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Research Article

# The Role of High School History Teachers on University Students' Attitudes toward History Classes

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## Abstract

This study is a qualitative case study aimed at revealing the roles of high school history teachers on university students' attitudes towards history courses. The study group consists of 30 teacher candidates studying in the department of social sciences and mathematics teaching of a faculty of education at a university in the Western Black Sea. The study group has been formed using the purposeful sampling method and a semi-structured interview form has been used to collect data. Interviews have been recorded and written down as text, and then the data was analyzed using the content-analysis method. At the end of the study, teachers are understood to have an important role in students' eagerness for history classes during their high school years. In particular, the methods and techniques that a teacher use during the course and, partially, the teacher's personality directly influence students' like/dislike of history lessons. This impression, which students gain in high school, affects their attitudes and interests regarding history lessons in the following years. According to these results, one can suggest that history teachers need training that increases awareness of their role in history teaching, alongside their methodology and knowledge regarding the field.

## Keywords

History teaching • History teacher • Love of history • Effective teaching • Effective teacher

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Education has been one of the most fundamental issues of humanity since ancient times. In those ages, the new generation's education was primarily undertaken by parents, clergy, philosophers, or those whom society regarded as wise. At that time, the understanding of teaching, which is thought to have been carried out by the wise, highlighted clergymen and philosophers as teachers within society. Therefore, clergymen and philosophers are accepted as the first teachers in societies (Yıldırım & Vural, 2014, p. 74). It is not easy to reveal definitive information regarding the history of the teaching profession, which is considered to be one of the oldest occupations in world history (Oktay, 1991). However, humanity is understood to have become interested in institutional education after settled lifestyles were adopted. One can encounter the tracks of institutional education in Egyptian, Hebrew, Iranian, Chinese, and Greek civilizations. Scholars, philosophers, and clerics are known to have been teaching at the educational institutions of those civilizations (Sönmez, 2002). In the Greek civilization, on the other hand, one sees that intelligent and literate slaves had been appointed as teachers (Sönmez, 2002), which can be considered as a consequence of the approach that the teacher should be the one with knowledge. In some civilizations, however, those who had been trained within the institutional education system were assigned as teachers. One of these is the Sumerian civilization. Sumer had two types of schools. While one was aimed at scientific and character education, the other was aimed at literary and creative education. Those who had successfully earned the right to receive diplomas by passing a school exam found the opportunity to work as teachers (Sönmez, 2002).

Despite its long history, teaching has never been considered as an area of expertise until the age of enlightenment. In western 17<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, teaching was emphasized as an area of expertise, and the idea that teachers should receive formal education came to the forefront (Yıldırım & Vural, 2014, p. 74). Two professors in particular, Cristoph Helwing (1532-1617) and Joachim Junge (1587-1657) from Giessen University, favored the argument that teacher training is necessary in professional terms for efficient education. At the end of discussions on the necessity of training teachers in Europe, the first teacher-training schools were opened. One of these is the teacher-training school opened in the city of Reims, France in 1685. This school is considered by education historians such as Adamson (1905), Cubberley (1948), and Compayre (1895) to be the first teacher-training school (as cited in Yüksel, 2011).

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, educating teachers in teacher-training schools has become widespread. Thus, the process of training educators has clearly become a separate area. At the same time, this process was also streamlined in the Ottoman Empire, and certain institutions emerged with a focus on training teachers, such as Dar'ül-Muallimîn and Dar'ül-Muallimat (Akyüz, 1989). One of the main concerns of these teacher-training

institutions was teachers' qualifications. The effort and concern for training qualified teachers, just like today, kept this matter live. The reason for paying great importance to teachers and teacher-training institutions is the vital the role of teachers in education. Cüceloğlu deemed teachers to be the essential element of education, because the teacher is education's starter, developer, and practitioner (Cüceloğlu & Erdoğan, 2013, p. 19). In other words, teachers are as important for education as education is for humans. Teachers have frequently been the subject of educational research due to their indisputable role in the educational world. Some of these research subjects have been about revealing the significant relationships that exist for teacher characteristics like professional seniority; levels of cognitive, affective, kinesthetic, and heuristic preparedness; salaries; and physical appearances with student success. According to the conducted research, the relationship of teachers' features such as age, salary, and physical appearance with student success has been found quite insignificant. Teachers' in-class attitude, on the other hand, has a significant effect on students' success and personal development (Engin, Özen, & Bayoğlu, 2009; Kosgei, Mise, Odera, & Ayugi, 2013; Scrivner, 2009; Sönmez, 2001, p. 137; Şişman, 2002, p. 154; Uluğ, Özden, & Eryılmaz, 2011). This relationship of teachers with students' success and personal development has inevitably led to discussions in terms of effective teaching, teacher qualifications, and effective teachers.

### **Effective Teaching and the Characteristics of an Effective Teacher**

Effective teaching is defined as situations where students accomplish the learning purposes that the teacher has determined (Kyriacou, 1997, p. 7). According to Brown and Atkins (2002, p. 5), conveying effective teaching to be parallel to student success is not enough. Effective teaching should not only be concerned with student success but also with appropriate values (2002, p. 5). Meanwhile, Dunne and Wragg (1994) emphasized effective teaching to be teaching environments that employ various teaching strategies, methods, and techniques where students can easily learn facts, skills, values, and concepts. The main factor in providing effective teaching is the teacher. However, defining what makes for an effective and qualified teacher is not easy (Berliner, 2005, p. 206; Blanton et al., 2006, p. 116). While some researchers link student success with teacher effectiveness, others, however, pay heed to teachers' high grades received from the administration or to students' or other educational stakeholders' comments about teachers (Stronge, 2007, p. x; Stronge & Xu, 2012). Discussions on teacher effectiveness include the matter of successful teachers' qualifications. Cruickshank and Haefele, in their study *Good Teacher*, characterize good teachers as ideal, analytical, respectful, talented, expert, and sensitive towards diversity (as cited in Stornge, 2007, p. x). In addition to not having any clear definition for the concept of an effective and successful teacher, neither do any valid criteria exist for evaluating this topic. White and Burke (1993), researchers who have

conducted studies on teacher effectiveness for many years, refer to the difficulties in developing reliable criteria for evaluating teachers' effectiveness. Counter to this, [Hamachek \(1969\)](#) and [Weimer \(1993\)](#) emphasize that one can distinguish the personal qualifications of a good and effective teacher from the personal qualifications of a poor and ineffective teacher, and that determining the qualifications of an effective teacher is not so difficult.

[Darling-Hammond \(2010\)](#) defined an effective teacher as one who intellectually challenges, motivates, determines high standards, and encourages students to learn on their own. On the other hand, [Anderson \(2004, p. 22\)](#) sees effective teachers as those who accomplish the goals that are determined by themselves or by other parties like the Ministry of Education.

[Stronge, Ward, and Grant \(2011\)](#) suggested four dimensions for determining the qualifications of an effective teacher. These are effectiveness of teaching, evaluating student learning, positive learning environment, and the teacher's personal qualifications. [Fenstermacher and Richardson \(2005\)](#) defined teachers' qualities in two dimensions. One is good teaching. According to this dimension, teachers should meet what is expected of their role. The other is effective/successful teaching. This expresses the teacher's effect on student learning and success. In this sense, both dimensions complete each other by defining teachers' qualities.

In effective teaching environments, teachers are expected to teach, facilitate, organize, and manage ([Dinç, 2009](#)). An effective teacher should also care about students' personalities as much as their academic success, keeping the learning expectations high, creating a positive learning environment, making use of technology, measuring students' learning status using suitable methods, and providing feedback to students ([Kola, Sunday, & Ayinde, 2015](#)). For teachers to be able to realize these suggestions, they should possess extensive field knowledge and professional skills ([Dunne & Wragg, 1994, p. 2](#); [Jones, Jenkin, & Lord, 2006, p. 5](#)).

Despite the differences in definitions of an effective teacher and the uncertainty in being able to measure their effectiveness, the consensus exists that teachers have a strong and permanent effect on students ([Stronge, 2007, p. x](#); [Şahin, 2011](#)) because poor and ineffective teaching demotivates students and causes them to develop negative attitudes toward learning and to suffer from decreased success. Teachers' strong effect on students also shows itself in history lessons. An effective history teacher (namely, effective history teaching) plays a determinant role in students' attitudes towards history lessons ([Ata, 2007](#)). Within the scope of effective history teaching, this situation has carried discussions on how history teachers should be in the field of history teaching.

## Effective History Teaching and the Characteristics of an Effective History Teacher

Today's need to understand yesterday in terms of urging people to keep their past alive for religious, political, folkloric, and other reasons have brought the field of history as an accumulation. History has been recorded since the oldest civilization with writing, the Sumerians (Köksal, 2007). Discussions on how and why this historical accumulation, which has been formed through written and unwritten sources, should be transferred to future generations have been a problem within the field of history teaching. According to Dilek (2001, p. 1), the fundamental variables determining what will be taught and how have been the expectations oriented around historical understanding and children. These types of expectations direct history teaching and set objectives. Safran (1997), on the other hand, asserted that history teaching is employed in the direction of three main objectives: history as a heritage, history for moral education, and history for understanding today's world. Over the course of time, pursuits for a standard in regard to history teaching have started regarding what should be taught and how (Sungur, 2009, 2014). The objectives and standards of history teaching, as well as how to teach it, have always been an issue with the effects of developments in the social and educational sciences. One discussion that has begun in recent years is on efficient history teaching.

The fact that an excessive number of subjects is desired to be taught to students is one of the factors that make effective history teaching difficult. Students have to remember the topics and understand the period of the event, as well as learn the concepts employed in history lessons. That is not quite easy for a student and leads history class to be seen just as a memorization lesson. Safran (2009, p. 10) describes history teaching as one of the most problematic fields in Turkey's educational system. In terms of the problems of teaching history, academicians usually focus on similar matters such as purpose, content, methods/techniques, course books, and course hours for history courses (Demircioğlu, 2009; Özbaran, 1992, p. 127; Safran, 2009, pp. 8–20; Şimşek, 2004, p. 474). Teaching history is a multi-directional and complex task. According to research, history teachers are also aware that this is a complex process. For the part of the process that concerns them, they see the intense syllabus of history teaching as the problem. They also attach importance to making history lessons likable and to gaining skills for making use of technology in their classes. One of the most important matters for teachers is to be able to increase the interest of students, who are intensely worried about exams, towards history (Akdemir, 2006, pp. 171–177). Apart from these general problems, some new problems that these days have brought about have also been added to history teaching. Some of these are information pollution on the Internet and media, student's lack of assessment regarding that, and many teachers' inability to keep pace with new developments and pedagogical approaches (Bal, 2011; Stradling, 2003, p. xi). Teachers are in a position to cope with the new problems and responsibilities that modern days have

put them through, as well as the general responsibilities that education puts on their shoulders. History teachers should not be passive narrators of historical information but professional members of this complex process (Karabağ, 2010, p. 376).

As studies on history teaching and teachers increase, universal opinions regarding how history teachers should behave have begun to be accepted. Qualifications that a good history teacher should have these days are sorted as follows: (a) History teachers should be aware of the idiosyncratic nature of history. (b) History teachers should be active and creative within the process of learning-teaching. (c) History teachers should be willing to apply innovations in the academic and educational field of history teaching to their courses. (d) History teachers should be able to look at historical events without personal prejudice. (e) History teachers should create learning-teaching environments that are suitable for the age-range and skills of their students. (f) History teachers' language and communication skills should be at an advanced level. (g) History teachers should make their students feel that the subject they teach is worth learning. (h) History teachers should use supplementary teaching materials and should follow information and communications technology that they see fit for use in their classes. Lastly, (i) History teachers should be open to interdisciplinary works (Çulha, 2010, pp. 370–372).

The qualifications sought in teachers in terms of history teaching are, no doubt, to accomplish effective history teaching. Among the qualifications of effective history teaching are encouraging historical thinking, building critical-thinking skills, establishing historical empathy, and teaching the main historical concepts (Dinç, 2009, pp. 1435–1442). In order to ensure effective history teaching, students are expected to possess a certain level of background information, or subject area knowledge, and various skills (Büyükbayacı, 2013, p. 10). In the event that students possess such a background, they can apprehend the logic of the discipline of history and get the opportunity to understand historical events, processes, developments, and connections much better. What is expected of teachers in order to ensure effectiveness in terms of history teaching is to possess field information and certain teaching skills. To understand and explain the historical events, facts, persons, periods, and authenticities, teachers should have the skills to transform the information into different forms and interpret, assess, analyze, and synthesize it. Nevertheless, in terms of effective history teaching, teachers' association of historical subjects with other courses such as geography, citizenship knowledge, or religious culture and ethics; their use of historical materials and sources in the classroom such as historical documents, objects, pictures, maps, and so on; and their use of information and communication technologies and the Internet are not deemed necessary. This variety of methods in history teaching is expected to increase students' historical understanding and learning levels by contributing to their cognitive development (Dinç, 2009, pp. 1445–1446).

Another way to establish effectiveness in history teaching is to relieve history lessons of their boredom, make them entertaining, and therefore increase students' history skills (Formwalt, 2002). For this purpose, benefitting from tales, narratives, epics, legends, museums, cartoons, movies, and other things that high school students are quite interested in is recommended in history classes (Altun, 2010; Kale, 2010; Öztaş, 2010; Sarıköse, 2011; Şimşek, 2010). Historical novels are also deemed effective at motivating students about history; they provide students with the opportunity to compare the past and future (Erol, 2012, p. 68). One issue that history teaching pays attention to is giving students the skills for questioning and interpreting historical evidence and knowledge (Demircioğlu, 2009, p. 229). The teacher's share at this point is to know how to use and benefit from these kinds of resources that are recommended for history lessons. Accordingly, teachers should always develop themselves and keep track of what is new in their field. Moreover, teachers who follow developments in their field should successfully transfer these to the classroom. When qualified history teachers effectively teach history, they can accomplish a positive change in students' attitudes and feelings toward history classes.

Teachers' qualifications and success in teaching also have an effective role in determining students' feelings and opinions regarding the course. For this reason, intra-class attitudes and behaviors of teachers in each field should be carefully examined in terms of course success. Such research is important, especially for history classes that are perceived as a memorization lessons. However, while theoretically tackling effective teachers' qualifications in history teaching, studies on the situation in practice are inadequate. This study, which examines the role of high-school history teachers on students' attitudes towards history lessons and on motivating them towards history classes, has the ability to illuminate history teachers' situations in practice. Within the framework of practice, the needs and deficiencies emerging in front of history teachers have the characteristics of being a pathfinder for the history teaching departments of universities and for Turkey's Ministry of Education.

## **Methods**

### **Research Model**

This study is a qualitative case study. According to Stake, a case study is a choice of what to study within a case rather than being a procedural choice (as cited in Glesne, 2013, p. 31; Merriam, 2013, p. 40). Therefore, a case study requires handling a modern phenomenon within certain boundaries (Berg, 2001; Hatch, 2002, p. 30; Zainal, 2007). On the other hand, phenomena, programs, persons, groups, and institutions can be chosen for the educational research in question (Merriam, 1988). In a case study, the factors concerning a situation are surveyed using an integrated

approach with a focus on how the individuals have been affected by the situation in question (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 73). Moreover, case studies are based on the questions of how and why; they allow researchers to probe a fact or event over which they've no control (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 292). For this reason, the case study has been deemed suitable for this research as it aims at revealing the roles of high school history teachers in university students' attitudes toward history classes. History teachers' personal traits and methods and techniques used during courses, which leads participants to develop positive or negative attitudes towards history classes, constitute the sub-dimensions of the research. The study has been conducted with teacher candidates in a university. To arrive at participants' experiences on the subject and to collect data accordingly, the interview method has been chosen as data collection tool. A semi-structured interview form was used during the interviews.

### **Study Group**

The study group consists of 30 teacher candidates studying in the department of mathematics and social sciences teaching of a faculty of education at a university in the western region of the Black Sea. While forming the study group, the easy-access case-sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, has been employed. Within the purposeful sampling method, which is also called judgment sampling, a researcher uses one's own judgment regarding whom to choose and takes those suitable for the purpose for sampling (Balcı, 2015, p. 104; Böke, 2014, p. 125). This sampling method brings a pace and practicability into the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 123). In consideration of the fact that students studying in the department of social sciences teaching are closer to the field of history, mathematics students, while distant to the field of history, have been included in the sample. This way aims to expand the perspective of the study. Participation in the research is volunteer-based. For the study, pre-interviews were conducted with students from the social sciences and mathematics teaching department. Because the university where the research was conducted does not have a department of history teaching, students from the history teaching department do not occur in the research. Fifteen of the students in the study group are from the department of social sciences teaching, and 15 are from the department of mathematics teaching. Again, six of them are freshmen, nine are sophomores, eight are juniors, and seven are seniors. Eighteen females and 12 males participated in the study. Eight of the students in the study group graduated from high schools in İstanbul, three from high schools in Ankara, two from high schools in Balıkesir, two from high schools in İzmir, two from high schools in Tekirdağ, and the remainder graduated from high schools in the cities of Erzurum, Hatay, Ordu, Manisa, Bartın, Mersin, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, Aydın, Ağrı, Gaziantep, Erzincan, and Zonguldak. Students' high schools of graduation range from eastern to western parts of Turkey. This is regarded as significant as it provides the research with a wide perspective.

### **Data Collection Tool**

In the research, data was collected using a semi-structured interview form. Consisting of open-ended questions and having a partially flexible structure, the semi-structured interview method has the potential to provide the researcher with detailed information (Karasar, 1995, p. 165). During these interviews, open-ended questions are systematically asked within a certain structural framework (Demir, 2009, p. 291). In order to develop the semi-structured interview form, a draft form consisting of 10 questions was first prepared. To establish the scope and structural validity of the interview form, five experts were asked for their opinions, four of whom are from the field of history teaching field and one being from the field of assessment and evaluation. On the experts' form, a two-choice format (correct/valid or incorrect/invalid) was used. Matching values from the experts' opinions for each question were expected to be between 90-100% in terms of validity (Büyükoztürk, 2005). While no changes were made to four of the questions, which had results between 90-100%, two questions with 70% and 90% respective matching values were reconsidered and reorganized. Four questions that experts had matching values of 70% or less were removed from the interview form. The pilot study of the research was conducted on four students who were not in the study group but were studying in the Departments of Science Teaching and Turkish Language Teaching.

Students in the study group were asked whether or not they liked history classes, and their feelings and attitudes towards history class were first attempted to be determined. These pilot-study participants were asked their reasons for liking/not liking history class. Therefore, the factors determining students' feelings and attitudes towards history classes were sought to be found. To determine history teachers' role in the attitudes that participants had developed towards history class, whether their high school history teachers had had any effect on their interest decreasing or increasing towards history classes was asked. The questions, "How have your history teachers contributed to your developing a positive attitude towards history classes?" and "Which of your history teachers' behaviors and characteristics contributed to your developing a negative attitude towards history classes?", were directed in order to make history teachers' effect on participants' attitudes clear and to understand all of their aspects.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The university's permission was first requested in order to conduct the interviews for providing the research data. Interview times were determined by conferring with 30 students studying in the departments of mathematics teaching and social sciences teaching. Interviews with the students who had accepted being participants in the study were conducted between February 3 and March 9, 2016. The interviews, whose duration lasted between 20-30 minutes, were recorded and then transcribed.

Content analysis was conducted in this study, prepared within the scope of the qualitative research approach. The main goal of content analysis is to arrive at the concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data collected. With content analysis, data is processed even more deeply. Rather than revealing just the perceived content, content analysis allows for the hidden content from the discourse to be revealed (Bilgin, 2014, p. 1; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 242). For this reason, content analysis is preferred in this study.

Qualitative research data is analyzed in four phases: coding data, finding themes, organizing the codes and themes, and defining and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2016, p. 243). The interviews, transcribed within the methodological framework of content analysis, were first coded, and then the categories and themes were determined pursuant to the coding. In the last phase, the findings have been interpreted.

While analyzing the students' opinions, grouping was made according to the similarity of their statements. To establish reliability and objectivity, the data was coded by the researcher twice with a two-week break in between. According to the calculation made by using the formula of  $(\text{Agreements} / [\text{Agreements} + \text{Disagreements}]) \times 100$ , as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), agreement between the two different codings that had been done at different times was calculated as .91. Moreover, member checking was applied, which is used to check validity in qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). Participants read the study results, and their approval was received in regard to the results representing their thoughts.

As a matter of ethicality for those who were in the study group, students from the mathematics department were coded as M1, M2, M3, up to M15, and students from the social sciences department were coded as S1, S2, S3, up to S15. Statements obtained from participants within the study were given with these codes. The data is expressed in frequency and percentage. Coded student opinions regarding history teachers' role in making history classes likable were supported using the direct quotes given in the study. This was done with the aim of establishing the validity of the research.

### **Findings**

In this part, the findings obtained at the end of the research are categorized according to the themes determined in the direction of participants' opinions; they have been interpreted by quoting directly from their opinions.

Within the frame of the study's purpose, the first question aims to arrive at information regarding whether or not students had liked their high school history classes. Student opinions on this issue are given in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Study Group Students' Status for Liking History Classes*

Student Opinions	Participants	<i>f</i>	%
I Liked	S2, S3, S4, S9, S11, S12, S13, S14, M6, M7, M13, M14	12	40.0
I Liked Some of Them (Partially)	S5, S6, S8, S10, M1, M4, M5, M15	8	26.6
I Didn't Like	S1, S15, S7, M2, M3, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12	10	33.3
Total		30	100

According to Table 1, 40% of the students liked their high school history classes, 26.6% liked only some of their history classes, and 33.3% stated not liking them.

M6 expressed their love for history in these words, "Yes, I liked them. History classes were special to me." A personal interest in history was also noticed in M6's statements. Some participants (S3, S4, S9, S12, M6, M7, M13, and M14) stated having sympathy for history class as, "Yes, I liked them." Students who had stated liking some of their history classes had feelings toward history classes that changed with time. S8 expressed the situation as, "My attitude towards my high school history classes changed from year to year. The main reason for this was having different teachers teach the lessons." While S8 attached a year-by-year change in feelings toward history teachers, some students attached changes in content to their changing interest towards history classes. M4 reflects this situation with the statement, "History classes differed for me based on the included subject. I like Ottoman history in general. In particular, the semester when we had this topic interested me more." M15 said, "I didn't like it in my first, second, or fourth year, just my third year." The teacher factor is what affected M15's interest in history classes during the third year. While M2, M8, M9, M10, M11, and S1 said, "I didn't like history classes," M12 and M3 expressed their feelings and thoughts with the statements, "I cannot say I liked them. All I did was try to pass the course," and "No, I didn't like them. They were so boring." S1, however, emphasized dislike by saying, "I never liked history classes."

While seven of the students who stated not liking their high school history classes are in the mathematics teaching department, three are in the social sciences teaching department. Four students from the department of mathematics teaching and eight students from the department of social sciences teaching said they liked their history classes. In this case, the sympathy for history classes from the four mathematics teaching students and the five social sciences teaching students changed over time, and the main reason for the change they experienced in their feelings was their history teachers, according to students' statements. History teachers' role in making history likable is discussed in other findings.

In the second question, students were asked why they hadn't liked their history classes. The data acquired through this question is given in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Study Group Students' Reasons for Liking History Classes*

Categories	Codes	<i>f</i>
External Reason	Teacher	20
Internal Reason	Personal interest in history	5
Total		25

According to Table 2, 20 students from the study group identified their history teachers as the reason for liking history classes. Five students, however, emphasized their personal interest in history classes as the reason. Students who stated that their teachers were the ones who had made the courses likable mentioned teachers' attitudes towards students as well as their teaching methods and techniques. On the other hand, in the statements of students who talked about their own personal interests, their curiosity about history and their past are what came forth. However, according to Table 2, the impact of teachers on students' sympathy for history classes can be seen clearly. This result reveals that teachers have a role in why students like history courses, as teachers do for all other courses. Stating that history classes are liked, S3 emphasized the positive effect of history teachers saying, "The reason why I liked history classes was that I have been lucky to have very good teachers." S9 also mentions about teachers' effect on his/her attitude towards history classes with these words: "All of my history teachers in secondary school and high school were good. They were so friendly and did their jobs fondly. This affected my like for history."

The fundamental problems of teaching history are what and how to teach in history classes. These problems also relate to syllabus content, teaching methods, and techniques. Teachers, as one of the corner stones of education, are part of the discussion on how to teach history because they are the ones who apply the determined teaching programs. Accordingly, how the program is implemented in class is mostly the teachers' responsibility. The reasons given by the study group students for not liking history classes were stated as not liking high school history classes as given in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Study Group Students' Reasons for Not Liking History Classes*

Categories	Codes	<i>f</i>
External Reason	The teacher	9
	History is a memorization lesson	1
Internal Reason	No personal interest in history	1
Total		11

According to Table 3, the reason why nine students didn't like high school history classes was their history teachers. All these students mentioned that their teachers had used ineffective methods and techniques in class. M10 stated this situation as "I didn't like history classes in high school because of our history teacher." M8 expressed his/her thoughts as "My interest in history class was quite low due to our teacher's boring lectures." M2 indicated teachers' teaching methods and techniques with the thoughts,

“It was my high school history teachers’ teaching styles that caused me not to like history.” M9 complained about the rote-learning nature of history lessons, saying “Because history courses are based on rote-learning, it seems like forced work to me.”

Students in the study group were asked how their history teachers made history classes likable; their answers are given in Table 4, which also gives the characteristics of teachers who make history classes likable. These characteristics give important clues for understanding the role of teachers in history classes.

Table 4

*Characteristics of Teachers Who Made History Classes Likable and Who Contributed to Students Who Developed Positive Attitudes towards History Classes, According to the Study Group Students.*

Categories	Codes	<i>f</i>
Personality and Attitudes	Is friendly	3
	Is an entertaining person	2
	Loves their job	2
	Is honest	2
	Is idealistic	1
	Is democratic	1
	Is a good communicator	1
	Is mild-mannered and calm	1
	Is nice and sweet	1
	Total	14
Proficiency	Being competent in their field	5
	Total	5
Methods and techniques	Teaches as though living it	4
	Teaches entertainingly	3
	Includes students in the lesson	3
	Makes students feel like they are on the stage of history	2
	Brings things up to date	2
	Narrates	2
	Teaches actively	2
	Teaches the lesson as though having a chat	1
	Uses gestures and facial expressions	1
	Pays attention to eye contact	1
	Provides supplementary sources	1
	Total	22

Table 4 shows that, according to the students, the qualifications of teachers who make history classes likeable and contribute to students’ development of positive attitudes towards history classes are grouped into three categories. One category is teachers’ personality and attitudes, another is their proficiency, and the third is their methods and techniques. Being friendly came first among personal characteristics. Characteristics such as being an entertaining person, loving one’s job, being honest, being idealistic, being democratic, being a good communicator, and being mild-mannered and calm are also among students’ statements.

Expressing a like of high school history classes, S9 mentioned, “All of my history teachers in high school were very good. They were friendly and did their jobs fondly. Because they were friendly, their communication skills were also good,” about the teachers, while M13 said, “I liked my teacher, the lectures were amusing,” and S7 said, “The teachers lectured very well. What was important to me is that they taught lessons calmly and mild-manneredly.” M1 said that the teacher’s honesty and knowledgeableness affected his like of history. M7 emphasized teachers’ personality, attitudes, and methods, saying, “My teacher was humorous and democratic, using question-and-answer and brain-storming techniques in class; the teacher was never boring.”

One category that came out of students’ opinions was that the teachers are good at their field. M4 drew attention to teachers’ field knowledge with the stated opinion, “My history teachers in 9th and 12th grades were quite good. 9th and 12th grades were when I liked history class the most in my life because they were very successful in their fields and lectured very well.” When M14 expressed opinions, M14 underlined both the methods and techniques that teachers used, as well as teachers’ field knowledge, saying:

The most important reason why I liked my history courses was my teacher. They stopped history class from being boring, teaching it more understandably and permanently. The teacher made me like history because teaching by connecting history to current events was able to make it permanent. Additionally, the teacher is competent in the field and lectures history as though living it. Moreover, reflecting these things onto me caused me to like history.

S3 and S10, as well as others, emphasized the importance of teachers’ field knowledge.

From the direction of data in Table 4, one understands that history teachers’ methods and techniques play a more important role in making history course likable. Students attach importance to their teachers’ attitudes, personalities, and field knowledge. However, the thing that they care about even more is the way their teachers teach lessons, their methods and techniques. M4 spoke up about this with these thoughts:

To me, the teacher is a very important factor for all courses. I think this includes history as well. I believe that teachers’ methods, rather than their personalities, attract us because my history teachers taught the lesson really well. But when you look from the outside, they were quite nice, sweet, and experienced teachers.

S8 especially pointed out teachers’ methods, saying:

My attitude towards history courses in high school years changed from year to year. The main reason for this is having different teachers teach the class. Depending on if I liked the teacher for that year, I would be interested in history as well. The reason was the method that the teacher used. Moreover, the method covered the topics enthusiastically, in addition to doing impersonations from time to time... Finally, I would like to say this: For me to be a beloved teacher in the future, I will add impersonations and interesting stories to the course content.

Within this method are enthusiastic narratives and interpretations of teachers. This shows that the students wish to understand history subjects concretely. M5 exposes this reality more clearly with the words:

One of our history teachers taught the lesson like they were living that moment, and it made me love the history course. I started to like the course because I liked the way he was teaching, enriching it with tests, visuals, and stories.

Considering M5's statements, one can also say that M5's teacher cared about solidifying historical subjects and that this method positively affected students. M15 stated not liking history classes except for junior year because of the teacher. The teacher's personality and way of teaching affected the enjoyment of history class that junior year because the teacher taught impressively, using his own notes so that they could almost picture the events in their minds. The reason why S4 liked history classes is similar to M5's reasons. S4's teacher was also giving students the feeling that one was living the event being told.

As the reason for S10's love of history, S10 showed that the teacher had taught the lesson actively. M7 stated that the teacher taught the lesson like a story, and M13 stated that the teacher adjusted gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice very well while talking about historical events. These are the most important reasons why these students like history classes. M14's reason for liking history class was that the teacher had given the lesson by living out the history and reflecting this onto the students. S2 stated the role of the teacher in liking history classes as:

Our history teacher would not only give lessons to us but would also make it easy for us to understand by associating it with daily life. I have always taken my private-school teacher's teaching technique as an example. The teacher would cover the subject by drawing a map on the board. This way would ensure that the subject stayed in my visual memory.

S13 said:

My history teachers were very good. With a ruler, they had us draw the Black Sea as a Turkish lake. I still remember that. They would come to the classroom and tell us that we were going to conquer Istanbul; it was as if we were the ones actually conquering the city, not Fatih. Normally, students do not actively include themselves in the lesson in verbal courses, but our teacher would include the whole classroom in the activity being performed.

One understands from the students' statements that teachers who take history out of a book-like narrative, who draw students into the events, establish bonds between historical and current events, narrate historical events as a story, and in particular, impersonate the events, have an effective teaching method.

Considering history teachers' general qualifications, one sees a dynamic teacher profile here. It draws attention to the fact that students want to learn history lessons

using a narrative method, or as though they were experiencing it. Additionally, getting up-to-date historical events and comparing them with current events are preferred by students. This can actually be interpreted as the request about dragging history classes, which are abstract in nature, to a concrete level. Teachers who include students in the course; have strong communication skills; and after giving lessons investigate with impersonations, gestures, facial expressions and various materials, have been able to make history classes likable. Teachers who do the opposite, on the other hand, are quite effective at making history classes disliked. The characteristics of teachers who cause history courses to be disliked and who cause students to have negative attitudes towards history are given in Table 5. With the question of which behaviors and characteristics of history teachers have caused negative attitude towards history classes to develop, some data was obtained from the students.

Table 5  
*Characteristics of Teachers Who Made History Classes Disliked and Caused Students to Develop Negative Attitudes towards History Courses, According to the Study Group Students*

Categories	Codes	<i>f</i>
Personality and Attitudes	Has a rough, cold personality	2
	Not able to establish communication	1
	Imposes their ideological opinions and politics in class	1
	Is reckless	1
	Total	5
Methods and techniques	Gives lessons by reading from book or while seated	7
	Is oriented toward rote teaching	5
	Gives boring and monotonous lessons	4
	Sticks to the book	3
	Gives lessons by writing on the board	2
	Summarizing the subjects briefly	1
	Focuses on the students sitting in the front desks	1
	Gives a literal narrative	1
	Gives unnecessary information	1
	Total	25

As seen in Table 5, the characteristics of teachers who made history classes disliked and caused students to develop negative attitudes towards history courses according to the students in the study group are grouped under two themes. These categories show similarities with the categories in Table 4. These teachers' personalities, attitudes, methods, and techniques had caused history classes to be disliked. However, according to Table 5, the methods and techniques that teachers use in their class are the most important factors that had made history classes disliked.

S6 stated not liking history classes due to the teacher's reckless manners when in the 9th grade. However, through the teacher's effect over the following years, S6's ideas have changed:

Our teacher in freshman year would come to the classroom, read the book, and comment on it. That is why I unfortunately had only a 0.5 on my first exam. In my sophomore year, I started to like the history course with the influence of my teacher, Mrs. Hicran.

S7, saying “Our teacher for freshman and sophomore years would not teach the lesson and was cold,” points out that the teacher’s personality was not open to communication.

M11’s thoughts, emphasizing the teacher’s rough personality and teaching method based on rote learning, were expressed as:

Our teacher was so rough and would always make us memorize, yelling and screaming unnecessarily. I would become stressed during the lesson and not listen. Because I was unsuccessful, I did not like these kinds of courses. I think history teachers shouldn’t talk to pass the class time but have us take some notes. When teachers speak too much, students get sleepy. When they have students write too much, students stop listening. I didn’t like the class because our teachers couldn’t balance it.

S8 stated:

During my high school years, my history class became a torment to me because my teacher would keep conveying information and conduct the lesson by ordering us to underline, take notes, memorize, etc. I will add impersonations and interesting stories to the course content so as to be a beloved teacher.

One’s attention is drawn to the fact that the method S8 wants to use when becoming a teacher shows similarities with the methods given in Table 4. These methods were used by the teachers who had made history classes likable.

M5’s following expressions indicate the teaching methods and techniques that keep students passive:

I liked history classes to a point because my teacher would not teach the lesson in a way I could understand. My teacher would read the book without leaving the desk and then end the class. One of my history teachers would come to class and only talk, never letting us speak or leave the class. Another history teacher would speak so fast during class. That is why I could never benefit from history courses.

S5 also mentioned a similar subject to M5’s:

My teacher in 9th grade made history miserable for me. He would only read, doing nothing else. The teacher didn’t know how to give a lecture. Because of how the teacher acted, it was really hard for me to like history and I would always get low grades on my exams.

Stating having no interest in history classes due to a history teacher, M10 criticized the teacher’s method by saying, “Our teacher would tell us too many unnecessary things without pointing out the important aspects.” Because in M10’s eyes, too much information meant more memorization. M2 and M3 stated that their teachers would

lecture by reading from the book, and thus they would get bored and sleepy. The teacher did not have an attention-grabbing method. In addition, M12 said, “I cannot say I liked history classes. All I did was try and pass the course. The teacher did not try and make the course likable but only give plain lectures.” S15 gives more detail regarding the teacher’s methods and techniques, saying:

I did not like history classes in high school because they were never taught by illustrating it from our point of view for us to picture it in our minds and embrace it. Either we were made to read from the course book or the teacher would write notes on the board and expect us to write them down in the notebook. They would make us take oral exams at the beginning of each lesson to focus on the class and increase the level of success. However, this alienated my friends and me from the course instead of connecting us to it. This gave me a reason to skip all history classes.

While M8 emphasized that their high school teacher did not teach efficiently, M15 saw that their own teacher’s ideological imposition was a problem. M15 stated this problem as:

I did not like history classes in my freshman, sophomore, or senior years, only my junior year. The reason why I liked it as a junior was entirely about our teacher’s personality and way of teaching. And the reason why I didn’t like it in other years was that my teachers would openly tell me about their ideological views and debate politics during class instead of teaching the subjects.

When Table 4 and Table 5 are considered together, one sees that the findings verify each other. While teachers’ personalities, attitudes, and in-class methods and techniques caused history courses to be loved (see Table 4), similarly, teachers’ personalities, attitudes, teaching methods, and techniques caused history courses to be disliked (see Table 5). For instance, just as the teacher lecturing history as though living it made history classes likable, teaching by only talking or reading from the book caused history classes to be disliked. While teachers with a friendly personality lead history classes to be liked, those with rough and strict attitudes cause them to be disliked. Therefore, the findings in Table 4 and Table 5 clearly reveal that history teachers have a primary role in history classes being liked or disliked and in students developing positive or negative attitudes toward history classes.

### **Discussion**

Teachers who put teaching objectives and programs into practice have an important place in students’ lives. This study confirms this in terms of history teaching and history teachers. In terms of being a subject, history classes that look abstract and are far removed from students’ lives fail to easily arouse student interest (Boadu, 2015, p. 39). On this point, history teachers bear greater responsibilities on their shoulders.

At the end of the study, that teachers have the biggest share in making history likable is clearly understood. In the research, students were seen to emphasize the personalities, methods, and techniques of both teachers who had made history likable and those who had caused history courses to be disliked. However, the methods and techniques that teachers use in class are more effective than their personalities on making history classes liked and leading to positive thoughts about history. This result relates to effective history teachers and effective teaching. Effective history teaching brings the historical subject closer to students' lives, hearts, and minds (Boadu, 2015, p. 39). Effective teaching is not expected to emerge in traditional history teaching because in traditional history teaching, the teacher lectures on the subject intensely and students take and memorize notes. This strengthens the opinion of history as a rote-based course where active learning does not occur for the student. Within active learning, students assume various responsibilities and make decisions; they are challenged to use their cognitive skills and have the opportunity to self-regulate during the learning process (Kırpık, 2009, p. 66). An active and effective teacher, on the other hand, encourages students to participate, provides opportunities and feedback, and warns students when necessary about doing better (Kırpık, 2009, p. 73).

In the research findings, students were seen to want effective and active history teaching. Students indicated two aspects regarding the characteristics of teachers who had made history likable and had brought history class to an important point in students' eyes. One of these two aspects is teachers' personal characteristics, and the other one is their methods and techniques. These student expectations coincide with the qualifications of effective history teaching and being an effective history teacher because effective and qualified history teachers should: be active and creative in the learning-teaching process, be willing to apply academic and educational innovations in class, prepare learning-teaching environments that are suitable for students' age groups and skills, use supplementary materials, and make use of information and communication technologies (Çulha, 2010, pp. 370–372; Dinç, 2009). Relieving history classes of boredom and rote memorization, making them entertaining, and increasing students' historical abilities are deemed important for securing effective history teaching (Formwalt, 2002). The most significant responsibility in this regard is that of the teachers.

The following are some of the personal characteristics of teachers who had made history likable according to the findings: friendly, entertaining, loves one's job, honest, idealistic, democratic, a good communicator, mild-mannered, and calm. Personal characteristics of teachers who had caused history courses to be disliked were stated by students as: a rough and cold personality, unable to communicate, imposes one's ideological opinions and debates politics in class, and is reckless. When comparing the personal characteristics of teachers who had made history courses to be liked

or disliked, one sees that they are opposite from each other. For example, while the teacher who makes history courses likable has been described as friendly, the other is mentioned as having a rough and cold personality. While the teacher making history likable is a good communicator, the other is not so good at it. Research on effective teaching and teaching environments has also emphasized teachers' personal characteristics and behaviors (Bashir, Bajwa, & Rana, 2014; Demir & Köse, 2016; Gündüz, 2014; Stronge et al., 2011). The teachers' in-class attitudes on the other hand, have a critical effect on students' personal development and success (Engin et al., 2009; Kosgei et al., 2013; Scrivner, 2009; Sönmez, 2001, p. 137; Şişman, 2002, p. 154; Uluğ et al., 2011).

According to the students, the methods and techniques of teachers who had made history likable and increased interest in history courses are: lecturing as if living it, being entertaining, including students in the lesson, making students feel like they are on the stage of history, bringing the subject up to date, narrating it, giving the lesson actively, liking to chat, using gestures and facial expressions, paying attention to eye contact, and providing supplementary sources. Studies on effective history teaching show it corresponds with students' expectations.

The methods and techniques of teachers who had made history disliked, on the other hand, are: giving lessons by reading from the book or making students read; having a rote-based, boring, and monotonous way of lecturing; sticking to the book; giving lessons by writing on the board; giving brief summaries of subjects; focusing on the students sitting in the front desks; giving simple narratives, and giving unnecessary information. Studies on effective history teaching show it corresponds with students' expectations. For example, Formwalt (2002) considered history classes that are entertaining; based on evidence; where the course books are used less, subjects are brought up to date, local history is mentioned, and music, movies, and computer technology are used to be more effective. Teachers who make history courses to be liked or disliked are seen to use the exact opposite methods and techniques. While teachers who make history likable include students in the lesson and lecture actively and multi-directionally, teachers from the other group lecture monotonously, which keeps students passive. Those teachers who give lessons monotonously and do not establish active communications with students because they've reduced history courses to memorization do not possess the skills that an effective teacher should have, because an effective teacher is expected to be enthusiastic, friendly, reliable, encouraging, and systematic; be able to attract students' attention; pay attention to diversity; be able to organize class time well; be able to follow students' development; give feedback; and know well how to teach what is to be taught (Kitson, Husbands, & Steward, 2011; Stronge, 2007; Tatar, 2004).

One of the most important aspects noticed upon the research is that students wish historical subjects to be handled more concretely. It is understood that the teachers who are bringing historical subjects up to date, teaching history like living it and narrating it are the ones who are successful in making history courses liked. By carrying historical subjects into students' worlds, teachers are bringing students' perceptions together with historical subjects that are about the past and abstract for students. By using historical movies, stories and novels, poetry and epics, and taking students to museum and field trips, teachers can meet this sort of student needs. However, in order for teachers to be able to make their classes more efficient at this phase, they need to have knowledge on how to use those kind of materials in teaching. As a result, it is inevitable for history teachers to keep pace with the developments and innovations in their fields to achieve professional success. In terms of history courses to be taught by history teachers in schools within a frame that is suitable with the history discipline, it is deemed necessary to bring together historians and history teachers from time to time, and that both groups stay in touch (Garg, 2007, p. 215; Fordham, 2012; Olutayo, 2015, p. 140). The said communication should be maintained even strongly between the academicians who study in the field of history teaching and the history teachers. In-service trainings organized by the Ministry of Education should be employed in this direction. Increasing the number of studies and projects that will be conducted with the cooperation of academicians and teachers in the field would allow the comparison of theory and practice regarding history teaching.

According to Ata, an effective history teacher plays a determinant role in students' attitudes towards history lessons (Ata, 2007). This study reveals that history teachers are quite effective on student's attitude towards history courses. However, participants' complaints about teachers' methods and techniques and teachers' maintaining traditional methods point out that the problems in the effective history teaching continue at a considerable level. For this reason, the number of studies on history teachers should be increased. It is a need to inform history teachers about effective history teaching and their awareness should be risen. Otherwise, for history teachers who are lacking professional awareness and field knowledge and are closed to development and communication, it will be inevitable to alienate students from the history love and cause them to develop negative attitudes towards history courses. According to Brown and Atkins (2002), poor and ineffective teaching decreases the motivation and causes students to develop negative attitudes towards learning. The fact that the participants developing negative attitudes towards history teachers had gone through an inefficient history teaching is a significant finding of the research.

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