



RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY BASED ON THE VIEWS OF PRE-SERVICE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

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Abstract:

One of the objectives of the social studies course is to train active and democratic citizens, who could tolerate differences. The aim of the present study was to determine the concept of respect for diversity based on the views of pre-service social science teachers and to reveal the cases where there is and there is no respect for diversity. The study was conducted at Firat University, Faculty of Education during the 2018-2019 academic year spring semester. The case study method, a qualitative research design, was used in the study. Convenience sampling method, a purposive sampling method, was also utilized. The study group included 21 pre-service social studies teachers. In the study, the data were collected with a semi-structured interview form and analyzed with the descriptive analysis technique. Based on the study findings, pre-service teachers stated that there was no respect for diversity in religion, ancestry, lifestyle and several other issues. According to the pre-service teachers, the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity were bias, a desire to consider others as unequal, gender differences, ignorance and lack of empathy, and traditional social structure. They defined respect for diversity as respect for differences in religion, language, and race.

Keywords: social studies, values education, respect for diversity

1. Introduction

Global developments allow the individuals to encounter multicultural experiences. More wars, disasters or migrations, developments in transportation and communication technologies and economic developments have led to a requirement to come up with global solutions for problems. One of the aims of education systems is to train tolerant citizens in a democratic society. Respect for diversity is respect towards individuals with a different religion, language, race, lifestyle or ideas. One of the objectives of the social studies course is to train active and democratic citizens.

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The items 2, 3, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17 that describe the special objectives of the social studies curriculum, emphasize respect for diversity. Social studies course discusses humans, the society and their association with the environment. It should allow students to develop their knowledge and experiences on human-society relations and provide an environment for the individual to discover himself and his values (MEB, 2018: 7; Kabapınar, 2014: 3).

One of the social studies fields is people. This concept of people includes both individuals near us such as the family and those who live in most distant parts of the world. These people include individuals who lived a long time ago, who currently live, and who will live in the future. While children learn things about other people, they would also create a common sense about humanity by discovering common traits and admiring the diversity among cultural groups (Zarillo, translated by Bayram Tay; Selçuk Beşir Demir, 2016: 4).

In the social studies curriculum, values are described as dependent on the training of individuals who have adopted and implemented their future social values. Thus, the education system aims to allow the individuals to make adequate ethical decisions and reflect these decisions on their behavior. Raising individuals with core values is one of the most fundamental objectives of the education systems (MEB, 2018: 4).

Difference is defined by the Turkish Language Association as being different, distinction, and diversity. Respect for diversity is defined as respect for individuals with different traits. What is the order of the respect for diversity or tolerance in value ranking? In a study conducted by Karatekin, Gençtürk and Kılıçoğlu (2013), the students, pre-service social studies teachers and social studies teachers were asked to rank the values in the social studies curriculum based on importance and explain the reasons for this ranking. The study findings demonstrated that the top three values were determined as honesty, respect and patriotism (<http://www.tdk.gov.tr/>).

Is there a difference between verbal or numerical departments? The research conducted by Güler, Yıldırım, Gürbüz and Koç (2016) analyzed the professional values of pre-service teachers based on various variables. The research findings revealed significant differences between the departments favoring the verbal fields. This was explained by the multi-faceted and the higher level discussion about the people in verbal courses.

Beldağ, Ozdemir and Nalçacı (2016) conducted a study to investigate the acquisition levels of certain values in the seventh-grade social studies course. The study findings revealed that there was a significant difference between the views of the students on honesty, fairness and peace values, favoring the female students, while the respect for diversity value was significantly higher among those with a high mother education level. How should the education and instruction environments be organized for the acquisition of the respect for diversity? According to Topçubaşı (2016), the selection and utilization of the material and organization of the space are very important in the training for acquisition of the respect for diversity. The educational environment should reflect children's positive identities and allow them to develop empathy towards diversity. It is

necessary to create an educational environment that promotes diversity and allows the children to observe cultural diversity in educational applications.

In a study conducted by Çengelci, Hancı and Karaduman (2013) to determine the views of teachers and students on values education, it was determined that the basic values that were aimed to be acquired included love, respect, tolerance, solidarity and responsibility. The students stated that the school primarily aimed the acquisition of the value of honesty.

Which values students acquire in educational institutions? In a study conducted by Beldağ, Ozdemir and Nalçacı (2017) to determine the views of the parents on acquisition levels of values in the seventh-grade social studies curriculum, it was reported that that children acquired patriotism, respect for diversity, aesthetic, scientific approach, honesty, peace and fairness values. Furthermore, the significance of family in the acquisition of these values was emphasized.

On respect for diversity, the impact of educational institutions is important in addition to that of the family. The education provided on the topic would be more permanent especially among younger age groups. A study carried out by Pekdoğan (2018) aimed to investigate the views of preschool teachers on respect to diversity education. The teachers stated that they mostly aimed the acquisition of empathy skills to improve respect for diversity, the preschool curriculum should include further applications on respect for diversity education, they mostly utilized game-play and drama methods, good models should be provided for children in the education, and there were problems about the significance of parent participation and in the evaluation process.

It is also a fact that teacher behavior affects values education. Based on the findings of a study conducted by Kılıç, Şahin, Albayrakoğlu and Arseven (2015), it was concluded that the values of respect, tolerance, justice, sincerity, truthfulness, humility, prudence, exemplification, benevolence, diligence, responsibility, patience, altruism, success, and solidarity were damaged as a result of negative teacher behavior.

Çatlak and Yiğit (2017) conducted a study on the impact of various methods and techniques on value acquisition. The study aimed to determine the impact of the storyline method on the acquisition of the values of respect for diversity and empathy skills by pre-service social studies teachers within the context of multiculturalism. The study findings revealed a significant difference between the empathy skills scale scores of the pre-service teachers favoring the experimental group, while there was no significant difference between their respect for diversity scale scores.

The methods, techniques and evaluation techniques adopted by the teachers in the course also affect the acquisition of certain values by the students. Based on the findings of the study conducted by Akyıldız (2015), social studies teachers preferred conventional methods in the acquisition of the value of respect for rights and freedoms and also utilized conventional measurement and evaluation methods besides observation and peer evaluation, and the study concluded that they experienced certain problems in the acquisition of respect for rights and freedoms due to media, school, parental and environmental factors.

Suwaed (2014) conducted a study to determine the perspectives of the educational staff employed in an Arab high school in Israel. The study reflected on the efforts of these schools to fill the gaps between the people. The study findings revealed that students were not adequately exposed to the culture of the other group and significantly influenced by misperceptions and misinterpretations. Respect for diversity, elimination of compulsory uniformity, maximum freedom of choice in lifestyle, and dialogue between different cultures were recommended in the study.

What is the approach for respect of diversity in undergraduate education? In a study conducted by Günçavdı and Polat (2018), the approach of instructors towards diversity was investigated based on the student views. The study findings demonstrated that the approach of the faculty members was positive to diversity; however, certain instructors attempted to undermine diversity and pressured the students to accept their views.

A study by Al Zubi (2018) aimed to propose a model to determine whether English teachers in Jordan adopted democratic techniques. A democracy scale was developed by the author and applied to 20 male and 10 female educators. The sample was randomly selected from the Albalqu Applied University faculty members. The study findings revealed that the adoption of democratic methods in the classes was not strong enough and further recommendations for the use of democracy in the classes were presented.

In a study conducted by Demovsky and Niemuth (1999), a program to improve global skills and ethnic diversity awareness in the classroom was developed and implemented to allow the students to better understand others. The study sample included middle school 6th grade and high school students with learning disabilities. The analysis findings demonstrated that the class lacked respect and perspective for ethnic diversity due to poor education of the teachers and the students and lack of school support, low tolerance towards each other, lack of social skills and superficial curriculum material. As a solution, utilization of cooperative learning, global understanding and tolerance were recommended.

2. Purpose of the Study

Educational institutions have important duties in value acquisition. The above-mentioned studies demonstrated that variables such as educational environment, teacher behavior, learning and instruction processes were effective on respect for diversity. Furthermore, there were certain problems in the acquisition of the value of respect for diversity in education and instruction process. The present study aimed to describe respect for diversity based on pre-service teacher views.

2.1 Research Questions

The study answered the following questions;

- 1) According to pre-service teacher, what is respect for diversity?
- 2) In which topics, do the pre-service teacher think that diversity isn't respected?

- 3) what are the reasons, for the lack of respect for diversity according to pre-service teachers?

3. Method

The present study was conducted as a case study, a qualitative research design, to determine the views of pre-service teachers on respect for diversity. In a case study, a case could be an individual, group, or institution. Case studies could be conducted with quantitative or qualitative approaches. The aim of these approaches is to reveal findings associated with a particular case. The most significant feature of a qualitative case study is the investigation of one or more cases. In other words, factors that affect a case are investigated with a holistic approach. These studies focus on the impact of the factors on the case and the impact of the case on these factors (Yıldırım, Şimşek, 2005: 77).

3.1 Participants

The study was conducted at Fırat University, Faculty of Education in the 2018-2019 academic year spring semester. The study group included 21 pre-service teachers. Convenience sampling method, a purposive sampling method, was used in the study. Only volunteering individuals were included in the sample. The participant demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The study group participant demographics

Teacher demographics		f
Gender	Female	1
	Male	8
Class Level	Junior	8
	Freshman	13
Total		21

As seen in Table 1, 13 participants were female and 8 were male. Eight participants were junior, 13 were freshmen students.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

The present study aimed to determine the views of pre-service teachers on respect for diversity. Case study, a qualitative research design, was applied. The data were collected with a semi-structured interview form. To ensure the construct validity of the interview form, the views of two field experts were obtained. To determine whether the questions were comprehensible, the draft form was applied to 5 pre-service teachers in a pilot scheme. The form was finalized after certain editions to that form. The study aimed to determine the factors that affect respect for diversity. Attention was paid to ensure that participant pre-service teachers volunteered in the study. The interview form included the questions:

- 1) In your opinion, what is respect for diversity?
- 2) In which topics, you think there is no respect for diversity?

3) In your opinion, what are the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity?

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were collected with a semi-structured interview form. Descriptive analysis technique was employed to analyze the collected data. The collected data were read by the author and a field expert. Associated topics were categories to obtain the study themes.

In the study, developed forms were distributed to the volunteering pre-service teachers and the aim of the study was explained. The interview form data were coded, and themes were determined based on these codes. The data were organized under themes and presented to the reader. The comparison between the two researchers was based on the reliability formula ($\text{Agreement} / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}) \times 100$). Thus, the reliability coefficient was calculated as 98% in the study. Reliability is tested using certain techniques. Initially, different researchers review the documents and the correlation between the data and the study results based on these data. It could also be called as reliability between the researchers (Tavsancil; Aslan; 2001. 81).

The study data are presented in a report. All study data were filed by the author for future analyses.

4. Findings

The study findings based on the study sub-objectives are presented below:

1. The findings on the definition of respect for diversity according to pre-service social studies teachers: The findings on the definition of respect for diversity according to pre-service social studies teachers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Respect for Diversity Definition

Definition	f
Diversity should be respected independent of religious, lingual or racial differences	20

The question 'In your opinion, what is respect for diversity?' was asked to pre-service social studies teachers to determine the definition of respect for diversity as seen in Table 2. Based on the answers, the vast majority of pre-service teachers defined the concept as respect for diversity regardless of religion, race and language. Examples of the pre-service teacher views are presented below.

"Regardless of religion, language, race and sect, people and diversity should be respected". (T1)

"It is to respect a person's religion, race and ideological views and to strive to create such an environment". (T4)

“It is one of the most important responsibilities of the individual to respect the race, religion, culture and views of others” . (T17)

As seen in the direct quotations mentioned above, pre-service teachers defined respect for diversity as respecting the religion, language, race, ideological views and culture of others. Based on these definitions, it was determined that teacher candidates knew the concept of respect for diversity.

2. The findings on the cases where respect for diversity was not observed based on the views of pre-service teachers: The findings on the cases where respect for diversity was not observed based on the views of pre-service teachers are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Cases where respect for diversity was not observed based on the views of pre-service teachers

Cases where respect for diversity was not observed	f
Religion, ancestry, lifestyle, etc.	14
Gender	4
Profession	2
Region	1

As seen in Table 3, the second question posed to the pre-service teachers, ‘In which topics, you think there is no respect for diversity?’ aimed to determine the cases where respect for diversity did not exist based on the views of pre-service teachers. Based on the pre-service teachers’ responses, there was no respect for religious, ancestral, lifestyle diversity, and there was no respect for gender, regional and occupational differences. Examples of the pre-service teacher views are presented below.

“It is observed that there is an unequal respect for one’s religion, ancestry and lifestyle, and more.” (T1)

“I think that there is respect for gender diversity” . (T2)

“I have experienced that there is no respect for professional diversity” . (T12)

“I observed disrespect due to the difference in status in a previous workplace” . (T17)

In the above-mentioned direct quotes, pre-service teachers stated that there was unequal respect for religion, ancestry, lifestyle and more, as cases where there was no respect for diversity and they experienced disrespect for national, gender and status diversity.

3. The findings on the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity based on the views of pre-service teachers: The findings on the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity based on the views of pre-service teachers are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: The findings on the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity based on the views of pre-service teachers

The reasons for the lack of respect for diversity	f
Prejudice and rejection of equality for all	14
Ignorance and lack of empathy	4
Family structure and upbringing	2
Different traits of genders	1
Traditional social structure	1

The third question posed to pre-service teachers, 'In your opinion, what are the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity?' aimed to determine the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity as seen in Table 4. Based on the pre-service teachers' responses, prejudice, rejection of the principle of equality for all, different traits of genders, ignorance and lack of empathy, and traditional social structure were among these reasons. Examples of the pre-service teacher views are presented below.

"Preference of men in my family, their traditional social structure". (T8)

"The reason for the lack of respect for diversity is ignorance and lack of empathy." (T7)

"The need of people here (Istanbul) to arrive at their jobs, homes etc. and to go where they want to go as soon as possible causes them to ignore different, disabled people who need help." (T10)

"There are many reasons why there is no respect for diversity. Some of them are family structure, upbringing, telling people that only their thoughts are absolutely correct, and lack of research and knowledge." (T13)

"People want to see uniform people. They want to see people that are similar to them, think and live like themselves." (T21)

In the above-mentioned direct quotes, pre-service teachers stated that the lack of respect for diversity was due to people's desire to see no one as equal, traditional social structure, ignorance and lack of empathy, inability to see the needs of people with disabilities, family structure and upbringing, and their desire to see only similar people.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The interviews conducted with 21 pre-service teachers to determine their views on respect for diversity aimed to identify their definitions on respect for diversity, their

views on the topics that lacked respect for diversity, and the reasons for this lack of respect for diversity. Pre-service teachers defined respect for diversity as respect for differences regardless of religion, language and race.

The pre-service teachers listed religion, ancestry, lifestyle, gender and regional and occupational differences as cases that lack respect for diversity. The present study findings were consistent with the findings reported by Türe and Ersoy (2015), Mercan (2016), Taştekin, Yükçü, İzoğlu et al. (2016)

The findings reported in the study conducted by Türe and Ersoy (2015) demonstrated that the majority of social studies teachers stated that tolerance could be acquired through education, educated individuals were more tolerant, and teachers should be tolerant. The teachers stated that different cultures and values should be instructed for tolerance and tolerance education was not sufficiently included in the curriculum. A study conducted by Mercan (2016) to determine the cultural intelligence levels of the employees in accommodation businesses and whether there was a correlation between cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity revealed that the cultural intelligence of the employees increased their intercultural sensitivity. The findings of the study conducted by Taştekin, Yükçü, İzoğlu et al. (2016) demonstrated that the attitudes of the teachers towards multiculturalism were generally positive, the individual interviews conducted in the study showed that teachers' perceptions were positive; however, they were incompetent in implementation.

In the present study, the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity based on the views of pre-service teachers were prejudice, the desire to reject equality for all, gender differences, ignorance and lack of empathy, and traditional social structure. The findings of the present study were consistent with the findings reported by Ersoy (2016), Güven (2012), Topçubaşı (2015), Kacar (2018), Yıldırım and Çakar (2018).

A study conducted by Ersoy (2016) aimed to determine the tolerance perceptions and development of fourth grade primary school students. The study findings demonstrated that students perceived tolerance as cooperation, love, forgiveness and good behavior, and only few perceived it as respect for diversity. The teachers stated that the developmental characteristics of the students, curricula, textbooks, the social environment, and the social and cultural environment at the school were effective on the development of the perception of tolerance. A study conducted by Güven (2012) aimed to determine the correlation between the autonomy levels and respect for diversity of pre-service teachers. The study findings demonstrated that there was a positive and significant correlation between autonomy levels and respect for diversity. Furthermore, the autonomy and respect for diversity levels of female pre-service teachers were higher when compared to male participants. Topçubaşı (2016) conducted a study to determine the impact of the respect for diversity curriculum on student attitudes towards respect for diversity. Respect for diversity curriculum was applied to the experimental group two hours a week for 14 weeks. The study findings were significant in favor of the experimental group. In a study conducted by Kacar (2018) to investigate the impact of multicultural personality in pre-service primary school teachers on respect for diversity, it was determined that as social entrepreneurship, cultural empathy, open-mindedness,

flexibility and emotional balance increased, respect for diversity increased as well. A study conducted by Yıldırımçakar (2018) aimed to determine the correlation between the informal relationship levels of primary and middle school teachers and their respect for diversity levels. The study findings revealed a moderately positive correlation between informal relationship levels and respect for diversity in primary and middle school teachers.

On conclusion, based on the views of pre-service teachers, there is no respect for diversity based on religion, ancestry, lifestyle, gender and region of origin and occupation. According to the pre-service teachers, the reasons for the lack of respect for diversity included prejudice, the desire to reject equality for all, gender differences, ignorance and lack of empathy, and traditional social structure.

6. Recommendation

- 1) Democratic education should be prioritized in educational institutions.
- 2) Empathy education should be emphasized.
- 3) Respect for diversity curriculum should be developed.
- 4) Different cultures and lifestyles should be introduced using technological facilities.
- 5) Curricula should focus on the introduction of different cultures.

About the Author

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