Examination of Social Science Teachers' Opinions on Digital Citizenship

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ABSTRACT

It is possible to specify the concept of "digital", which is defined as "displaying data electronically on a screen" in the Turkish Dictionary, as an area in which human beings are most directly or indirectly affected. The digitalization moves of states with a systematic structure, especially in social issues, can be shown as the best example of this. In this context, developments in technology, communication and scientific studies, as well as showing their effects, made it necessary to reconsider the perception of citizenship in the social sense. The digitization of citizenship in the digital age also lets human beings re-evaluate economic, social and technological conditions. It also tries to determine what kind of position the human being, who is in a rapid and effective change, will be in this process. In this context, it can be stated that the importance of education will increase much more today, as it was in the past, in the integration of human beings, who are social beings, both to the society in which they live and to the world in a universal sense. Considering Turkey in particular, it can be said that the social studies course will be the course that the young individuals will encounter directly in schools within the framework of these issues and within the scope of the research topic. It also emerges that the content of the social studies course should consider the citizenship approach in the digitalized world in the context of the past, present and future of the individuals in this context. It is undeniable that it is important to determine the views of teachers who teach social studies in the teaching dimension about the phenomenon of digital citizenship and to make inferences about it. In this context, the research was shaped in a case study pattern and suggestions were presented within the framework of the results obtained.

Keywords: Digital Citizenship, Social Studies, Opinion, Case Study.

INTRODUCTION

In the current century, rapid developments are experienced especially in information technology. These developments directly affect societies and individuals, and thus change the meanings attributed to the concept of citizenship by the human being, who is a social being. Within the framework of the digitalization process experienced in many fields, from economy to health, from trade to education, it is seen that citizenship has also evolved towards digitalization.

In such a period when new concepts such as "constitutional citizenship, world citizenship, European citizenship" emerge (Ersoy, 2013, p. 70), being an active and effective citizen requires digitalization as well as interaction with the physical environment. Because societies are being transformed and affected by people in the digital world (eTwinning Central Support Service, 2016).

The concept of "digital citizenship", which first emerged with Prensky's (2001) work called "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants", includes the understanding that educational activities should be developed especially based on technology. According to Çubukçu and Bayzan (2013), a digital citizen is a citizen who criticizes when using information and communication technologies, understands the moral consequences of online behavior, uses technology in a way that does not harm others, can use his right to communicate on the internet, displays the right attitude in his sharing and cooperation, and encourages others to act in this direction. Karaduman and Öztürk (2014), on the other hand, define a digital citizen as a person who can understand, write, read, share the information on the internet and use the internet effectively. Ribble et al. (2004, 33) express the three principles that those who use the digital environment need in order to use technology responsibly and to be digital citizens in the form of *respect for self and other people*, *self-education and connecting with other people* and *protecting self and other people*.

Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2008) list the reasons that have recently come to the fore and discussed the concept of digital citizenship as follows:
- The positive effect of information technology on society and economy,
- Ensuring equal opportunity for economic access and use of the Internet
- Promoting the active participation of citizens in society and democracy
- Internet access and use policies create a situation of inequality for low-income and educated people and

minorities.

Ribble (2011) examined the studies on the dimensions of digital citizenship and stated that many different classifications were made. These are "digital communication", "digital etiquette", "digital access", "digital literacy", "digital commerce", "digital rights and responsibilities", "digital law", "digital health amd wellness", "digital security" (Ribble et al., 2004, 34). "Digital communication" is knowing when it is appropriate to take advantage of digital communication tools (e-mail, video conferencing, instant messaging, etc.) for the purpose of communicating and when it is appropriate to use them (Ribble, 2011). "Digital etiquette" is knowing when and how to use digital tools while respecting the rights of others (Çubukçu & Bayzan, 2013). "Digital access" is accessing fast and high quality digital technology from anywhere and using them effectively (Çubukçu & Bayzan, 2013, Orhon, 2019). "Digital literacy" is learning, teaching and using digital technology appropriately (Ribble, 2011). "Digital commerce" is the awareness and practice of buying goods or services online, protecting the confidentiality of banking system data, and making transactions on secure websites (Çubukçu and Bayzan, 2013). "Digital rights and responsibilities" means that everyone can freely use digital tools, express themselves comfortably with them, and use the right to complain against crimes and unfair situations that occur in digital environments (Çubukçu and Bayzan, 2013). "Digital law" is taking responsibility for actions by being knowledgeable about the rules, policies, laws and regulations in the digital environment and warning those who do not pay attention to them (Ribble, 2011). "Digital health" is the individual's physical and psychological attention to herself/himself while benefiting from technology that has a direct or indirect effect on health (Çubukçu & Bayzan, 2013; Elçi, 2015). "Digital privacy and security" means network security, protection of system hardware; It is related to the establishment of person, school and community safety (Ribble, 2011).

According to the results of research conducted in recent years, it is understood that with the increasing use of the Internet - when the digital citizenship dimension is taken into account - children experience problems in terms of accessing the online environment, privacy, security, health, ethics and communication (Karaduman & Öztürk, 2014). Therefore, the importance of education emerges in the integration of the individuals of the future both to the society they live in and to the world, as in the past years. In Turkey, it is thought that the course that has a direct impact on the education of children in this direction is the social studies course. In this context, the content of the social studies course should also be based on the citizenship approach in the digitalized world in the context of individuals' past, present and future. Based on the current situation, it is thought that it would be appropriate to determine the opinions of the teachers who teach the social studies course about the phenomenon of digital citizenship and to make inferences about it. However, it would be appropriate to emphasize that there has been no research conducted in this way, and that the studies mostly focus on social studies teacher candidates.

In this context, the research seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What do the teachers think about the definition and content of citizenship education in social studies course?

2. What are the teachers' views on the conformity of the digital citizenship phenomenon to the structure of the social studies course topics and the nature of the social studies field?

3. What are the teachers' views on the advantages and disadvantages of digital citizenship within the scope of social studies course?

4. What are the teachers' possible suggestions for digital citizenship within the scope of social studies course?

METHODS

This research which was conducted within the scope of qualitative research model, is in case study pattern. According to Merriam (2013), the case study is a research design that focuses on finding a holistic description and explanation. In addition, as Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006) stated that this study pattern allows the researcher to examine a phenomenon or event that cannot be controlled by the researcher based on 'how' and 'why' questions. In this study, 'typical case sampling', which is one of the purposive sampling methods and aiming to reveal the typical or normal (Glesne, 2013, 61) was applied. 21 social studies teachers working in public schools affiliated to Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education were reached in the 2020-2021 academic year in this context. Information about the working group is given below:

Table 1. Information about the study group of the research

		n	**%**
Tenure	1 – 5 year	2	10
	6 – 10 year	5	24
	11 – 15 year	10	47
	16 – 20 year	4	19
	20 + year	0	0
	Total	*21*	*100*

Gender	Female	7	33
	Male	14	67
	Total	*21*	*100*
Age	25-30	3	14
	31-35	4	19
	36-40	9	43
	41-45	3	14
	46-…	2	10
	Total	*21*	*100*

According to the Table 1, 14 (67%) of the participants are male and 7 (33%) are female. It is seen that teachers who work for 11-15 years are more than the others in terms of their tenure. In addition, when looking at the age range, the majority of teachers are 36-40 years old.

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained in order to answer the sub-questions of the research are given. The opinions of the teachers based on their answers to the question ' Please write your views on the definition and content of citizenship education in social studies course.' were tabulated in 7 themes:

Table 2. Opinions about the definition and content of citizenship education in social studies course

Themes	**n**	**%**
Active Citizenship	19	17
Important	18	16
Insufficient	17	15
Responsibility	16	14
Right	15	13
Separate Course	15	13
Comprehensive	13	12
Total	*113*	*100*

19 of teachers (17%) stated *active citizenship* theme, 18 (16%) of them stated *important* theme, 17 (15%) of them stated *insufficient* theme, 16 (14%) of them stated *responsibility* theme, 15 (13%) of them stated *rights* theme, 15 (13%) of them stated *separate courses* theme and 13 (12%) of them stated *comprehensive* theme. In questionnaire no. 13, one participant said:

> *Citizenship education in social studies sessions aims to protect and maintain the political existence of the state. Citizenship education aims to raise democratic individuals who know the political, socio-cultural and structure of the society and adapt to it. In citizenship education, it is very important for individuals to learn and use their rights and to have a sense of duty and responsibility. Another important point in citizenship education is to create a well-equipped active citizen type who will serve the development of the state in a world that is experiencing rapid change and development and has reached the skills, abilities and competencies required by the age.*

In addition, a participant, who filled out the form no. 12, said ' Citizenship education given with social studies course is the education of individuals who are loyal to their state and national culture, who know their rights and responsibilities. Citizenship education is lacking in terms of its content and form in terms of social practices. The training provided has deficiencies in practice.'

Table 3. Opinions about the conformity of the digital citizenship phenomenon to the structure of the social studies course subjects and the nature of the social studies field

Themes	**n**	**%**
Appropriate	17	37
Should be increased	15	33
Deficient	12	26
No idea	2	4
Total	*46*	*100*

For the second sub-problem of the study, 'What are your views on the conformity of the digital citizenship phenomenon to the structure of the social studies course topics and the nature of the social studies field?', 17 (37%)

of the participating teachers stated that it was appropriate, 15 (33%) stated that it should be increased, 12 (26%) stated that there was a deficiency, and 2 (4%) did not have any ideas. The participant who filled out the form 14 for this sub-problem said following:

> I think that the phenomenon of digital citizenship is definitely suitable for the subjects and nature of the social studies course. I can definitely say that digital citizenship education should be included in our textbooks within the scope of rights, freedoms, duties and responsibilities, and moral values and that education should be given in the social studies course. Due to the nature of social studies this should be done.

Table 4. Activities carried out by teachers in social studies lessons within the scope of digital citizenship

Themes	n	%
Current Events	14	18
Brainstorming	12	15
Poster Preparation	11	14
Shopping	9	11
Communication-Media	8	10
Digital Platforms	8	10
Content Preparation	7	9
True False	6	7
I did not attend any activity.	5	6
Total	*80*	*100*

For the third sub-problem of the study, 'Please write down the activities you have done within the scope of digital citizenship in Social Studies classes.', the participants classified the activities they did in the classroom under nine themes: Current events (14 teachers, 18%), brainstorming (12 teachers, 15%), poster preparation (14%), shopping (11%), communication-media (10%), digital platforms (10%), content preparation (9%), true false (7%). 5 teachers (6%) stated that they did not attend any activity. The teacher who filled out the form 13 said following on this subject:

> In this context, I teach that by opening the e-government application from the smart board, we can practically do many transactions from where we are. I make them realize the areas where they use the digital world such as homework research, internet games, social media, e-commerce by asking questions and brainstorming.

The teacher with form 7 said ' I'm sorry to say, I did not attend an event on digital citizenship'.

Table 5. Opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of digital citizenship in the scope of social studies course

Themes Advantages	n	%	Themes Disadvantages	n	%
Ease	14	24	Internet network	18	18
Teaching	13	22	Information pollution	17	16
Saving on time	12	20	Security	17	16
Awareness	10	17	Addiction	15	15
Reducing intensity	10	17	Out of purpose	13	13
			Equality	10	10
			Psychological problems	8	8
			Content	4	4
Total	*59*	*100*	*Total*	*102*	*100*

For the fourth sub-problem of the study, teachers answered this question: 'Please write your views on the advantages and disadvantages of digital citizenship within the scope of social studies course.' To this question, teachers reported 5 themes as ease (24%), teaching (22%), saving on time (20%), awareness (17%) and reducing intensity (17%) as the theme of advantage. In the disadvantage part, teachers stated nine themes under the headings of internet network (18%), information pollution (16%), security (16%), addiction (15%), out of purpose (13), equality (10%), psychological problems (8%), and content (4%). The teacher who filled out the form 16 said following:

> In today's communication age, every citizen is also a digital citizen. People who receive digital

citizenship training will be advantageous in this regard. It is very advantageous in terms of making communication fast, easy and cheap. It is very advantageous for accessing and sharing information. However, there are disadvantages in the use of digital platforms due to their features such as security problems, problems with the protection of personal information, inability to access correct information, abuse, inappropriate opinions and ideas. In order for legal sanctions and environments to be followed closely, expert teams should be formed and correct usage training should be given.

Another teacher said on form 4:

The most important advantage of digital citizenship is that it saves time, works are carried out quickly on the internet, can be followed up, direct examples and explanations can be shown during the lessons, the issue of rights is perceived especially better. As for the disadvantages, the most important is security. In the digital environment, security problems can arise at any time. In addition, students' incorrect and inappropriate use is another disadvantage.

Table 6. Possible suggestions for the phenomenon of digital citizenship within the scope of social studies course

Themes	n	%
Should be a separate course	17	16
Topics should be increased in the curriculum	16	16
Interactive activities should be prepared	14	14
Digital literacy issues should be	13	13
Digital support units should be established	11	11
Awareness should be increased	10	10
Digital citizenship projects should be carried out	8	8
Disadvantages should be eliminated	7	6
In-Service training should be given	7	6
Total	*103*	*100*

For the fifth and the last sub-problem of the study, teachers answered this question under nine themes: 'Please write your possible suggestions for digital citizenship within the scope of social studies course.' 17 teachers (16%) stated that there should be separate course, 16 teachers (16%) stated that the subjects in the curriculum should be increased. In addition, these themes were also explained: interactive activities should be prepared (14%), digital literacy issues should be (13%), digital support units should be established (11%), awareness should be increased (10%), digital citizenship projects should be carried out (8%), disadvantages should be eliminated (6%) and in-service training should be given (6%). In this context, the teacher who filled out the form 18 said the following:

Students should be introduced to the concept of digital citizenship. The benefits and harms should be explained, and this information should be included in textbooks and educational platforms. Teachers should be informed through in-service training. Parents should be informed and the necessary values for domestic use should be determined. Age status, content features, security vulnerabilities, obtaining correct information, protection of personal information and legal status should be explained to citizens.

The teacher who filled out the form 8 said:

Most of the students' families shop online, but they are not aware that it is digital shopping. Finding book summaries, doing homework, playing games, but what is a digital citizen? it freezes. Students can be educated on this subject. Even though we touch on these issues in the media literacy lesson, especially in our last unit, there is not enough learning. In particular, the issue of digital security cannot be grasped.

CONCLUSION

In this study, examining the views of social studies teachers on digital citizenship, participants in the study group stated about the definition and content of citizenship education in social studies courses, effective citizenship, important, insufficient, responsibility, right, separate course and comprehensive themes.

The majority of the participants stated that the phenomenon of digital citizenship is suitable for the structure of the social studies course subjects and the nature of the social studies field. There are also participants who stated that this phenomenon should be increased and that there are deficiencies.

It has been concluded that within the scope of digital citizenship, teachers carry out activities in the context of current events, brainstorming, poster preparation, communication-media, digital platforms, content preparation,

true-false.

For the advantages and disadvantages of the digital citizenship phenomenon within the scope of the social studies course, our teachers consider the themes of convenience, teaching, saving on time, awareness and decrease in intensity as advantages; on the other hand, it has been concluded that there is a disadvantage with the themes of internet network, information pollution, security, addiction, out of purpose, equality, psychological problems and content.

According to the results of the research, the participants made suggestions for the subject of digital citizenship under the themes of separate courses, increasing the topics in the curriculum, interactive activities, digital literacy, digital support units, awareness, digital citizenship projects, elimination of disadvantages and in-service training.

Based on the results, the following recommendations can be made:
1. Citizenship education course can be evaluated as a separate course.
2. The phenomenon of digital citizenship can be given more space in different units in the social studies course.
3. The subject of digital citizenship can be associated with other courses and discussed in the skill dimension with interactive activities.
4. Training on digital literacy can be increased.
5. Projects can be made on digital citizenship and digital literacy.
6. Digital citizenship public service announcements can be prepared and events can be held in schools.

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