



## PRESERVICE HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF OUTDOOR HISTORY TEACHING

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### Abstract:

Creating positive attitude and behaviors in individuals towards the environment he/she lives in, outdoor teaching aims at bringing the individual together with unwritten evidences by making use of historical environment and resources when considered especially within the scope history and social studies teaching. Using relational screening model, this study aimed at investigating preservice history and social studies teachers' perceptions of outdoor history teaching in terms of different variables. The participants were composed of 265 preservice teachers studying at two different universities in Turkey during 2016-2017 academic year. Outdoor History Teaching Perceptions Scale (OHTPS), which was developed by Yazıcı and Yıldırım (2017) and aimed at determining the teachers'/preservice teachers' perceptions of outdoor history teaching, was used as the data collection tool. Within the framework of this study, preservice history and social studies teachers' perceptions of outdoor history teaching were investigated in terms of gender, university, department, GPA, and appointment status after graduation. As a result of the study, it was found that preservice social studies teachers obtained higher scores from the subscales of outdoor history teaching awareness, knowledge, and competency, and from the complete scale than preservice history teachers.

**Keywords:** outdoor learning, history education, social studies education, preservice teacher, perception.

## 1. Introduction

Outdoor teaching enables making links between formal education and informal education environments such as museums, science centers, historical places, zoos, botanical gardens, etc. Important evidences of these kinds of education environments on students' attention, attitudes, and learning can be found in literature (Salmi, 1993). Extending the boundary of learning process, outdoor teaching aims at implementing the curriculum through outdoor observations and experiences. This practice facilitates the learning of theoretical topics, that aren't based on any experience, through individual experiences. Thus, it becomes possible for students to internalize their knowledge and turn them into experiences (Hoodless, 2008; Smith, 2010). This situation helps both learning the outside of the school and enrich the school programs through a variety of activities (Binbaşıoğlu, 2000).

Student-centered active learning, which is the fundamental philosophy of constructivist approach, has an important place in outdoor learning. The students construct the knowledge on their minds as a result of their experiences and interaction with environment (Tokcan, 2015). This aspect shows the difference of outdoor learning from traditional methods. The students are given a variety of tasks during the learning process. In return, the students participate in these tasks actively and develop their skills of analysis, synthesis, and design (Newman & Associates, 1996). Moreover, their abilities such as individual or group research, reading, note-taking, and obtaining information from others are also strengthened. Outdoor activities are conducted rarely, and this situation makes them more special and permanent for students (Özür, 2010).

In order for the outdoor teaching to be efficient, the activities should be conducted in accordance with the students' interests and wills based on the curriculum. Moreover, these activities should be linked with the lessons and conducted within the scope of the topic (Binbaşıoğlu, 2000; Karademir, 2013). Additionally, the activities should be conducted in a planned way with the approval of school administration and guidance of the teacher. In other words, outdoor teaching is effective only when it is connected with the curriculum. Otherwise, it becomes just an entertaining trip (Lappin, 1997; Binbaşıoğlu, 2000). In outdoor activities, it generally aimed at completing the educational works conducted at school and making a link between the theoretical knowledge and life (Demirel, 2008).

Creating positive attitude and behaviors in individuals towards the environment he/she lives in, outdoor teaching was firstly introduced within the scope of environment; however, it becomes an alternative educational activity over time. It is in demand by many disciplines such as math, geology, communication, history, social

studies, and political sciences (Safran & Ata, 1998; Okur-Berberoğlu & Uygun, 2013). Considered within the scope of history and social studies teaching, museums, historical places, and martyrs memorials are the subjects of outdoor teaching. It is aimed here to bring the students together with unwritten evidences by making use of historical environment and resources (Safran, 2006).

When the young people experiences what is beneficial for them, they learn better. While doing this, they not only learn how the life of people in the past was, but they take better positions in making their own decisions about topics and discussions as well (Smith, 2010; Snelson, 2011). The majority of history courses are conducted in the classroom and the students get out of the classrooms only for a few topics. However, the most efficient lessons during the history teaching take place out of the classrooms, historical places, and museums (Kitson, Husbands & Steward, 2011).

When the current history curriculums in Turkey are examined, it can be seen that outdoor activities are emphasized. Outdoor history teaching activities are observed in the *Secondary Education 9<sup>th</sup> Grades History Course Curriculum*. In the cyber museum activity called as "History in Internet" recommended under the title of curriculum activities samples, the students are asked to visit the archeology museums around the world and Turkey, obtain information, and share it with the peers in the classroom. Moreover, in the activities of "Lets Travel and See" and "History-Place", it is recommended to arrange an excursion to the archeological museums around and historical places. Similarly, in the activity called "History near us", it is recommended to arrange excursions to historical places belonging to Turkish states and principalities founded in Anatolia. Additionally, the documentaries called "Cenghis Khan" and "The Candles of Asia", which is about the Turkish scholars living in Central Asia (MEB, 2007).

Outdoor teaching activities are also present in *Secondary Education 10<sup>th</sup> Grade History Course Curriculum* and *10<sup>th</sup> Grade Elective History Course Curriculum*. Among the sample activities, excursions to historical places are recommended in the topics of "The First Cities of Ottoman", "Ottoman Bazaars", "The History near us", and "Gallipoli is impassable". Turkish social life, family life, and the position of man and woman are recommended to be examined through the stories of Dede Korkut in the activity called "From the Words of Dede Korkut". In the activity called "Tanzimat Era Literature", it is asked to examine the reflections of political and social events on literature by making use of literary works of the era. In the activity called "Anatolia from the Viewpoint of Evliya Celebi", the students are asked to investigate their cities based on the book of Evliya Celebi. In the activities called "The Conqueror of Baghdad", "The Operation of Sarikamis", "Sari Gelin", and "The Foundation of Ottoman Empire", it is recommended

to make the students watch documentaries. Finally, in the activity called "Imperial School of Naval Engineering", it is recommended to investigate the school's history and make a cyber excursion through the webpage of Naval Military College (MEB, 2011a).

Similarly, outdoor activities are also present in *Secondary Education 11<sup>th</sup> Grade History Course Curriculum*. For example, a museum trip is advised in the activity called "Tanzimat Museum". In the activity called "Parliament of the People", cyber or real excursions are recommended to first or second Grand National Assembly of Turkey. In the activities called "Lets Travel and See", "Lets Know about the Artifacts from Seljuks and Principalities", and "Lets Know about Ottoman Artifacts around", excursions to historical places are recommended. In the activity called Safranbolu, a Culture City", a cyber excursion is advised. In the activity called "Pen-Work", documentaries about Ottoman ornament art are recommended to be watched (MEB, 2011b).

In the *Secondary Education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism Course Curriculum*, historical places are recommended to be visited in the activities called "In Gallipoli with Mustafa Kemal Pasha", "We are visiting the Parliament", "Duatepe Martyrs Memorial", and "Atatürk's Mausoleum". In the activities called "Turkish Telegraphers during the War of Independence", "The War of Independence with the Movies", "The Republic", and "Ataturk Documentary", documentaries are advised to be watched. Museums are recommended to be visited in the activities called "Republic Museums" and "We are visiting Ataturk Museum Houses". In the activity called "Surname Law", the students are asked to investigate oral history. A cyber excursion is recommended to be arranged in the activity called "Ataturk Forest Farm" (MEB, 2012a). Finally, when the *Secondary Education Modern Turkish and World History Course Curriculum* is examined, it can be seen that oral history studies with Korea and Cyprus war veterans are recommended to be made in the activities called "Korean Veteran", and "Oral History". Moreover, in the activity called "Turkish Workers in Germany", the students are asked to make oral history studies with the workers that had been abroad, and they are asked to make cyber excursions in the activity called "European Council" (MEB, 2012b).

When the Social Studies Curriculum in Turkey is examined, it is observed that outdoor activities are given place especially after 2005. It involves some goals such as "making use of the event in and out of the school", "making comparisons with real life problems frequently", and "interaction with environment". Since 2005, outdoor activities such as oral history, local history, and cyber museum visits have been mentioned. In addition to that, the scope of activities such as museum education, historical place and field trips, interviews, and projects have been determined and made more functional by systematizing them (Kabapınar, 2015). Recently, a variety of projects

related to outdoor education such as “Children’s Fruit Gardens”, “Museum Education”, “Sunflower”, and “The Bridge of Heart” have been supported by the Ministry of National Education (Özür, 2010).

Although outdoor learning is emphasized in history and social studies curriculums in Turkey, history and social studies teachers’ awareness and knowledge about outdoor education and their perceptions competency are important in order to implement this technique effectively. Within this scope, the aim of this study is to investigate the preservice history and social studies teachers’ perceptions about outdoor history teaching in terms of some variables.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Research Model**

Relational screening model was used in this study aiming at investigating the preservice history and social studies teachers’ perceptions of outdoor history teaching in terms of some variables. Relational screening models are the research models used to find the existence and/or the degree of covariance between two or more number of variables (Karasar, 2005).

### **2.2 Participants**

The participants of this study were composed of 265 preservice teachers studying at 2 universities in Turkey during 2016-2017 academic year. The universities were coded as A and B for ethical considerations. 150 of the participants (57%) were female while 114 (43%) were male. 170 (65%) studied in A university while the rest (35%) studied in B university. 173 (65%) participants were receiving pedagogical formation education while 92 participants (35%) were studying at the last year in the social studies teaching undergraduate program. Their GPA distributions were: 3 participants were between 54 and 63; 79 were between 64 and 74; 154 were between 75 and 86; and 22 were between 87 and 100. 102 of the participants (41%) thought that they would be appointed as teachers in the future while 58 (24%) thought the opposite. 87 of them (35%) were undecided about it.

### **2.3 Data Collection Tools**

Outdoor History Teaching Perceptions Scale (OHTPS), which was developed by Yazıcı and Yıldırım (2017) and aimed at determining the teachers’/preservice teachers’ perceptions of outdoor history teaching, was used as the data collection tool. It composed of three subscales called as Awareness, Knowledge, and Competency and 21

items. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In the study conducted by Yazıcı and Yıldırım (2017), The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were estimated to be .94, .87, and .88 for Awareness, Knowledge, and Competency subscales, respectively. This value was estimated to be .94 for the whole scale. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were estimated to be .93, .87, .87, and .93 for Awareness, Knowledge, and Competency subscales and the whole scale.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using SPSS 20 software. The mean scores and standard deviations of preservice history and social studies teachers' perceptions of outdoor history teaching. Whether their perceptions differed in terms of gender, university, department, and GPA was examined using t-test while whether their perceptions were differed in terms of appointment status was examined using One-way variance analysis (ANOVA).

### 3. Findings

Independent samples t-test was conducted in order to determine whether the participants' perceptions of outdoor history teaching differed in terms of gender. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Preservice History and Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Outdoor History Teaching in terms of Gender

Subscales	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
Awareness	Female	139	32,70	242	-,835	,404
	Male	105	33,38			
Knowledge	Female	129	25,50		,295	,768
	Male	107	25,31			
Competency	Female	142	22,27		-,760	,448
	Male	112	22,70			
Total	Female	119	81,75		,540	,590
	Male	97	80,82			
		139	32,70			

As can be seen in Table 1, the participants' scores obtained from subscales and the whole scale weren't differed significantly in terms of gender. Independent samples t-test was conducted in order to determine whether the participants' perceptions of

outdoor history teaching differed in terms of their university. The results can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Preservice History and Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Outdoor History Teaching in terms of University

Subscales	University	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
Awareness	A	155	34,15	243	3,346	,000
	B	90	31,09			
Knowledge	A	155	25,43		,253	,800
	B	82	25,26			
Competency	A	164	22,83		1,715	,088
	B	91	21,83			
Total	A	141	83,06		2,824	,019
	B	76	78,13			
	A	155	34,15			

\*p<.05

As can be seen in Table 2, the participants' scores obtained from the whole scale and the Awareness subscale significantly differed in terms of their university. Accordingly, the participants from A university had significantly higher perceptions based on their scores obtained from Awareness subscale and the whole scale. Independent samples t-test was conducted in order to determine whether the participants' perceptions of outdoor history teaching differed in terms of their GPA. The findings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Preservice History and Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Outdoor History Teaching in terms of GPA

Subscales	GPA	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
Awareness	74 or lower	74	32,31	236	-1,238	,217
	75 and higher	164	33,39			
Knowledge	74 or lower	78	25,59		,471	,638
	75 and higher	152	25,26			
Competency	74 or lower	79	22,68		,590	,556
	75 and higher	169	22,32			
Total	74 or lower	68	80,38		-,775	,439
	75 and higher	142	81,79			

As can be seen in the Table 3, the participants' scores obtained from subscales and the whole scale weren't differed significantly in terms of their GPA. One-way variance

analysis was conducted in order to determine whether the participants' perceptions of outdoor history teaching differed in terms of their appointment status as a teacher after graduation. The findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Preservice History and Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Outdoor History Teaching in terms of their Appointment Status

Subscale	Source of the Variation	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean sum of Squares	F	p
Awareness	Between Groups	19,181	2	9,591	,248	,780
	Within Groups	8687,288	225	38,610		
	Total	8706,469	227			
Knowledge	Between Groups	202,371	2	101,186	4,195	,016*
	Within Groups	5281,845	219	24,118		
	Total	5484,216	221			
Competency	Between Groups	50,694	2	25,347	1,305	,273
	Within Groups	4562,739	235	19,416		
	Total	4613,433	237			
Total	Between Groups	989,227	2	494,614	3,297	,039*
	Within Groups	30154,003	201	150,020		
	Total	31143,230	203			

\*p<.05

According to the ANOVA results, the participants' scores obtained from the whole scale and the Knowledge subscale significantly differed in terms of their appointment statuses as a teacher. Tukey HSD test was conducted in order to reveal between which groups there was difference. According to results, the participants who thought that they would be appointed as a teacher had significantly more knowledge about outdoor history teaching and they had significantly higher perceptions of outdoor history teaching when compared with the participants who thought that they were unlikely to be appointed as a teacher in the future at the level of p<.05. Independent samples t-test was conducted in order to determine whether the participants' perceptions of outdoor history teaching differed in terms of their departments. The findings are presented in Table 5.



**Table 5:** Preservice History and Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Outdoor History Teaching in terms of their Departments

Subscales	Department	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
Awareness	History	159	32,48	243	-1,847	,066
	Social Studies	86	34,02			
Knowledge	History	147	24,69	235	-2,654	,008
	Social Studies	90	26,48			
Competency	History	166	22,03	253	-2,199	,029
	Social Studies	89	23,31			
Total	History	135	79,79	215	-2,361	,019
	Social Studies	82	83,87			

As can be seen in Table 5, participants' scores obtained from the whole scale and all of the subscales significantly differed in terms of their department at the level of  $p < .05$ . Accordingly, the preservice social studies teachers obtained significantly higher scores from the whole scale and all of the subscales than preservice history teachers.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, it was aimed at determining the preservice history and social studies teachers' perceptions of outdoor history teaching and revealing the variables that had an effect on their perceptions. Within this scope, the participants' gender didn't cause a significant difference in their perceptions of outdoor history teaching according to t-test results. This finding was consistent with the results of a study conducted by Yazıcı & Yıldırım (2017). Moreover, similar results were obtained in the studies focusing on concepts related to outdoor history teaching. For example, in a study carried out by Arslan & Büyük (2014), it was determined that social studies teachers' perceptions of historical and cultural places didn't differ in terms of gender. In the study of Yeşilbursa & Uslu (2014), preservice social studies teachers' self-efficacy beliefs of museum education didn't differ in terms of gender.

According to the results, the variable of preservice history teachers' university caused a significant difference in their scores obtained from the Awareness subscale and the whole scale. The participants from A university had significantly higher perceptions based on their scores obtained from Awareness subscale and the whole scale. This situation shows that the undergraduate education received by preservice teachers had an effect on their perceptions of outdoor history teaching. Similarly, in the study carried out by Yeşilbursa & Uslu (2014), the preservice social studies teachers'

self-efficacy about museum education, which is an important concept in outdoor history teaching, differed significantly in terms of the university variable.

Another result of the study was that the preservice teachers' scores didn't differ significantly in terms of their GPA. On the other hand, they differed significantly in terms of their beliefs about future appointment. Accordingly, the participants who thought that they would be appointed as a teacher had significantly more knowledge about outdoor history teaching and they had significantly higher perceptions of outdoor history teaching when compared with the participants who thought that they were unlikely to be appointed as a teacher in the future. This situation is important since it shows that the belief of future appointment was a motivation source for them.

The most interesting result of the study is that the preservice social studies teachers obtained significantly higher scores from the whole scale and all of the subscales than preservice history teachers. As known, social studies teachers are trained through undergraduate programs under education faculties, while the history teachers are trained in two ways. The first one is carried out through the undergraduate programs under education faculties, and the students receive courses related to pedagogical content knowledge starting from the first year. The second and the widest way is to provide pedagogical formation for the students studying history at science-literature faculties. In this practice, the students encounter educational concepts and methods in their final year and they are expected to implement them. When it is considered that the preservice history teachers in this study received pedagogical formation, it can be stated that their education wasn't suitable for the development of awareness, knowledge, and competency related to outdoor history teaching, which is very important for their professional development. Although outdoor history education is related to social studies teaching, its real field of application is history courses. Preservice history teachers' lower scores than preservice social studies teachers bring the quality of pedagogical formation into question.

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