Friendly and Hostile Country Perceptions of Prospective Social Studies Teachers

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Abstract:
Peace education requires that students have a correct and academic perception regarding other countries. These perceptions of students, who acquire certain perceptions starting from primary school to university, need to be based on real facts and should not contain extravagance.This study aims to determine whether 3rd year Prospective Social Studies Teachers have a perception of friendly and hostile country and what factors affect the formation of these perceptions. In this context, 33 students studying at Bülent Ecevit University, Zonguldak were interviewed using the semi-structured interview technique. Students were asked to write down their answers for questions in the interview form prepared for the study. The resulting data were analyzed with content analysis and descriptive analysis. Common statements were merged according to determined criteria and presented under themes.In the light of findings obtained from the study, it was seen that students had developed an awareness regarding friendliness and hostility. It was found that political events between States and national and religious issues were effective on the formation of this awareness. Also, factors such as media and internet were found to be effective on the formation of the awareness in question. On the other hand, it was found that students were influenced by current events when creating their knowledge-base.
Keywords: history education, friendship, hostility, social studies

1. İntroduction

Wars which resulted in millions of deaths such as World War I and II were the largest social disasters of the previous century. Although not on this scale, wars still continue today in different regions of the world. These wars and conflicts which cause death, poverty and mass migration make the world more unlivable with each passing day. Many countries or leaders do not hesitate to start conflicts with other counties and even with their own people for reasons such as desire for power, rule and leading. Attitudes of rulers against civil insurrections which started in North Africa in 2010 and turned in to a civil war in Syria as of today may be given as example. Another fact is that 60 million people lost their lives in the last 50 years in these wars and conflicts in different parts of the world.

Indeed, violence is manifested in every aspect of life. The man is responsible for violence on both the State level and the personal level. It is daunting for the humanity that the culture of violence reached this level in both the society and interstate relations. Peace and security are the basis of human dignity and development. States in war are only the institutionalized versions of people who seek to solve their problems using violence. Both of them regard violence as a means to achieve their goals or solve their problems. Considering that people are the living part of the State and the element that brings States to life, it is obvious that the root cause of the problem is not aggressive States, but violence-prone people. Indeed, it is impossible to avoid increasing cases of violence seen in every aspect of everyday life as reported written / visual media. Violence has almost become a regular event on the street, at home or at school. For this reason, it should be remembered that the only way to reform the State is to change people. The only way to change people or even humanity, on the other hand, is education. Indeed, we can say that one of the most fundamental reasons behind all this negativity is lack of education. Education for sustainable development plays a key role in promoting values for peace (Khan, 2013). For this reason, teaching concepts such as peace, democracy, freedom and justice to the next generation is of great importance, which can only be done in schools. Because it is a fact that education is the most important factor in transformation of a person. The form and content of education, which starts with the family, becomes institutional with school and continues throughout life, are very important in this regard. In this process, education has the biggest share in shaping the personality. Education is of vital importance for obtaining the capacity to coexist in peace and for avoiding conflicts which hinder development (Harris, 2002). In this way, students can gain knowledge, values, skills and attitudes necessary for dialog and cooperation. The quote "***Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world***" is noteworthy in that it shows the power of education.

Citizens of almost every country in the world have perceptions about different countries and cultures. It was found that historical feelings of hostility, ideological prejudices and non-scientific speculations were effective on formation and adoption of these perceptions (Neuman, 2001). In a wold of increasing violence,

raising peaceful citizens who respect differences with a multi-cultural perspective and who are open to dialog should be another important mission of education in addition to academic achievement. This form of education referred to as peace education which started in 1950s was formed in different areas such as global security, human rights education and environmental education (Bajaj and Chiu, 2009). UNICEF defines peace education as *"the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level."* Peace education aims to allow individuals gain awareness about problems and improve their problem-solving skills (Karaman Kepenekçi, 2010). At this point, peace education is the process of improving knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in order to prevent violence, resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, provide conditions that support peace on all levels and platforms (Fountain, 1999). Studies show that peace education is useful in improving students' skills to resolve conflicts (Demirtas, 1991, Ulusavaş, 2000).

In a period when the world is in such a chaos, the most important investment to prevent new generations from facing or causing the same problems is to seek to eliminate the perception of hostility toward other countries. Teaching values and skills such as tolerance, justice, equality, goodwill, empathy and love within the framework of peace as a part of children's education is of great importance for peace education.

When peace education or efforts related to creating a perception of peace in students are examined, it is observed that there are negative approaches to different countries. In their study, Yılmaz and Yiğit (2010) found that university students had negative opinions toward various countries based on either hearsay information or certain events occurred in the past. In a study with a group of middle school students, Kaya (2015) found that a perception of hostility toward other countries. It was identified that countries in question were perceived as enemies due to past and current problems.

Domestic and international studies on peace education mostly focus on resolution of conflicts. Demirtaş (1991), Ulusavaş (2000), Tapan (2006) and Demir (2011) found in their studies that peace education improved students' conflict resolution skills. Harris (1996) reviewed peace education projects in state schools in the United States and found that programs were aimed at improving conflict resolution and problem-solving skills. Fuerverger (1997) and Kupermintz and Salaman (2005) found that the application of a peace education program between Israeli and Palestinian students reduced the sense of hostility in students. Caulfield (2000) revealed that it was necessary to give an education aimed at peaceful ends in order to create a society living in peace. Johnson and Johnson (2001) found that peace education improved students' conflict resolution skills. Ediger (2003) investigated topics of peace, war and education and highlighted the necessity of peace education. Sarrica and Conteralle (2004) investigated peace and conflict representations of peace activists and non-activists. The authors found that both groups had equal levels of representations. Genç (2006) worked on a peace education project between Turkish and Greek students and found that the sense of mutual trust improved between students as a result of the project. Gazioğlu (2008) investigated conflict resolution skills of students in her study. Askerov (2010) focused on the effect of peace education on conflict resolution in his study. Ersoy (2013) investigated how Turkish students and teachers perceive international wars and conflicts and how they handle wars and conflicts in social studies class. The author found that teachers influenced students and teachers did not have sufficient knowledge to teach controversial international issues.

In a study investigating how Chinese university students perceive the Japanese culture, it was found that 81.3% of the participants saw Japan as a military threat and 72% had a negative approach toward Japanese history and culture. In a study conducted by Walker et al. (2003), primary school students in Yugoslavia and Greece were asked to draw a picture of war and peace and students generally tried to draw characters they had seen in war-themed movies and games. In a study conducted by İmamoğlu and Bayraktar (2014), it was revealed that a considerable part of the students participated in the study (40%) did not really believe in the possibility of peace.

To live in a geography as challenging as Turkey requires to witness a lot of problems directly. Underdeveloped Muslim Middle East countries with constant war or internal conflicts which have rich underground resources, particularly oil, in the East and European countries which are rich in terms of democracy, yet poor in terms of most important energy resources of our time such as oil and natural gas in the West. To be the bridge between two regions which are dependent on each other is a challenge for Turkey brought by its geographical position. Considering the problem of terrorism which has been going on for more than 30 years, right-wing vs. left-wing conflicts before terrorism, several military coups and the Cyprus Peace Operation on top of these, we can say that there has almost never been a period free of conflict on this land. All these events have influenced the way concepts such as peace and friendship perceived by the people of the country. Although it was decided by international organizations such as UN and UNESCO that hostile statements about other countries and nations were removed from history textbooks in order to solve these problems through education, the desired results could not be achieved (Tekeli, 1998).

1.1 The Purpose Of The Study:
The main objective of this study is to determine whether 3rd year Prospective Social Studies Teachers have perceptions of friendship and hostility regarding other countries and if they do, reveal the reasons behind these perceptions and what factors influence the formation of these perceptions. To this end, an attempt was made to answer the following sub-problems:

- Do 3rd year Prospective Social Studies Teachers have friendship and hostility perceptions regarding other countries?
- What are the reasons behind 3rd year Prospective Social Studies Teachers' friendship and hostility perceptions regarding other countries?
- What are the factors influencing 3rd year Prospective Social Studies Teachers' friendship and hostility perceptions regarding other countries?

2. Method
Since the study aims to determine perceptions of the students, it is necessary to collect in-depth information. A method which can collect in-depth information was necessary in order to determine friendship and hostility perceptions of the students and reasons behind these perceptions. Since using qualitative research methods would allow for reaching larger data, the use of qualitative research methods was preferred (Karasar, 2005; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Because qualitative research methods which can be used for in-depth research to reveal perceptions (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005).   Thus, current state can be better described and becomes understandable.

2.1 The Sample Of The Study
The sample of the study consists of 33 students, 18 females and 15 males, attending the Department of Social Studies Teaching, Ereğli Faculty of Education, Bülent Ecevit University. The purposeful sampling (maximum variation) method were used in the study. This sampling method was preferred due to its high representation power of the population (Büyüköztün et al.; 2011). Gender and socio-economic status of the students were not considered in the study.

2.2 The Study Group
The study group was created by selection among 3rd year students of the Social Studies Teaching Department, Bülent Ecevit University. Due attention was paid to select students from 7 different regions of Turkey and that students represent regions of Turkey equally.

2.3 Data Collection Tool and Data Processing
The qualitative data of the study were collected from 33 students using the semi-structured interview method. The interview method is a very commonly used data collection tool in qualitative research (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005; Patton, 1990; Balcı, 2001; May, 1996; Karasar, 2005). 5 questions were prepared for interviews and these questions were applied to 5 students as pilot test after receiving expert opinions from two academics. The pilot test was performed in April 2015. After the pilot test, the interview form was given its final shape to apply to students and administered by the researcher personally. In case of incoherences, the researcher made necessary explanations. The students were asked to write down countries which they saw as friendly and hostile countries and reasons behind their opinions in order of importance. Each student wrote down three friendly countries and three hostile countries. In the findings section, tables show a total of 33 statements from students regarding each country which they wrote down as the first, second and third country. A total of 99 statements from the students are shown in tables through content analysis. The study was performed 2 weeks after the pilot test. Statements of the students were categorically assigned under themes using content analysis to analyze the data. Similar statements were given under the same theme and the frequency of statements was shown in tables. The number of students for each statement was also shown after content analysis. Then, statements were subjected to descriptive analysis and results were presented in the findings section.

3. Findings
In order to determine friendship and hostility perceptions of prospective social studies teachers, the students were asked to write down countries which they saw as friendly and hostile countries in order of importance. Students were instructed to write down only three countries in order of importance. Statement of 33 students were tabulated.

Table 1. Hostile Country Perceptions of Prospective Social Studies Teachers

Countries	1st Order	2nd Order	3rd Order	Total
Israel	9	7	9	25
USA	7	3	5	15
Greece	6	4	3	13
Armenia	4	5	3	12
Russia	3	2	3	8
Syria	2	3	2	7
France	2	3	1	6
Iran	0	2	3	5
China	0	2	1	3
Egypt	0	1	1	2
Southern Cyprus	0	1	1	2
Iraq	0	0	1	1
Total	33	33	33	99

As can be understood from what students wrote down, Israel took the first place as the enemy of Turkey. Israel was written down by 25 out of 33 students as a hostile country in any of the three places. Especially in terms of countries written in the first place, Israel took the first place by being written by 9 students. Hostile countries written by students included USA, Greece, Armenia, Russia, Syria, France, China, Egypt, Southern Cyprus and Iraq. Among these countries; Iraq, Egypt, Iran and Syria are Muslim countries. Syria, Iraq and Iran are also neighbors of Turkey. Israel and USA, countries which took the first two places, do not have any border with Turkey.

Country Name	Reasons for hostility	n
Israel	Israel attacked Mavi Marmara and acted as an enemy of Turkey	6
	Turkey defends Palestine	5
	They discriminate against Palestine	4
	Their policies regarding Muslims	4
	Problems in our foreign relations and their policies regarding Turkey	3
	They do not do any good for the humanity	2
	Their will for world domination	1
USA	They implicitly or explicitly support terrorism activities in Turkey	4
	They appear as if they were friendly but exploit Turkey and are hypocrites	3
	Because Turkey is in an important geopolitical point	2
	USA is an imperialist country	2
	They interfere with our internal affairs	2
	Things they say and things they do are not consistent	1
	Their pressure on Turkey and will for world domination	1
Greece	Issues on land and sea (maritime boundaries, fir boundary, issue of Aegean islands)	6
	They want to occupy lands of our country	4
	Problems experienced in the past	3
Armenia	Because they accuse Turks of genocide	7
	Armenian attacks on Turks in the past	5
Russia	They want to exploit Turkey	3
	Because of Turkey's geopolitical position	2
	Their policy to reach warm seas	1
	Problems from the past	1
	Their negative attitude in international policies	1
Iran	They support terrorism and they are jealous of the power of Turkey	3
	They follow an aggressive policy against Turkey and want to increase their effectiveness in Middle East	
Syria	Immigrations from Syria due to civil war	2
	Syria's policies regarding Turkey	2
	Problems experienced recently	1
	Massacres committed by the Syrian government	1
	They claim rights on Hatay	1
France	They claim Turkey committed genocide on Armenians	3
	France follows policies against Turkey	2

	They do not like Muslims	1
China	Their attitudes toward Turks in China	2
	They try to exercise control over Turkey	1
Egypt	The military coup in Egypt and Turkey's opposition regarding the coup	2
Southern Cyprus	They do not want to recognize presence of Turks in Cyprus	2
Iraq	Their water problem with Turkey	1

Table 2. Reasons Why 3rd Year Prospective Social Studies Students See Certain Countries as Hostile Countries

When countries perceived as enemies of Turkey by the students and reasons behind these opinions of the students are examined, it is seen that there are 3 main factors. The first factor is current problems and hostility which develops due to these problems. Statements of the students such as "Mavi Marmara Operation" regarding Israel or "They interfere with our internal affairs" regarding USA can be given as examples. This factor is also evident in the hostility perception against countries such as Syria and Egypt. The second factor behind hostility perceptions of the students is events from the history. In this case, negative events between the Republic of Turkey or the Ottoman Empire and countries such as Greece, Russia, Armenia and Iran contributed to hostility perceptions of the students. The third factor behind the formation of hostility perceptions of the students is religion. Statements such as "Their policies regarding Muslims" for Israel and "The French do not like Muslims" regarding France support this factor.

Table 3. Friendly Country Perceptions of Prospective Social Studies Teachers

Countries	1st Order	2nd Order	3rd Order	Total
Azerbaijan	15	6	6	27
TRNC	6	5	4	14
Macedonia	0	2	4	7
Germany	3	1	2	6
Uzbekistan	2	2	2	6
Turkmenistan	3	2	1	6
Palestine	1	2	3	6
Pakistan	1	2	2	5
Arabia	1	2	1	4
Iran	2	2	4	5
Kazakhstan	1	2	2	5
Kyrgyzstan	0	1	1	2
Syria	0	1	1	2
South Korea	0	1	0	1
USA	1	1	1	3
Russia	0	1	1	8
Total	33	33	33	99

When friendly country perceptions of the students are examined, it is seen that a significant part of countries which students perceive to be friendly are Turkic and Muslim countries. Turkic Republics which parted from Russia and TRNC are perceived as friendly countries by the students. Similarly, Muslim countries such as Palestine, Arabia, Iran and Pakistan found their place among friendly countries. Here, factors affecting perceptions of the students seem to be historical unity and religion. Also, the students regard Germany and Macedonia as friendly countries. USA, Russia and South Korea are perceived as friendly countries as well by a low number of students.

Table 4. Reasons Why 3rd Year Prospective Social Studies Students See Certain Countries as Friendly Countries

Country Name	Reason for friendship	f
Azerbaijan	Friendship from the past	3
	Sharing the same nationality	5
	Their support for Turkey and our neighborhood	5
	Our partnership in natural gas and oil pipelines	2
	Unity of language, religion and nation, our brother country	8
	They do not seek to exploit Turkey	1
	Our brother country, they gave 12 points to us in Eurovision	1
TRNC	It is a Turkic country	6
	It is our child country	5
	It is a country where Turks live	4
Macedonia	It used to be Ottoman soil	3
	There are Turks living there	3
Germany	There are Turks living in Germany	4
	We have developed commercial relations with Germany	1
	We were on the same side in the World War	2
Uzbekistan	Because it is a Turkic country	4
	It is one of the States founded on the motherland	3
Turkmenistan	Because it is a Turkic country	4
	We have similar languages and cultures	3
Palestine	Turkey helps Palestine	2
	Because of religious reasons	1
	Because we defended them	1
	Because both countries are Muslim	1
Pakistan	Because it is a Muslim country	3
	Because we helped each other in cases of natural disaster	1
	We have close friendship relations	1
Arabia	We have religious ties	4
Iran	We are neighbors and it is a Muslim country	2
	We were friends in the past	1
	We have developed commercial relations and believe in the same religion	1
Kazakhstan	Because it is a Turkic country	4
	We have similar languages and cultures	1
Kyrgyzstan	Because it is a Turkic country	2
Syria	We have a long land border and are historic friends	1
	Because it is our brother country	1
South Korea	Because we helped them during Korean War	1
USA	They helped us after World War II	1
	Due to our commercial relations	2
Russia	We are dependent on Russia for natural resources	1

The table shows that a significant part of countries which students perceive to be friendly are Turkic and Muslim countries. A considerable portion of the students wrote Azerbaijan or TRNC in the first place. When reasons behind friendship perceptions of the students are examined, it is observed that having the same roots, having the same religion and political interests are reasons for friendship. Positive events experienced recently are also seen as a reason for friendship by the students. Statements such as "They gave 12 points to us in Eurovision" regarding Azerbaijan and "We helped each other in cases of natural disaster" regarding Pakistan support this idea. The only country outside this category is Germany. The students saw Germany as a friend of Turkey. The students gave reasons such as Turkish citizens living in Germany, good commercial relations and historical collaboration between Turkey and Germany.

The students were asked write down the most significant sources which influenced their perceptions.

Table 5. Factors Affecting Perceptions of 3rd Year Prospective Social Studies Teachers

Television	12
History Books	8
Teachers	6
Internet	4
Newspapers	2

Table 5 shows sources from which the students are influenced. The most influential source on the

formation of the students' perceptions was television, followed by books, teachers, internet and newspapers.

4.Conclusion and Discussion

In this study on 3rd year Prospective Social Studies Teachers' friendship and hostility perceptions regarding other countries, it was found that the students had friendship and hostility perceptions regarding other countries. Countries such as Israel, USA, Greece and Armenia took the top places among countries perceived to be hostile by the students. Although non-Muslim countries found their places on the top of the list among countries perceived to be hostile, some Muslim countries were seen as hostile by the students, albeit low in number. Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Iran can be given as examples to these Muslim countries. This may be explained with chaotic events occurred recently in the region where Muslim countries are and direct or indirect support of Iraq and Syria in particular to terrorism acts in Turkey which have been going on for more than 30 years. It was seen in the study that political events occurred in recent times were effective on the students' friendship and hostility perceptions regarding Muslim countries. On the other hand, non-Muslim neighbors of Turkey are regarded as enemies due to events occurred in the historical process. Large countries (USA, Russia, etc.) are regarded as enemies for both historical and current political events. These results are consistent with those of a similar study conducted by the researcher with middle school students (Kaya, 2015).

Reasons behind students' hostile country perceptions fundamentally fall under three headings. The first is problems experienced between some countries and Turkey in recent years. Students consider these political factors a reason for hostility. Students did not consider religious structures of countries. Although countries such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq are Muslim countries, they are regarded as hostile countries by some students due to recent problems. Recent events between Turkey and Israel and USA's interference with Turkey's internal affairs are shown as reasons for hostility by the students. Some of the countries regarded as hostile do not have a historic problem with Turkey. There has not been any wars between Turkey and these countries. From this point, we may conclude that students think dynamically when forming their opinions, do not use their historic thinking skills and depend on up-to-date information rather than academic information.

The second factor which influence hostility perceptions of the students is problems experienced in the past. The factor behind hostility perceptions regarding countries such as Greece, Russia, Armenia or Iran is wars and problems with these countries in the past. Here, students move either from information which they obtained earlier or information which they learned in school rather than current political information. It may be concluded from statements of the students that problems experienced in the historical process affect new generations either positively or negatively.

The third factor affecting students' perceptions is religion. Policies of some countries regarding Muslim countries influence perceptions of students. Problems between Israel and Palestine can be given as an example to this case. Statements of the students show that current political rhetorics are among the most important factors influencing perceptions of hostility.

Considering friendly country perceptions of 3rd year prospective Social Studies teachers, it is seen that Turkic States are mostly seen as friends. Especially Azerbaijan and TRNC are perceived as friendly countries by the students. In addition, the students have the perception that Muslim countries are friends of Turkey. Among European countries, Germany and Macedonia are regarded as friendly countries. USA and Russia, on the other hand, are perceived as friendly countries by a very low number of students.

When we examine why students perceive these countries as friends, it is seen that the sense of having the same roots has an important place. In this context, countries such as Azerbaijan, TRNC, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are regarded as friendly countries. Sharing the same race (being Turkic) is regarded as a reason for friendship by the students. Another important factor affecting the friendship perception is religion. Counties such as Palestine, Pakistan and Iran are regarded as friends in this context. There are similar studies that support this conclusion (Tuncel, 2002). Also, another factor influencing friendship perception of students historical and current events. Germany is regarded as a friend due to both historical and current events. In this context, it is concluded that negative political, social or military events between countries in the past, religious beliefs of students and information given in history classes in school play important roles in formation of hostility perceptions of students (Neuman, 2001, Yılmaz, 2010; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Rock, 2004).

Students are also influenced by negativities experienced by oppressed nations when creating their perceptions of friendship. Regarding problems between Palestine and Israel, the students took sides with Palestine, which is the weaker party. Although it does not have a shared border with Turkey, South Korea is regarded as a friendly country by some students due to Turkey's part in the Korean War. As can be understood from statements of some students, the students also used the pragmatist mentality when forming their perceptions of friendship.

When students were asked about sources from which they were influenced when forming these perceptions, they stated that television was in the first place. This statements is consistent with the fact that their perceptions of friendship and hostility were mostly based on events occurred in recent years. These results are

also consistent with those of a similar study conducted by the researcher with middle school students (Kaya, 2015). The students listed history books, teachers, newspapers and internet as other sources affecting their perceptions.

The following may be recommended as a result of the study:

- Different aspects, if available, should be revealed with similar studies on friendship and hostility perceptions of students and reasons behind them should be researched and solutions should be offered. Statements in textbooks which may increase hostilities should be carefully examined and removed from textbooks.
- Programs shown on TV should be prepared more consciously in this sense.

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