respect to digital citizenship education and that this course should be integrated with digital citizenship education. However, social studies teacher candidates in both countries have reported that either there are no topics or themes about digital citizenship within social studies course or they are insufficient and shallow. This study includes several suggestions concerning the incorporation of topics and themes about digital citizenship into social studies teacher training program.

Keywords: Social studies, digital citizenship, teacher candidate

INTRODUCTION

Together with the development of digital technologies, people's way of life and their interaction with each other and with the world have entered into a rapid transformation process (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008). Especially digitalization process in almost every aspect of daily life has led citizenship and relevant concepts to a technology based transformation (Isin & Ruppert 2015). In this sense, a new citizenship referred as digital citizenship (Ribble 2006; ISTE [International Society for Technology in Education], 2007; Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal, 2008; Churches, Crockett & Jukes, 2010; Greenhow, 2010; Farmer, 2010; Knorr, 2010) has taken its place within the literature.

ISTE (2007) defines digital citizenship as "to advocate and practice behaviors that enable legal, ethical, safe, and responsible use of info-communication technologies in online settings". Another definition of digital citizenship is to consider basic norms while using technology and act accordingly (Ribble and Bailey 2007). Digital citizens, on the other hand, are those "who have the skill to read, write, comprehend, and refer what they see online, who own broad-band access compatible with their economic limits, and who use the Internet regularly and efficiently" (Mossberger, Tolbert & McNeal, 2008). Farmer (2010) states that digital citizens can filter electronic information appropriately, participate in the cyber-space effectively, and who can make use of the information they learn online wisely in order for both personal and social development. Digital citizens think before acting, take the consequences into account, display a good command of ethics, and are aware of both risks and benefits of access to online materials (Churches, Crockett & Jukes, 2010). According to Knorr (2010), practicing safe and responsible behaviors on the Internet is the key indicator of a well-established digital citizenship. The common points of all these definitions emphasize having access to the Internet and using it ethically and appropriately.

Ribble (2006) notes that digital citizenship has 9 dimensions which are ethics, access, law, literacy, communication, commerce, rights & responsibilities, privacy & safety, and health & wellness. Likewise, Jones & Mitchell (2015) state that the concept of digital citizenship refers to a wide range of target and that digital citizenship can be considered as responsible behaviors while using the Internet and partaking in Internet use

(online citizen participation). All these classifications are endeavors to meet ever-increasing need for digital citizenship education sufficiently since integration of digital technologies including mobile and social media tools has a deep impact over the lives of current students throughout the whole world along with the debate over digital citizenship and if any digital citizenship model exists or not (Searson, Hancock, Soheil, & Shepherd, 2015).

Children of the 21st century are growing at a time when use of the Internet becomes more and more common, and this easy access to information and sources of information introduces these children with both advantages and disadvantages of digital world (Hao, 2010). Digital world and the Internet furnish children with unique creativity and communication skills that make the entire planet more accessible at a very early age (Common Sense Media, 2009). Therefore, statistics show that students use the Internet very often, and this use is elevating rapidly day by day (Hollandsworth, Dowdy & Donovan, 2011). Miles (2011) underlines that keeping children away from digital and media culture makes them vulnerable against misuse of these technologies, and that children should be taught how to make reasonable decisions in online settings just as they are advised about how to make good decisions to be safe by their families and schools. Thus, Miles (2011) emphasizes that children should not be restricted from the advantages of the Internet due to potential dangers, rather they should be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to explore the virtual reality safely and responsibly, and that the concept of rights and responsibilities should be expanded from the real world onto the Internet world.

A major part of responsibility falls onto families, educators, and educational institutions in terms of providing knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to explore the digital world. A digital citizenship terminology should be created by joint policies, standards, and a new understanding (Perle, 2009; Greenhow, 2010; Hollandsworth, Dowdy & Donovan, 2011; Searson, Hancock, Soheil, & Shepherd, 2015). It is a challenging process to develop a common understanding and to raise digital citizens, and students need especially the leadership of their teachers in the digital world (Nebel, Jamison, & Bennett, 2009). In this regard, teachers should strive to furnish their students with knowledge, skills, concepts, values, and attitudes in accordance with digital citizenship model.

As for Ribble (2006), one of the things that should be done for digital citizenship is that issues and skills related with digital citizenship should not be confined to computer laboratories, rather they should be incorporated into all disciplines and they should be indispensable components of all courses. Searson et.al (2015) underscore that digital citizenship should be integrated with all fundamental courses. Social studies is one of the courses that digital citizenship can be taught effectively. A study by Karaduman and Ozturk (2014) concludes that activities designed for digital citizenship and conducted within social studies course have a statistically significant effect over students' attitudes with respect to ethics & responsibilities, communication, privacy & safety, rights, and access. Including digital citizenship activities within social studies course, employing those activities efficiently, being a role model, and knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes of both social studies teachers and social studies teacher candidates are considered meaningful in terms of enhancing this positive effect. In this sense, it is of great importance for especially social studies teacher candidates to have the competence to conduct digital citizenship education.

Berson and Balyta (2004) note that advances and innovations in technology require making amendments on social studies teacher training programs and integrating technology into teacher training programs in a way to enhance both teaching and learning. Similarly, Bennett and Scholes (2001) report that teacher candidates cannot utilize technology during learning and teaching activities if there is no sample integrated into their professional courses. Thus, integrating digital citizenship into social studies teacher training programs and providing teacher candidates with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes are crucial for future practices.

Though literature holds both theoretical and empirical research studies focusing on digital citizenship within teacher training (Lee, 2006; Thieman, 2011; Sincar, 2012; Isman & Gungoren, 2013; Kaya & Kaya, 2014; Isman & Gungoren, 2014; Correa, Aberasturi-Apraiz & Gutierrez-Cabello, 2016), there is no specific study investigating what social studies teacher candidates think about digital citizenship and its place within both social studies course and social studies teacher training program. This research aims to determine and compare what social studies teacher candidates living in two different countries think about digital citizenship and its place within social studies and social studies teacher training program and to produce suggestions concerning digital citizenship education. Answers have been sought for the following questions:

1. What do social studies teacher candidates living in the USA and Turkey think about digital citizenship?
 - 1.1. How do social studies teacher candidates define digital citizenship?

- 1.2. According to social studies teacher candidates, what are the characteristics and skills that digital citizens should have?
- 1.3. How do social studies teacher candidates assess themselves in terms of digital citizenship?
2. What do social studies teacher candidates living in the USA and Turkey think about the place of digital citizenship in social studies course?
 - 2.1. What do social studies teacher candidates think about activities and practices that can be employed within social studies course for digital citizenship education?
 - 2.2. What do social studies teacher candidates think about the roles and responsibilities of social studies teachers in digital citizenship education?
3. What do American and Turkish social studies teacher candidates think about the place of digital citizenship within Social Studies Teacher Training Programs?

METHOD

Having a descriptive design, this research has employed a data collection tool developed in accordance with qualitative research method and consisting of open and closed-end questions directed to figure out teacher candidates’ opinions regarding the reflection of technology onto values.

Participants

The participants of the study are a total of 14 American (7 females-7 males) senior teacher candidates studying at Social Studies Teacher Training Program of a university located in East North Central region of the Midwestern United States and 51 Turkish (28 females-23 males) senior teacher candidates studying at Social Studies Teacher Training Program of a university located in the Central Anatolian Region of Turkey. Relevant demographic information about the participants are given in Table 1:

Table 1. Demographic Features of American and Turkish Social Studies Teacher Candidates

| | | USA | | TURKEY | |
|--|-------------------|----------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Answer | Response | % | Response | % |
| The number of personal computers (desktop/ laptop/ tablet) owned by the teacher candidates | 1 | 8 | 57 | 43 | 84 |
| | 2 | 4 | 29 | 6 | 12 |
| | 3 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 4 |
| | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | More | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 14 | 100 | 51 | 100 |
| The teacher candidates’ responses regarding how long they have been using the Internet | 0-2 years | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| | 2-4 years | 0 | 0 | 13 | 25 |
| | 4-6 years | 1 | 7 | 12 | 24 |
| | 6-8 years | 0 | 0 | 9 | 18 |
| | More than 8 years | 13 | 93 | 15 | 29 |
| | Total | 14 | 100 | 51 | 100 |
| The daily amount of time dedicated to internet use by the teacher candidates | 0-1 hours | 0 | 0 | 11 | 22 |
| | 1-2 hours | 2 | 14 | 17 | 33 |
| | 2-3 hours | 2 | 14 | 13 | 25 |
| | 3-4 hours | 5 | 36 | 3 | 6 |
| | 4-5 hours | 4 | 29 | 5 | 10 |
| | 5-6 hours | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | More than 6 hours | 1 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| | Total | 14 | 100 | 51 | 100 |
| The number of e-mail accounts owned by the teacher candidates | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 1 | 1 | 7 | 23 | 45 |
| | 2 | 8 | 57 | 21 | 41 |
| | 3 | 5 | 36 | 4 | 8 |
| | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | More | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 14 | 100 | 51 | 100 |
| | Desktop computer | 4 | 29 | 17 | 33 |
| | Laptop | 13 | 93 | 42 | 82 |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|----|-----|----|----|
| Devices used by the teacher candidates to access internet | Netbook | 0 | 0 | 9 | 18 |
| | Smart phone | 12 | 86 | 20 | 39 |
| | Other | 1 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| Reasons for internet use | Obtaining information | 14 | 100 | 49 | 96 |
| | Communication/ Establishing social relation | 14 | 100 | 47 | 92 |
| | Games/Entertainment | 9 | 64 | 36 | 71 |
| | Shopping | 10 | 71 | 29 | 57 |
| | Education | 14 | 100 | 18 | 35 |
| | Banking | 11 | 79 | 13 | 25 |
| | Other | 1 | 7 | 4 | 8 |

A closer look at Table 1 reveals that American teacher candidates own more personal computers, that they started using the Internet earlier, that they spend more time on the Internet, and that they have more e-mail accounts than Turkish candidates. Laptop is the most frequently used digital device to get online by teacher candidates in both countries. Among the reasons of Internet use, obtaining information, communication/establishing social relations, and education are the most common ones for American teacher candidates. As for Turkish candidates, on the other hand, obtaining information, communication/establishing social relations, and games/entertainment are the most frequent reasons for Internet use. Furthermore, “facebook” is the answer to an open-end question about the most often visited website by the candidates in both countries. Of all the American candidates, 7 reported that they frequently check their facebook pages whereas 25 Turkish candidates noted a daily use of “facebook”.

Data Collection Tool and Data Collection

A questionnaire form developed by the researcher and consisting of both open and closed-end questions was employed in order to collect data regarding teacher candidates’ opinions about digital citizenship and its place in both social studies and social studies teacher training programs. "Open-end questions" or "open-end questionnaire" is one of the techniques utilized to collect qualitative data (Patton, 2002, Creswell, 2005). The questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part contains closed-end questions directed to gather some personal information such as gender, the number of computers they have, how long they have been using the Internet and the length of daily Internet use, the number of e-mail accounts they have, digital devices they use to get online, the reasons to use Internet, and the most frequently visited websites. Yet, the second part of the questionnaire includes 8 open and 3 closed-end questions designed to determine teacher candidates’ opinions about digital citizenship, its place in social studies, and how well it is integrated into social studies teacher training programs.

Data collection tool was developed based on the headlines distilled from meticulous literature review. Questions were prepared in accordance with these headlines and the pool of questions was consulted with the experts. Feedback from the experts helped the researcher shape the draft copy of data collection tool. A pilot study was conducted on five teacher candidates in order to test the reliability of the data collection tool. Data collected from the pilot study was analyzed by the researcher and the tool was finalized. After finalizing the Turkish version of the questionnaire, it was translated into English, examined by language experts, piloted on two teacher candidates, and then it was ready to use within the scope of this research.

Following the preparation of questionnaire forms, both universities granted the relevant consent to collect research data, and data collection started and finished during the spring term of 2012-2013 in both universities simultaneously. The questionnaire was administered to the American teacher candidates online and one-on-one by the researcher while Turkish candidates were given the questionnaire in an online setting.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from participating teacher candidates’ answers to open-end questions within the questionnaire were analyzed via content analysis. Content analysis is a repeatable and systematic technique that summarizes the words of a text into smaller content categories through several codings based on certain rules, and its basic aim is to reach concepts and relations that can explain the collected data (Buyukozturk et.al, 2012; Yildirim and Simsek, 2005). During the analysis process, first the answers to open-end questions were typed and transferred into software format by the researcher. Subsequently, teacher candidates’ opinions about the open-end questions were coded into one word or phrase that reflected the main idea by both the researcher and another researcher independently. Next, the codes were used to form themes, and codes and themes were matched. Afterwards, the codings by two researchers were compared and tested via Miles & Huberman formula (1994) (reliability

percentage = [agreement / (agreement + disagreement)] X 100), which resulted as 0.82. Data analyzed through content analysis was supported with direct quotations, which helped establish the reliability of the current study since direct quotations from the participants and presenting them with no add-ons increases the reliability for qualitative studies (Buyukozturk et.al., 2012). Internal validity of the current study was improved via independent analysis of research data by the researchers. Findings are presented in percentages and arithmetic means for closed-end questions and in frequencies for open-end questions; moreover, direct quotations are given from teacher candidates’ opinions.

FINDINGS

Research findings are presented in tables that depict teacher candidates’ perception of digital citizenship, the relation between digital citizenship and social studies course, and the place of digital citizenship in social studies teacher training programs.

Teacher candidates’ perception of digital citizenship

Teacher Candidates’ definitions of digital citizenship

Table 2:Teacher candidates’ definition of digital citizenship

| Turkey | | The United States of America | |
|--|-----------|---|-----------|
| Conducting citizenship tasks on the Internet | 21 | Connecting with community via effective use of digital devices and the Internet | 6 |
| Using digital devices | 6 | Adopting an identity in online settings | 2 |
| Effective use of the Internet | 6 | Proper use of technology | 2 |
| Use of social networks | 4 | Becoming a good citizen in technology world | 1 |
| Proper use of technology | 3 | Becoming a member of digital world | 1 |
| Change of citizenship perception due to technology | 3 | Reflecting American citizenship onto digital settings | 1 |
| I have no idea | 8 | I have no idea | 1 |
| Total | 51 | | 14 |

As can be seen in Table 2, a significant part of Turkish participants defines digital citizenship as conducting their relationship with the state over the Internet within the limits of individual rights and responsibilities. For instance, teacher candidates numbered TR06 and TR18 underline use of the Internet for the relationship between the state and citizens in their definitions: *“I think it means being able to conduct citizenship transactions online. It means that citizens are able to conduct their tasks with state institutions and organizations over the Internet.”* and *“Digital citizens are those who can follow their transactions with the state and its institutions and organizations in virtual settings and who can complete those tasks online.”* respectively. As for Americans, it is possible to note that they mostly define digital citizenship as connecting with the community via effective use of digital devices and the Internet. In this regard, teacher candidate numbered USA04 said, *“Digital Citizenship means using technology to connect to your community through a means of computer, iphone, or et cetera. Defined to me as the connectedness of a society through technology. I do not think it is confined to just a community but instead a state or nation.”*, and USA05 noted *“being competent with digital media. having the skills to connect to others proficiently through digital media.”*.

A comparison between the definitions of digital citizenship by the American and Turkish teacher candidates indicates that Turkish candidates mostly regard the concept as being able to complete their citizenship tasks over the Internet while American candidates perceive digital citizenship as connecting with their community in online settings via effective use of digital devices and the Internet.

Characteristics and competences of digital citizens according to the teacher candidates

Table 3:Characteristics and competences of digital citizens according to the teacher candidates

| Turkey | | The United States of America | |
|-----------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|
| | f | | f |
| <i>Skills</i> | 39 | <i>Skills</i> | 10 |
| Using the Internet | 13 | Communication and cooperation | 3 |
| Using computers | 8 | Access to information technologies | 2 |
| Using technology | 7 | Creativity | 2 |
| Digital literacy | 5 | Problem solving | 1 |
| Accessing information | 3 | Technology literacy | 1 |
| Critical literacy | 1 | Internet literacy | 1 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| Media literacy | 1 | | |
| <i>Values and attitudes</i> | 12 | <i>Values and attitudes</i> | 8 |
| Ethics | 3 | Being open to innovations | 2 |
| Respect | 3 | Respect | 2 |
| Responsibility | 2 | Responsibility | 1 |
| Self-control | 1 | Kindness | 1 |
| Being reliable | 1 | Ethic values | 1 |
| Being open to innovations | 1 | Being orderly | 1 |
| Having interest in technology | 1 | | |
| <i>Knowledge about</i> | 5 | <i>Knowledge about</i> | 4 |
| Citizenship | 3 | Computer and Internet terminology | 3 |
| Rights and responsibilities | 2 | Current issues | 1 |
| Total | 56 | | 22 |

Table 3 depicts that Turkish teacher candidates analyzed the characteristics and competences that digital citizens should have under skills (39), values and attitudes (12), and knowledge (5). Accordingly, candidate TR03 said, “They have to know how to use a computer. That is a must. Yet, the most basic one is responsible use of the Internet, they should be conscientious” and TR34 noted “They have to be able to use the Internet to conduct their tasks and responsibilities at least.”.

Likewise, American teacher candidates grouped the characteristics and competences that digital citizens should have under skills (10), values and attitudes (8), and knowledge (4). In this sense, knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding technology, computer, and Internet use were underlined. USA7 stated “A digital citizen should have a working knowledge of how technology works and how to implement it in their everyday life. They need to be creative, hands on and have the ability to adapt to new and evolving sources of technology.”, and USA08 said “A digital citizen should be accessing the internet multiple times a day, and be able to understand the basics of the Internet, along with the websites that they use”.

Teacher candidates’ self-perceptions regarding digital citizenship

Table 4: Teacher candidates’ self-perceptions regarding digital citizenship

| Turkey | | The United States of America | |
|-----------|----|------------------------------|----|
| | f | | f |
| Yes | 19 | Yes | 13 |
| No | 12 | | |
| Partially | 12 | | |
| No idea | 8 | No idea | 1 |
| Total | 51 | | 14 |

Table 4 shows that some of the Turkish candidates see themselves as digital citizens. The candidates often relate this to “being able to effectively use the Internet and digital technologies to meet their individual needs and to complete their tasks with the state”. For instance, TR04 said, “Yes, I think so because I can manage most of my relation with the state in online settings”, and TR35 stated “Yes, because I spend 3-to-4 hours online daily. I read, have fun, and meet my personal needs across websites...”. A noteworthy finding is that almost half of the candidates replied as either ‘no’ or ‘partially’. Those who do not regard themselves as digital citizens stated that they cannot use the Internet effectively, they do not prefer online settings, and that they don’t have enough knowledge about it. Candidate TR28 replied as “No, because I’m not that much into technology”. Similarly, those who consider themselves as partial digital citizens noted that they felt like digital citizens in some aspects but on the whole they had lots of things to learn. Accordingly, candidate TR40 replied as “Partially because I use the digital settings for my interests and to meet my needs, yet I do not know much about the safety and copyright issues in these settings”.

Table 4 yields that all American teacher candidates, except for one, believe that they are digital citizens. That one candidate stated no idea since s/he did not know about the concept of digital citizenship. American teacher candidates explain the reason why they see themselves as digital citizens by noting that they have used the Internet and digital devices since they were born, and they made use of it efficiently and regularly. In this sense, candidate USA03 said, “Yes, because I use the internet a lot and have intergrated it into my everyday life. I also know how to effectively use it for a variety of tasks”; candidate USA08 stated, “I do see myself as a digital citizen due to the amount of time that I am on the internet, along with the amount of knowledge I possess about the internet itself, and how to manage it. Growing up with computers, and technology, I believe my age is the

most tech savy, and you can see this by walking through campus each day. Not only do we all use our laptops for classes, along with personal use, but we each have an Ipad, or Ipod, and a phone that we can access the web with”, and candidate USA10 replied as “Yes, I have been learning about the internet and how to utilize its potential in a safe way since I was a child. In other words, I grew up learning about the internet just as I grew up learning about my country”.

The relation between social studeis course and digital citizenship

The place of social studies course in digital citizenship education according to the teacher candidates

Table 5: The place of social studies course in digital citizenship education according to the teacher candidates

| Turkey | | The United States of America | |
|---|----|--|----|
| | f | | f |
| Significant | 11 | Significant | 4 |
| Should be placed in social studies course | 10 | Should be placed in social studies course | 4 |
| Can be placed in social studies course | 8 | Digital tools and sources can be employed in social studies course | 3 |
| They are related | 7 | May be integrated in different ways | 3 |
| Social studies course includes digital citizenship | 6 | | |
| The best course for digital citizenship education | 5 | | |
| Social studies course does not have an effective role | 2 | | |
| Total | 49 | | 14 |

Table 5 presents that social studies teacher candidates think that social studies course has a significant place in digital citizenship education. Teacher candidates attribute the foundations of this relationship to the fact that social studies course naturally deals with raising effective citizens, to its goals and content, to the fact that it prepares people for social life, to its interwoven nature with life, to the fact that it involves value education, to its systematic analysis of events in terms of past, present, and future, and to the possibility that technology may improve the effectiveness of social studies course. For instance, candidate TR04 said “*Social studies course prepares the community by all means. Thus, digital citizenship course should be incorporated into social studies*”, candidate TR29 noted “*Since social studies help individuals adapt themselves to life, it will be highly influential about this as well owing to the fact that this is a daily issue individuals encounter regularly*”, and candidate TR38 replied as “*Social studies course concerns daily life. I mean daily issues are involved within this course. Internet is a leading phenomenon these days. Therefore, it is a heavy part of social studies course*”.

Likewise, American teacher candidates also think that digital citizenship education and social studies course are highly related. They ascribe this relevance to the fact that social studies course is where citizenship education is conducted, to the goals and content of social studies course, to how social studies course reflects social life, to how digital settings help students build links among different individuals and cultures, and to the availability of tools and materials necessary for digital citizenship within social studies course. Accordingly, candidate USA07 stated that social studies and digital citizenship education can merge by many aspects by saying “*In social studies, you can incorporate digital citizenship in many ways. Webquests are a good way of utilizing technology and digital citizenship. Civics classes can have students do activities that focus on citizenship and the responsibilities of being a citizen*”. In addition, candidate USA10 noted that social studies course has an important place in digital citizenship education by saying “*I believe Social Studies has a very important place in digital citizenship education. This form of education allows students to internet with people they may otherwise never have the chance to interact with. Students can be exposed to many new experiences and gain wealth of knowledge*”. Similarly, candidate USA09 thinks that social studies may fulfil a major role for digital citizenship education by saying “*Social Studies courses can play a big part in digital citizenship, teaching students how to recognize a primary source online. Also, the internet is a place where people come together to discuss culture, society, and current events. It is important that Social Studies courses prepare their students for dissecting this information*”.

Teacher candidates' opinions about how important the aspects of digital citizenship are in social studies course

Table 6: Turkish and American candidates' views on the importance of these aspects in social studies courses

| How important are these aspects in social studies education | Unimportant | | Somewhat important | | Important | | Very important | | Total Responses | | Mean | |
|---|-------------|-----|--------------------|------|-----------|------|----------------|------|-----------------|-----|------|------|
| | TR | USA | TR | USA | TR | USA | TR | USA | TR | USA | TR | USA |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | | | | |
| Digital Literacy | 2.0 | 0.0 | 3.9 | 0.0 | 39.2 | 71.4 | 54.9 | 28.6 | 51 | 14 | 3.53 | 3.29 |
| Digital Rights & Responsibilities | 2.0 | 0.0 | 5.9 | 28.6 | 29.4 | 35.7 | 62.7 | 35.7 | 51 | 14 | 3.47 | 3.07 |
| Digital Etiquette | 5.9 | 0.0 | 5.9 | 14.3 | 35.3 | 50.0 | 52.9 | 35.7 | 51 | 14 | 3.37 | 3.21 |
| Digital Communication | 3.9 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 14.3 | 47.1 | 42.9 | 47.1 | 42.9 | 51 | 14 | 3.37 | 3.29 |
| Digital Security (self-protection) | 3.9 | 0.0 | 5.9 | 7.1 | 39.2 | 35.7 | 51.0 | 57.1 | 51 | 14 | 3.35 | 3.50 |
| Digital Access | 3.9 | 0.0 | 13.7 | 7.1 | 39.2 | 57.1 | 43.1 | 35.7 | 51 | 14 | 3.22 | 3.29 |
| Digital Law | 2.0 | 0.0 | 21.4 | 28.6 | 50.0 | 35.7 | 35.3 | 28.6 | 51 | 14 | 3.16 | 3.07 |
| Digital Health & Wellness | 7.8 | 7.1 | 15.7 | 50.0 | 37.3 | 35.7 | 39.2 | 7.1 | 51 | 14 | 3.08 | 2.43 |
| Digital Commerce | 7.8 | 0.0 | 37.3 | 28.6 | 37.3 | 50.0 | 17.6 | 21.4 | 51 | 14 | 2.65 | 2.93 |

Table 6 points that Turkish social studies teacher candidates consider some aspects of digital citizenship such as “digital literacy (3.53)”, “digital rights and responsibilities (3.47)” and “digital etiquette (3.37)” more important than some others such as “digital commerce (2.65)”, “digital wealth (3.08)”, and “digital law (3.16)”. On the other hand, social studies teacher candidates living in the USA think that several aspects of digital citizenship such as “digital security and privacy (3.50)”, “digital literacy (3.29)” and “digital communication (3.29)” are more significant than some others such as “digital health (2.43)”, “digital commerce (2.43)” and “digital rights and responsibilities (3.07)”.

Digital citizenship in social studies course

The extent of topics and themes about digital citizenship in Social Studies Teacher Training Programs according to teacher candidates

Table 7: The extent of topics and themes about digital citizenship within the teacher training programs that the candidates study

| | Turkey | | The United States of America | |
|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| | f | | f | |
| None | 25 | Partial or insufficient | 5 | |
| Partial or insufficient | 14 | Yes | 4 | |
| Yes | 7 | None | 4 | |
| No reply | 5 | No reply | 1 | |
| Total | 51 | | 14 | |

A closer examination of Table 7 reveals that a majority of social studies teacher candidates living in Turkey stated that either no topic or theme about digital citizenship was included in their curriculum or it was insufficient and superficial. Teacher candidates noted that digital citizenship was only mentioned in one or two classes, that there was no practice, that faculty members were not enough about digital citizenship, that it was a new subject for everybody and therefore it was not included in the curriculum, and that some of them met with this concept for the first time when they took the questionnaire. Several candidates said the following: candidate TR38 “I think we’ve learned nothing about digital citizenship in classes we’ve taken so far”; candidate TR39 “I’m a senior student in Social Studies Teacher Training, but I don’t think we’ve studied anything about digital citizenship in our classes”; candidate TR08 “I don’t think much has been said about it since it was only mentioned once in Science Technology and Social Change Course we took in the fourth term. Yet, there was nothing about practice”; and candidate TR19 “I think we’ve learned something about that in Science Technology and Social Change course we took during sophomore year. Plus, our teachers tell us about digital citizenship in several other courses”.

Another finding one can distill from Table 7 is that American social studies teacher candidates think that topics and themes about digital citizenship are either ignored or partially covered in their classes, that these themes were studied in only few classes insufficiently, that lessons are generally instructed through use of powerpoint and students take notes, that modern technology is completely neglected in professional courses, and that practice was limited with using technology for instruction. For instance, following are two quotes exemplifying the limited place of digital citizenship in social studies course: candidate USA04 *“Somewhat, we had one course over digital media”* and candidate USA14 *“Yes, but only in one education course education technology I learned everything I learn about digital citizenship in this one class”*. Still, candidate USA06 complained that digital citizenship is not properly included within the program *“I don't really see digital citizenship too often in my school. Many times, it is just a lecture where the teacher reads off a powerpoint and we copy down the notes”*.

Teacher candidates’ views on digital citizenship knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that they gained during their training

Table 8: Teacher candidates’ views on digital citizenship knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that they gained during their training

| | Turkey | | The United States of America | |
|--------------------------|--------|----|------------------------------|----|
| | | f | | f |
| No, I don't think I have | | 22 | Yes, I think I have | 6 |
| Yes, I think I have | | 17 | No, I don't think I have | 4 |
| I think I partially have | | 6 | I think I partially have | 3 |
| No reply | | 6 | No reply | 1 |
| Total | | 51 | | 14 |

Table 8 shows that social studies teacher candidates living in Turkey replied the question “Have you gained any knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes about digital citizenship within social studies teacher training program you have been attending to?” as “No, I don't think I have”, “Yes, I think I have”, and “I think I partially have” respectively. However, the candidates did not explain much about the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes they have learned. In this sense, they mostly referred to citing from online sources, quick access to online sources, digital literacy, digital communication, and respect for copyright. Accordingly, candidate TR38 stated that they have learned nothing about digital citizenship because there was no relevant activity in the program by saying *“There has been no activity designed to furnish us with relevant knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes in Social Studies Teacher Training Program”*. Yet, candidate TR33 referred to copyrights by stating *“... I learned about respecting copyrights in his/her course. Now, I'm more sensitive about using licensed software; and candidate TR 20 underlined security and privacy issues by noting “Yes, I have. We have to respect everybody's rights, especially when it comes to security and privacy of others”*.

Another finding presented in Table 8 is that social studies teacher candidates living in the States responded the question “Have you gained any knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes about digital citizenship within the social studies teacher training program you have been attending to?” as “Yes, I think I have”, “No, I don't think I have”, and “I think I partially have” respectively. American teacher candidates often referred to educational technologies course and reported that they learned about digital rights, responsibilities, law, and access in that course and underpinned that they made use of the Internet for their assignments from other courses, which helped them improve their Internet skills. For instance, candidate USA14 pointed his/her gains about digital rights, responsibilities, law, and access in educational technologies course by clearly saying *“Yes, in the educational technology class we learn about digital rights and responsibilities, law and access”*; and candidate USA01 pointed his/her gains about digital literacy by saying *“Somewhat, I did use the internet and computers for many of my assignments. These skills contribute to the development of my digital literacy although they don't specifically address it.”* Lastly, candidate USA013 noted that s/he had no gains by saying *“No I did not. I feel like my courses were taught more for the exams and not to provide extra learning”*.

Teacher candidates’ knowledge about the dimensions of digital citizenship

Table 9: Turkish and American candidates’ responses regarding their knowledge on the dimensions of digital citizenship

| I know about.... | None | | Little | | Some | | A lot | | Total Responses | | Mean | |
|------------------------------------|------|-------|--------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|-----|------|------|
| | TR % | USA % | TR % | USA % | TR % | USA % | TR % | USA % | TR | USA | TR | USA |
| Digital Communication | 2.0 | 0.0 | 3.9 | 0.0 | 41.2 | 42.9 | 52.9 | 57.1 | 51 | 14 | 3.45 | 3.57 |
| Digital Literacy | 5.9 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 43.1 | 64.3 | 49.0 | 35.7 | 51 | 14 | 3.35 | 3.36 |
| Digital Commerce | 5.9 | 0.0 | 19.6 | 35.7 | 37.3 | 35.7 | 37.3 | 21.4 | 51 | 14 | 3.12 | 2.86 |
| Digital Access | 3.9 | 0.0 | 13.7 | 0.0 | 49.0 | 71.4 | 33.3 | 28.6 | 51 | 14 | 3.06 | 3.29 |
| Digital Rights & Responsibilities | 5.9 | 7.1 | 17.6 | 28.6 | 54.9 | 50.0 | 21.6 | 14.3 | 51 | 14 | 2.92 | 2.71 |
| Digital Security (self-protection) | 3.9 | 0.0 | 19.6 | 0.0 | 56.9 | 78.6 | 19.6 | 21.4 | 51 | 14 | 2.92 | 3.21 |
| Digital Etiquette | 5.9 | 0.0 | 29.4 | 7.1 | 45.1 | 64.3 | 19.6 | 28.6 | 51 | 14 | 2.78 | 3.21 |
| Digital Health & Wellness | 7.8 | 14.3 | 27.5 | 35.7 | 45.1 | 42.9 | 19.6 | 7.1 | 51 | 14 | 2.76 | 2.57 |
| Digital Law | 13.7 | 7.1 | 35.3% | 35.7 | 37.3 | 50.0 | 13.7 | 7.1 | 51 | 14 | 2.51 | 2.43 |

As can be seen in Table 9, social studies teacher candidates in Turkey stated that they have more knowledge on “digital communication (3.45)”, “digital literacy (3.35)”, and “digital shopping (3.12)” than on “digital law (2.51)”, “digital health (2.76)”, and “digital etiquette (2.78)”. On the other hand, social studies teacher candidates in the States noted that they knew more about “digital communication (3.57)”, “digital literacy (3.36)”, and “digital access (3.29)” than “digital health (2.43)”, “digital law (2.57)”, and “digital rights and responsibilities (2.43)”.

Suggestions by teacher candidates in terms of what can be done to enhance social studies teacher candidates’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes about digital citizenship

Table 10: Teacher candidates’ opinions on what can be done to enhance social studies teacher candidates’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes about digital citizenship

| Turkey | | The United States of America | |
|--|----|--|---|
| | f | | f |
| <i>About learning-teaching process</i> | 13 | <i>About learning-teaching process</i> | 6 |
| Giving information about digital citizenship within the courses | 6 | Informing and teaching about digital citizenship | |
| Designing activities about digital citizenship | 2 | Providing opportunities for technology and computer use | |
| Homework assignment about digital citizenship | 1 | Holding debates about digital media | |
| Warnings about safe and unsafe websites | 1 | Integrating digital communication skills into courses | |
| Integrating topics such as Internet security, copyright, and citation into courses | 1 | Increasing practice opportunities to offer more experience | |
| <i>About Social Studies Teacher Training Program</i> | 9 | <i>About Social Studies Teacher Training Program</i> | 3 |
| Offering digital citizenship as a separate and elective course | 5 | Offering courses about technology and how to use technology in classes | 2 |
| Emphasizing digital citizenship within the program | 3 | Offering digital citizenship as a separate course | 1 |
| Restructuring the contents of some courses within the program in accordance with digital citizenship | 1 | | |
| <i>About the faculty members</i> | 4 | <i>About outside-class activities</i> | 1 |
| Improving themselves about digital citizenship | 3 | Conducting workshops about digital citizenship | 1 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Designing research on digital citizenship | 1 |
| Guiding students about digital citizenship | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>About outside-class activities</i> | 3 |
| Conducting outside-class activities and projects | 2 |
| Conducting symposiums on digital citizenship | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>About teacher candidates</i> | 2 |
| Helping faculty members about how to reflect the aspects of digital citizenship onto the course content | 1 |
| Improving themselves about digital citizenship | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total | 56 |

As shown in Table 10, social studies teacher candidates from Turkey classified their suggestions to enhance social studies teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and attitudes about digital citizenship under learning-teaching process, Social Studies Teacher Training Program, faculty members, outside-class activities, and teacher candidates. In this sense, suggestions regarding learning-teaching process and the program outnumber the others. Candidate TR38 suggested that digital citizenship can be incorporated into the course via separate activities by saying *"First of all, some informing activities can be held. Since digital citizenship is not covered within the content of the course, separate activities can be designed."* Likewise, candidate TR50 noted that the course can either be based heavily on digital citizenship topics or it can be offered as a separate course by saying *"There may be more emphasis on this field within the courses that we take as part of our teacher training program since they are covered so superficially in the current curriculum. Even, it can be integrated into the program as a separate elective class just like effective citizenship course. I feel that it is highly essential since we are the ones who will teach digital citizenship to next generations."* In addition, candidate TR33 and TR40 supported these opinions by saying *"Computer class can be redesigned in a more active manner. New courses may be added because digital life is the most important topic of future"* and *"Different activities might be added to the courses in order to create awareness. It can be explained that using digital settings will be more rapid, secure, and beneficial with the new knowledge."* respectively.

Table 10 displays that social studies teacher candidates from the States made their suggestions to improve social studies teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and attitudes about digital citizenship under learning-teaching process, Social Studies Teacher Training Program, and outside-class activities. Similar to their peers in Turkey, they also set forth more suggestions about learning-teaching process than others. Candidate USA02 who shared his/her opinions about this question emphasized that opportunities to use computers more often would better citizenship competences by saying *"Increased opportunities for use with technology. More computer time. More teaching geared toward skills within the framework of technology. ie formatting lesson plans, finding information, communicating appropriately on the computer."* Moreover, candidate USA05 underlined the need for a separate digital citizenship course by saying *"I think a class dedicated to digital citizenship prior to our other education classes would be beneficial."*, and candidate USA09 pinpointed that workshops and supportive trainings would be meaningful by saying *"I think may be providing workshops or help sessions to allow pre-service teachers to become better informed about digital citizenship"*.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

A comparison between the characteristics of teacher candidates from Turkey and the States indicates that those in the USA have been using the Internet for a longer time, allocate more time for Internet use on a daily basis, own more e-mail accounts, use the Internet more often on smart phones together with laptops, and make use of the Internet more comprehensively for various purposes than their peers in Turkey. "Facebook" is the most often visited website for both teacher candidate groups. Compatible with the current research findings, several studies in the literature have concluded that many teacher candidates have a facebook account and they use it for both education and communication needs regularly (Sendurur, Sendurur, and Yilmaz, 2015; Birinci and Karagozlu, 2016).

While managing citizenship tasks online is commonly underlined among the definitions of digital citizenship by Turkish teacher candidates, connecting with the community through effective use of digital tools and the Internet is noteworthy for the definitions provided by American teacher candidates. In this regard, it is possible to note

that teacher candidates from two countries perceive digital citizenship differently and that those in the States have defined the concept of digital citizenship more in detail consistently with the ones in the literature (Mossberger, Tolbert ve McNeal, 2008; Farmer, 2010). However, both groups have referred to legal, ethical, moral, responsible, and safe use of digital tools and the Internet (more often underlined aspects of digital citizenship in the literature) (ISTE, 2007; Ribble and Bailey 2007; Churches, Crockett & Jukes, 2010; Knorr, 2010) less than expected in their definitions. Since these aspects are the focal point of digital citizenship, this may be an indicator of a major miss on behalf of social studies teacher candidates. Furthermore, almost all the teacher candidates from the States regard themselves as digital citizens within the boundaries of their definitions, and a significant portion of the participants from Turkey either do not consider themselves as digital citizens or they believe to be partial digital citizens. Because being a role model is one of the most important responsibilities of a teacher in digital citizenship training (Brooks-Young, 2007; Peckham, 2008; Perle, 2009; Farmer, 2010; Crocco & Leo, 2015), teacher candidates first should see themselves as digital citizens and then be role models for their students. In this sense, one can conclude that teacher candidates from the USA are more advantageous in terms of being a role model for their future students compared to Turkish peers because they both produced more comprehensive definitions of digital citizenship and regard themselves as digital citizens.

As research findings have indicated, both groups of participants have underpinned internet and computer literacy and general citizenship competences with respect to characteristics and qualities that digital citizens should bear. Buente (2015) states that digital citizenship is a strong feature of a citizen who utilize the Internet consciously. Thus, the fact that both groups of teacher candidates from the two countries mentioned internet and computer literacy can be taken as a support for this view.

Similarly, teacher candidates from both countries believe that social studies course has great importance for digital citizenship education and that this course has to be associated with digital citizenship, which is consistent with Karaduman and Ozturk's study (2014) concluding that digital citizenship activities integrated with social studies have positively influenced students' digital citizenship attitudes and behaviors. Accordingly, teacher candidates' opinions also point to the significance of digital citizenship within social studies course.

In addition, both social studies teacher candidate groups have stated that they are most knowledgeable about "digital communication" aspect of digital citizenship. Ribble and Baily (2007) note that digital communication, digital access, and digital literacy are directly related with students' academic experiences. Besides, digital communication is the most frequently debated and referred aspect of digital citizenship within relevant literature. The reason why both teacher candidate groups are most informed about digital communication can be attributed to these two factors. On the other hand, "Digital law" and "Digital health" are two aspects that teacher candidates from the two countries are the least aware of. According to Ribble and Baily (2007), these two aspects are related with outside-school experiences. So, teacher candidates are least aware of these two aspects because they are not relevant to school life and candidates are hardly ever informed about them.

Research results have shown that social studies teacher candidates from Turkey think that topics and themes about digital citizenship are either superficially covered or not mentioned at all within social studies teacher training program. On the contrary, those in the States believe that they are incorporated, but somehow inadequately, into their teacher training program. This specific finding marks a major deficiency in social studies teacher training program about digital citizenship education in Turkey. The fact that majority of American social studies teacher candidates mostly answered the same question as partially or inadequately shows that there is a partial deficiency about digital citizenship education in the States. Berson and Balyta (2004) report that advances and changes in technology require making changes in the process of training social studies teachers. Bolick et.al (2003) note how important it is for teacher candidates to be good enough in technology and draw attention onto teacher trainers and teacher training programs. Therefore, the place of digital citizenship, which emerged as a reflection of recent advances in digital technologies onto citizenship training, has to be clarified and stabilized within social studies teacher training programs. Moreover, a significant portion of teacher candidates from Turkey think that they have learned no knowledge, skill, value, or attitude about digital citizenship as part of the curriculum of their teacher training program and American teacher candidates state that they either learned everything about digital citizenship during their education or they partially picked up some of those skills, values, and attitudes as part of their training program. Crocco and Leo (2015) note that social studies experts have recently become more informed and theoretically more sophisticated with respect to advantages and difficulties of digital technologies that either facilitate or impede social studies teacher training. Crocco and Leo's (2015) standpoint may explain as to why the definitions of American social studies teacher candidates are more comprehensive, why more space is allocated to topics and themes about digital citizenship within social studies teacher training program in the States, and why American candidates have picked up more knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes about digital citizenship during their education.

In accordance with research results and the opinions of teacher candidates from both Turkey and the USA, following may be suggested to effectively improve digital citizenship education within social studies teacher training programs:

- In line with the new mission assigned to citizenship concept as a result of technological advances, digital citizenship has to be granted a firm and stable space not only in social studies course within primary education but also in Social Studies Teacher Training Programs. In this regard, teacher candidates should be informed holistically about digital citizenship and its aspects through various courses in the Program.
- “Digital Citizenship Education” should be incorporated into Social Studies Teacher Training Program as an elective class in order to both inform the candidates and to furnish them with relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Educational methodology courses should be enhanced with technology in order to offer practice to teacher candidates as to how they can conduct digital citizenship education in their future classes. Accordingly, faculty members should prepare practical activities and sample lesson plans in order to guide teacher candidates in terms of how to use technology and internet within social studies course.
- Faculty members who are expected to be role models for teacher candidates in technology use and digital citizenship should improve themselves with respect to technology use and internet, and faculties should design relevant seminars and training sessions.
- Faculty members should expand use of technology and the Internet in their courses and should be role models in terms of using them ethically and responsibly.
- Practical seminars and workshops should be designed about digital citizenship and digital citizenship education for teacher candidates.
- Classrooms where teacher candidates are trained should be redesigned to offer effective experience in technology use.

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