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Examining pre-service social studies teachers' sensitivity levels based on various variables

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not pre-service Social Studies teachers' interpersonal sensitivity levels significantly vary depending on various variables. The study employed the quantitative model to determine pre-service Social Studies teachers' sensitivity levels. The survey model was used as a quantitative model. The study group consists of 80 pre-service teachers studying in the Social Studies Teaching department of a state university located in the Central Anatolian Region of Turkey. The study used a personal information form to find out the pre-service teachers' demographic information. The personal information form includes descriptive information about age, gender, and grade. The study also used the sensitivity. The scale analysis was made via SPSS. The data were analyzed through independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The data were collected by the researcher in the 2018-2019 academic years. The pre-service Social Studies teachers' general average of consciousness was found to be high.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sensitivity has a lot of meanings. The broadest definition provided by Turkish Language Association (TDK) is that sensitivity refers to being conscious [1]. This may cover a wide range of areas such as people, other living beings, and historical and cultural works. Karaman Kepenekci, & Nayır [2] state that classroom climate, and teacher are influential on providing individuals with sensitivity in the educational environment. Sensitivity is socially important in many fields and especially interpersonal relations. The Social Studies course has a pattern that may be effective in providing individuals with sensitivity as a value. This is because the Social Studies course aims to raise efficient, productive, democratic, and modern individuals thanks to its structure integrated with many disciplines of social science [3]. Therefore, the activities to be conducted inside and outside the classroom for the said purpose may well be associated with consciousness.

Sensitivity is closely related to the values of society. Values appear as standards or measures of individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors [4]. The values contained in the renewed Social Studies curriculum can be listed as [5]: justice, aesthetics, giving value to unity of family, equation, independence, freedom, peace, respect, scientificness, love, working hard, responsibility, solidarity, saving, sensitivity, patriotism, honesty, helpfulness. Sensitivity is one of the 18 values contained in the Social Studies curriculum that are intended to be given to students. In today's world, a progress has been made in many fields along with technology. This progress has also been accompanied by certain developments affecting values in the social field. In the face of these developments, values are important to realize social harmony. This is because

values, as stated by Kuş, Merey & Karatekin [6], are what are accepted to be "best" and "rightest" by society. It can be said that values are the common ground of the entire society. Hence, values should be given formally in school and informally in family and social environment so that individuals can have harmony with society and develop a sense of belonging to it. In this way, the culture and values of society are transferred from generation to generation [7]. These values are important not only for the community a person is a member of but also for his/her cooperation with other communities, as stated by Yaşar, Gültekin & Bayır Gürdoğan [8]. The individual may contribute to himself/herself, the community s/he lives in, and the world only in this way. As Kohlberg & Hersh, [9] have stated, they are often included in the teaching process and content in schools.

The ability of individuals to adapt to society, to manage their emotions and to be able to take responsibility is important for both the individual and the society [10]. Learning is a social process and the school is the ideal place for the individual to socialize [11]. Schools which provide social environment have an important place in gaining sensitivity to individuals. In schools, together with the constructivist learning approach, the teacher and the student design the learning process both emotionally and cognitively [12]. Such an environment can help students gain various skills as well as gaining sensibility. In fact, promoting social and emotional development can increase the student's academic success [13].

The introduction of the individual with the social environment starts in the family and the family plays an important role in the socialization process and gaining the values. With the beginning of the education of the individual, the school starts to be effective. The social emotional development of the individual in the family continues in the school. In the globalizing world, increasing violence and unrest have once again revealed the importance of interpersonal sensitivity. It is because individuals form society. Therefore, the social peace is provided by individuals. This situation shows the importance of providing interpersonal sensitivity to individuals in schools.

The literature contains various studies on sensitivity and values. With regards to values education, Yazıcı & Aslan, [14] deal with the Social Studies textbooks in terms of values education and pre-service teachers' character choices. Can Aran & Demirel [15] explore elementary school teachers' views of values education provided in the Social Studies course? Kuş, Merey & Karatekin, [6] examined the values included in the 4th and 5th grade Social Studies textbooks. Çelikkaya & Filoğlu, [16] investigated Social Studies teachers' views of values and values education. Çelikkaya & Seyhan, [17] searched in-service and pre-service Social Studies teachers' metaphorical perceptions regarding universal values. Yıldırım & Çalışkan, [18] sought teachers' views about values and values education provided in the Social Studies curriculum implemented from 2005 to 2017. Kafadar, Öztürk & Katılmış, [19] compared the Social Studies curricula of different countries based on values education. Keskin & Öğretici, [20] carried out a study for conducting consciousness education through activities. Kılcan & Akbaba, [4] determined students' perceptions concerning sensitivity to cultural heritage. Topkaya, [21] compared concept cartoons and comics about the value of sensitivity to natural environment. Karacaoğlu & Çabuk, [22] focused on university students' environmental sensitivity. Erözkan, [23] conducted a study on the relationship between university students' interpersonal sensitivity and depression. Aktaş & Güvenç, [24] investigated the relationship between interpersonal sensitivity and adolescents' aggressive and positive social behaviors. Özbıçakçı, Çapık, Gördes Aydoğdu, Ersin & Kıssal, [25] dealt with sensitivity education and noise level in school.

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed the quantitative model to determine pre-service Social Studies teachers' sensitivity levels. Survey model was used as a quantitative model. Survey models are also discussed as Sönmez & Alacapınar [26]. Survey model describe an existing situation or phenomenon [27].

2.1. Study group

The study group consists of 80 pre-service teachers studying in the Social Studies Teaching department of a state university located in the Central Anatolian Region of Turkey in the 2018-2019 academic year that were chosen through purposeful sampling, which involves studying groups with specific features in one or more than one situation [28]. Table 1 describes that candidates are examined. The study group consists of 25 male and 55 female. 29 of them were 19 years old, 24 were 20 years old, 16 were 21 years old, 5 were 22 years old, 2 were 23 years old and 4 of them were 24 years old. There are 24 of the participants, 1st grade, 25 participants 2nd grade and 26 participants 3rd grade.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of pre-service social studies teachers

Variables		N
Gender	Female	55
	Male	25
Age	19 age	29
	20 age	24
	21 age	16
	22 age	5
	23 age	2
	24 age	4
Grade	1st Grade	29
	2nd Grade	25
	3rd Grade	26
Total		80

2.2. Data collection tool

The study used a personal information form to find out the pre-service teachers' demographic information. The personal information form includes descriptive information about age, gender, and grade. The study also used the sensitivity scale. The scale was developed by Demirci Seyrek, Ersanlı & Tunç, [29]. It is a 5-point Likert-type scale. It has four sub-dimensions: compassion, empathy, understanding, and humanitarianism. It is comprised of 15 items in total.

In its reliability study, the reliability values of the sub-dimensions compassion, empathy, understanding, and humanitarianism were found to be .70, .65, .62, and .55, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha reliability value of the overall scale was found to be .81 [29].

2.3. Data analysis

Out of the forms delivered by 83 pre-service teachers participating in the study, 80 were accepted valid, whereas 3 were deemed invalid as the pre-service teachers left some parts incomplete. The scale analysis was made via SPSS. The data were analyzed through independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Scale expressions were scored as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

2.4. Data collection

Necessary permission was obtained from the researchers to use the sensitivity scale [29] in the present study. The data were collected by the researcher in the 2018-2019 academic years. The researcher administered the sensitivity scale to the pre-service teachers for 20 minutes.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained from the t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) applied to the sensitivity scale administered to the pre-service teachers. As shown in Table 2, the pre-service teachers' scores in the understanding, empathy, compassion, and humanitarianism sub-dimensions of the scale significantly varied by gender. In other words, differences were found between the scores obtained by the female and the male pre-service teachers in the sub-dimensions of the scale. In the understanding sub-dimension, the female pre-service teachers' mean score was ($\bar{x}$=4.18), and the male pre-service teachers' mean score was ($\bar{x}$=3.83). In the empathy sub-dimension, the female pre-service teachers' mean score ($\bar{x}$=4.03) was higher than that of the male pre-service teachers ($\bar{x}$=3.66). In the compassion sub-dimension also, the female pre-service teachers' mean score ($\bar{x}$=4.66) was higher than that of the male pre-service teachers ($\bar{x}$=4.36). On the other hand, in the humanitarianism sub-dimension, the male pre-service teachers were seen to have a higher mean score ($\bar{x}$=2.12) than the female pre-service teachers ($\bar{x}$=1.50).

Table 2. T-test results of the sensitivity scale results by gender

Sub-Dimension	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	S	sd	t	p
Understanding	Male	25	3.83	.619	78	2.47	.016
	Female	55	4.18	.576			
Empathy	Male	25	3.66	.927	78	2.02	.047
	Female	55	4.03	.668			
Compassion	Male	25	4.36	.684	78	2.20	.030
	Female	55	4.66	.492			
Humanitarianism	Male	25	2.12	.912	78	3.47	.001
	Female	55	1.50	.631			

As shown in Table 3, there were no significant differences between the scores the pre-service teachers obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale. In the understanding sub-dimension, the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$=4.17) was in the 1st grade, whereas the lowest mean score was in the 2nd grade ($\bar{x}$=3.97). The mean score in the 3rd grade was ($\bar{x}$=4.05). In the empathy sub-dimension, the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$=4.08) was in the 1st grade, while the 3rd grade mean score was ($\bar{x}$=3.93), and the 2nd grade mean score was ($\bar{x}$=3.72). In the compassion sub-dimension, the highest mean score was in the 1st grade ($\bar{x}$=4.64), while the 2nd grade mean score was ($\bar{x}$=4.56), and the 3rd grade mean score was ($\bar{x}$=4.49). Lastly, in the humanitarianism sub-dimension, the highest mean score was in the 2nd grade ($\bar{x}$=1.97), while the mean score in the 1st grade was ($\bar{x}$=1.60), and the 3rd grade mean score was ($\bar{x}$=1.53).

Table 3. One-way ANOVA results of the sensitivity scale results by grade

Sub-Dimension	Grade	N	$\bar{x}$	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Understanding	1st Grade	29	4.17	Intergroup	.558	2	.279	.748	.477
	2nd Grade	25	3.97	Ingroup	28.716	77	.373		
	3rd Grade	26	4.05						
Empathy	1st Grade	29	4.08	Intergroup	1.753	2	.877	1.486	.233
	2nd Grade	25	3.72	Ingroup	45.412	77	.590		
	3rd Grade	26	3.93						
Compassion	1st Grade	29	4.64	Intergroup	.334	2	.167	.503	.606
	2nd Grade	25	4.56	Ingroup	25.565	77	.332		
	3rd Grade	26	4.49						
Humanitarianism	1st Grade	29	1.60	Intergroup	2.785	2	1.393	2.376	.100
	2nd Grade	25	1.97	Ingroup	45.126	77	.586		
	3rd Grade	26	1.53						

As shown in Table 4, no significant relationships were found between the scores the pre-service teachers obtained from the understanding, empathy, compassion, and humanitarianism sub-dimensions of the scale and age.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA results of the sensitivity scale results by age

Sub-Dimension	Age	N	$\bar{x}$	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Understanding	19 age	29	1.83	Intergroup	.141	5	.028	.072	.996
	20 age	24	1.58	Ingroup	29.133	74	.394		
	21 age	16	1.66						
	22 age	5	1.66						
	23 age	2	2.00						
	24 age	4	1.41						
Empathy	19 age	29	4.10	Intergroup	4.362	5	.872	1.508	.198
	20 age	24	4.01	Ingroup	42.803	74	.578		
	21 age	16	4.07						
	22 age	5	4.10						
	23 age	2	4.12						
	24 age	4	4.12						
Compassion	19 age	29	3.86	Intergroup	.594	5	.119	.347	.882
	20 age	24	4.01	Ingroup	25.306	74	.342		
	21 age	16	4.06						
	22 age	5	3.93						
	23 age	2	4.33						
	24 age	4	3.00						
Humanitarianism	19 age	29	4.57	Intergroup	1.412	5	.282	.449	.812
	20 age	24	4.55	Ingroup	46.499	74	.628		
	21 age	16	4.62						
	22 age	5	4.32						
	23 age	2	4.50						
	24 age	4	4.80						

Table 4 shows that the pre-service teachers' highest mean score in the understanding sub-dimension based on age was ($\bar{x}$=2.00) for the age 23, while the score was ($\bar{x}$=1.83) for the age 19, ($\bar{x}$=1.66) for the ages 21 and 22, ($\bar{x}$=1.58) for the age 20, and ($\bar{x}$=1.41) for the age 24. In the empathy sub-dimension, the highest mean score based on age ($\bar{x}$=4.12) was for the ages 23 and 24. The mean score was ($\bar{x}$=4.10) for the ages 22

and 19, ($\bar{x}$=4.07) for the age 21, and ($\bar{x}$=4.01) for the age 20. In the compassion sub-dimension, the highest mean score based on age was ($\bar{x}$=4.33) for the age 23, while the mean score was ($\bar{x}$=4.06) for the age 21, ($\bar{x}$=4.01) for the age 20, ($\bar{x}$=3.93) for the age 22, ($\bar{x}$=3.86) for the age 19, and ($\bar{x}$=3.00) for the 24. . In the humanitarianism sub-dimension, the highest mean score based on age ($\bar{x}$=4.80) was for the age 24, while the mean score was ($\bar{x}$=4.62) for the age 21, ($\bar{x}$=4.57) for the age 19, ($\bar{x}$=4.55) for the age 20, ($\bar{x}$=4.50) for the age 23, and ($\bar{x}$=4.32) for the age 22.

4. DISCUSSION

Educational environment is one of the most suitable environments to provide individuals with Sensitivity. Activities about sensitivity should be offered to students from the first stage of formal education to higher education. Not only the Social Studies textbook, but all textbooks should be organized in such a way that they provide students with sensitivity. Thus, efforts should be exerted not only to improve individuals' academic success, but also to contribute to their moral and humanitarian growth [29]. For social harmony and balance, individuals' sensitivity should not be limited to school only, but should be developed in family, school, and social environments altogether.

School and classroom environment are important places for students to take role models. Teachers have an important role in forming the behaviors of students in the society [30], [31]. Because, because of the age of the students spend the most time after school is the school. Especially the classroom environment is the most suitable place for both teachers and students to experience moral dilemmas Paolitto, [32]. Both role models are influenced by their teachers and can affect their peers. The content of moral education should include both the individual and the individual's relationship with the society to which it belongs [33]. It is because each individual has the power and responsibility to influence the environment [34]. At this point, the sensitivity of the individual has the power to influence the society. Such a high value should be gained in schools because sensitivity has a relationship with experience [35]. The more experience the students experience, the more interpersonal communication in the community can be healthy.

The basis for the realization of social and universal peace is the interpersonal healthy communication. This communication ability actually begins with the socialization of the individual. When the individual is born, he/she socialize with its family and then this process continues in school. When the individual is socializing, he starts to assimilate the moral values of the society in which he lives. This assimilation also contributes to the development of social and interpersonal sensitivity of individuals.

The education sector plays an important role in establishing and sustaining social and interpersonal sensitivity. School and classroom environment are the most suitable places for students. Appropriate class and school environment can be developed by creating a variety of materials, methods and techniques. Because it is seen that students in schools that have a good academic character education contribute significantly to school and society [36].

It is important that teachers, who have a significant impact on the education process, should be a role model in the classroom in order to give students sensitivity. Teachers should be trained on sensitivity during their undergraduate education. Activities and projects that may contribute to the society in which it is located should be designed and implemented.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine the pre-service Social Studies teachers' sensitivity levels and to find out whether their sensitivity levels significantly varied by gender, age, and grade. The pre-service Social Studies teachers' general average of sensitivity was found to be high. This implies that sensitivity was acquired by the pre-service teachers in their family, social environment, and school. First, the study investigated whether the pre-service teachers' sensitivity scores significantly varied by gender. It was found that the scores obtained from the understanding, empathy, compassion, and humanitarianism sub-dimensions of the scale significantly varied by gender.

The study also investigated whether the pre-service teachers' sensitivity significantly varied by age. That is, age was seen to be non-influential on the said sub-dimensions of the scale. Lastly, the study searched whether the pre-service teachers' sensitivity significantly varied by grade. It was found that there were no significant relationships between grade and such sub-dimensions of the scale as understanding, empathy, compassion, and humanitarianism. This indicates that grade is not an influential variable on consciousness. Sensitivity is a value that individuals should have in social life. Sensitivity should not be taken as limited to interpersonal relations only. It may also cover awareness of environment, nature, and historical and cultural works.

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