



## Examination of the Academic Dissertations Related to the Problems Encountered in Social Studies Teaching: Meta-Synthesis Study

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to examine the postgraduate theses about the problems encountered in social studies teaching with meta-synthesis study. The study was prepared with meta-synthesis design including thematic content analysis based on qualitative research methodology. The data of the master's and doctorate theses were collected from the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YOK) via internet connection. The data were searched under the title of problems encountered in social studies teaching. The researches in this study were 28 master and 2 doctoral theses conducted between 2004-2018. The studies included in the research were determined primarily by reviewing the literature. Each of the identified studies was coded as 'A' by shortening 'Research'. A1, A2, A3, ..., A30 codes were given and a detailed grading process was passed. All theses examined were primarily coded. Then all the coded data were tabulated for the themes created. The coded theses were tabulated according to the objectives, years, university, thesis type, sample region, model, method, results and suggestions. The frequencies of the theses that were coded into tables were found. The frequencies were interpreted in accordance with the meta-synthesis study. The prominent problems in research are; problems of teaching of the course, problems of program and textbook, problems in teaching of geography subjects and problems encountered in teaching of history subjects. In the research theses, some suggestions are made such as in-service training, tools, equipment and resource support, arrangement of program and textbooks, appropriate course teaching and increasing the hours of the course.

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#### Keywords:

Social studies teaching, problems encountered, meta-synthesis study.

### 1. Introduction

Education starts from the existence of human beings. Education has always existed in different ways, from the most primitive societies to the most modern societies, from early human societies to modern human societies. The education, which was informal before the writing was found, then became formal (Şişman, 2012; Uygun, 2018). Education is the part of education that is planned, programmed and carried out as a course in schools. The curriculum is a course set-up covering all of the teaching experiences and activities planned to be taught to individuals both inside and outside the school. The syllabus is the program that covers all the activities that are applied to the individual while acquiring the aims and behaviors designed in the course of teaching (Demirel, 2013). Each course has a curriculum and the social studies course is taught within a program. Social Studies course was taught in the United States in 1916 for the first time. In Turkey, for the first time, it began

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to be taught in 1968 (Güngördü, 2002; Sönmez, 2005; Öztürk, 2006; Bilgili, 2008; Safran, 2008; Kan, 2010). The latest social studies curriculum was published in 2017 and revised in 2018.

Units were not included in the social studies curriculum and gains were given under the title of learning areas. The skills included in the program have increased and the gains and values have decreased. The concept list and classification is not made and there is no explanatory information about the activities. The latest social studies curriculum offers flexibility to teachers (Uygun, 2018). Social Studies course; although it is multidimensional, open to development and active discipline that puts the student in the center, the problems and difficulties encountered in teaching are outstanding. There are many studies in the field literature on the problems encountered in teaching social studies. These studies can be categorized as follows:

Studies on social studies education and teaching problems (Aydın, 2004; Karasoy, 2004; Köroğlu, 2006; Tahiroğlu, 2006; Yılmaz, 2010a; Alataş, 2010; Yavuz, 2010; Akşit, 2011; Tangülü & Çıdacı, 2014; Akmehmetoğlu, 2014; Yener, 2014; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015; Gönenç & Açıkalın, 2015; Karaca, 2017; Tonga, 2017; İbrahimoglu, 2018); studies on social studies curriculum, content and textbook problems (Tuncer, 1999; Kırtay, 2007; Sağlam, 2014; Akdeniz, 2008; Ekici, 2018; Baydar, 2009; Arslantaş, 2006); problems in geography subjects in social studies teaching (Salik, 2007; Karakök, 2011; Aktaş, 2010; Sagay, 2007); problems in history subjects in social studies teaching (Yuvacı, 2018; Göç, 2008; Akşit, 2016; Ünal, 2012); method / technical problems of social studies teachers (Erdoğan, 2010; Polat, 2006); Problems in museum teaching (Sönmez, 2011); Problems of new teachers (Tepebaş, 2010; Yılmaz & Tepebaş, 2011); problems faced by students (Göçgen, 2016); problems in merged classes (Abay, 2007) and problems encountered in social studies education at undergraduate level (Yılmaz, 2009; Yılmaz, 2010b).

The similarities, differences, results and suggestions of the problems encountered in the teaching of social studies will shed light on the other researchers.

### **1.1. Purpose of the research**

The aim of the research is to examine the postgraduate theses about the problems encountered in social studies teaching with meta-synthesis study. For this purpose, the following sub-problems were sought:

What is the distribution according to research purposes?

What is the distribution of research by years?

What is the distribution of Research by Universities?

What is the distribution according to sampling regions?

What is the distribution of research by thesis types?

What is the distribution according to research models?

What is the distribution according to research methods?

What is the distribution according to research results?

What is the distribution according to research proposals?

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Research Design**

The study was prepared with meta-synthesis design including thematic content analysis based on qualitative research methodology. Meta-synthesis studies are to reach common themes with a holistic perspective of the researcher (Glesne, 2013). Meta-synthesis is a study examining and interpreting the findings of multiple studies (Finfgeld, 2003; Walsh & Downe, 2004). In addition, the research is to compare the similarities and differences. It is the synthesis of the critical paradigm of studies and themes on the same subject (Çalık & Sözbilir, 2014).

### **2.2. Data Collection and Analysis**

The study has been prepared considering the following sequential stages (Noblit & Hare, 1988: 26-29):

Stage 1: Identifying the topic or title by creating the focus of the topic.

Stage 2: Determining the works to be synthesized, deciding the works to be included and excluded.

Stage 3: Reading the study data.

Stage 4: Creating themes by identifying the relationship between works.

Stage 5: Transforming works by comparing them.

Stage 6: Synthesizing the works.

Stage 7: Presenting the synthesis.

The data of the master's and doctorate theses were collected from the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YOK) via internet connection. The data were searched under the title of problems encountered in social studies teaching and obtained by contacting the university library where theses were made for the dissertations that could not be reached. The researches in this study were 28 master and 2 doctoral theses conducted between 2004-2018.

The studies included in the research were determined primarily by reviewing the literature. Each of the identified studies was coded as 'A' by shortening 'Research'. A1, A2, A3,..., A30 codes were given and a detailed grading process was passed. All theses examined are primarily coded. Then all the coded data were tabulated for the themes created. The coded theses were tabulated according to the objectives, years, province / university, thesis type, sample region, model, method, results and suggestions. The frequencies of the theses that were coded into tables were found. The frequencies were interpreted in accordance with the meta-synthesis study.

The validity of qualitative research is the fact that the researcher presents the facts as researched as it is and as impartially as possible (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). It is important for the validity of the data collection process, the identification of included and excluded studies. The studies included in the research were analyzed in an objective manner and as is.

### 2.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Research

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Research

Studies have been prepared in Turkey.

The researches were conducted between 2004-2018.

In the title and summary of the research, social studies teaching includes words of problem, problem and difficulty.

To reach the full text of the research.

The studies included in the research are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** List of studies included in the research

Code	Author	Research Subject	Sampling / Province
A1	Kırtay, A.	The solution references and meeting problems using the application of the social in studies in the 4th and 5th classes in the education term in 2005-2006	Kars
A2	Aydın, D.	Teaching at social studies lesson in 4. and 5. classes of primary school on difficulties that are faced with (Example Bitlis)	Bitlis
A3	Karasoy, D.	Teaching of social studies lesson in 4. and 5. classes of primary school and difficulties that are faced with	Konya

A4	Sönmez, E.	2nd stage 6th grade elementary social studies course in Ancient history museums in the processing of the importance of issues problems and solutions: Case of Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa
A5	Erdoğan, E.	Methods/techniques used by social studies teachers and problems they faced	Kütahya
A6	Sağlam, E.	Evaluation of value getting levels and difficulties which are met in evaluation process designated in the program of primary school 4th grade social studies lecture	Çanakkale
A7	Tepebaş, F.	Social studies teachers encountered problems who start a new career	İstanbul
A8	Köroğlu, F. İ.	The problems of teaching social studies lesson in fifth class of primary school	Erzurum
A9	Polat, F.	Social studies of teachers and their faced problems at 7th grade of primary school	Afyon
A10	Alataş, F.	Problems encountered in 4th and 5th grade social studies teaching in primary education curriculum	İzmir
A11	Salik, G.	The problems encountered in teaching geography subjects in social studies and the teachers views about the analyzing suggestions	Eskişehir
A12	Karakök, H.	The effect of success level of teacher candidate of land trip in education of physical geography subjects and the problems encountering in education of physical geography subjects	Niğde
A13	Akmehmetoğlu, H.	The problems encountered by social studies teachers in social studies teaching (Sample of Kastamonu province)	Kastamonu
A14	Yener, Ş.	Problems encountered by social studies teachers related to the instruction of social studies course: Case of Muş province	Muş
A15	Akşit, İ.	The problems which social studies teachers serving in primary schools faced, during the social studies education (The examples of Denizli and Erzurum)	Denizli- Erzurum
A16	Yavuz, İ.	Opinions of teachers regarding problems encountered in social studies courses in the six grade (Ankara provincial sample)	Ankara
A17	Yuvacı, İ.	The applications of social studies teachers about the local history and the problems encountered-sample of Sivas	Sivas
A18	Aktaş, S.	Teaching subjects of geography at social studies at second grade in primary schools in the of renewed syllabus of primary school	Kilis G.Antep
A19	Tahiroğlu, M.	To reveal the obstacles and the difficulties that the social sciences teachers come across in the process of teaching social sciences (sample of Aksaray city)	Aksaray
A20	Akdeniz, N.	Difficulties encountered in new lesson program application of 6th class social studies lesson	Konya
A21	Göç, N.	To apply local history topics within social studies lessons; difficulties which they appear and solution offers (For the Yozgat case)	Yozgat
A22	Sagay, N.	Teaching of geography subjects in primary social studies courses (stage 2) : Problems- suggestions	Afyon

A23	Akşit, İ.	An action research intended to solve and detect the encountered issues that are used during the process of studying of some concepts on the 7th grade social studies course in the unit 'voyage in the history of Turkish	Denizli
A24	Ekici, Ö.	Social studies teachers' opinions on the problems in citizenship education at secondary schools	Diyarbakır
A25	Baydar, P.	The level of value acquisition which is determined in fifth grade primary school social studies course and the evaluation of the problems which are encountered in that process	Adana
A26	Abay, S.	The problem of teaching social studies in unified classes	Samsun
A27	Arslantaş, S.	The problems about instruct of satisfied of 6th grade and 7th grade social studies and proposals explanation in agreement with posture of teachers	Malatya
A28	Karaca, S.	The problems which social studies teachers serving in secondary schools faced, during the social studies education (The examples of Çorum)	Çorum
A29	Göçgen, S.	Examination of the problems faced by 7th grade students in preparing social studies course performance mission	Erzurum
A30	Ünal, S.	Social studies teachers problems about student oriented methods which they used for teaching history	Çanakkale

### 3. Results

**Table 2.** Distribution according to research purposes

Research purposes	Code	f
Course teaching problems	A2, A3, A8, A10, A13, A14, A15, A16, A19, A28	10
Program and textbook problems	A1, A6, A20, A24, A25, A27	6
Problems in teaching of geography subjects	A11, A12, A18, A22	4
Problems in teaching of history subjects	A17, A21, A23 A30	4
Method / technical problems of teachers	A5, A9	2
Problems in museum teaching	A4	1
Problems of new teachers	A7	1
Problems faced by students	A29	1
Problems in merged classes	A26	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the problems related to the teaching of the course ( $f = 10$ ) are mostly examined according to the research aims. Distribution according to other purposes is given in Table 2.

**Table 3.** Distribution of research by years

Year	Code	f
2010	A5, A7, A16, A18	4
2006	A8, A9, A19, A27	4

2007	A1, A11, A22, A26	4
2008	A10, A20, A21	3
2011	A4, A12, A15	3
2014	A6, A13, A14,	3
2004	A2, A3	2
2017	A23, A28	2
2018	A17, A24	2
2009	A25	1
2012	A30	1
2016	A29,	1
2005	-	0
2013	-	0
2015	-	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

When Table 3 is examined, it is found that the most studies were conducted in 2006, 2007 and 2010 (f = 4). Distribution according to other years is shown in Table 3.

**Table 4.** Distribution of research by universities

University	Code	f
Atatürk University	A8, A14, A24, A29	4
Selçuk University	A3, A4, A19, A20,	4
Gazi University	A9, A16	2
19 Mart University	A6, A30	2
Çukurova University	A25	1
Afyon Kocatepe University	A22	1
Amasya University	A28	1
Pamukkale University	A15	1
Fırat University	A27	1
Anadolu University	A11	1
Marmara University	A7	1
Dokuz Eylül University	A10	1
Kastamonu University	A13	1
Kilis 7 Aralık University	A18	1
Kafkas University	A1	1
Dumlupınar University	A5	1
Niğde University	A12	1
Sakarya University	A2	1

Ondokuz Mayıs University	A26	1
Cumhuriyet University	A17	1
Gaziosmanpaşa University	A21	1
Uşak University	A23	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

Table 4 shows that the highest number of studies was conducted in Atatürk University (f = 4) and Selçuk University (f = 4). The distribution according to other universities is given in Table 4.

**Table 5.** Distribution according to sampling regions

Sampling Region	Code	f
Central Anatolia (İç Anadolu )	A3, A11, A12, A16, A17, A19, A20, A21, A28	9
Aegean (Ege)	A5, A9, A10, A15, A22, A23	6
Eastern Anatolia (Doğu Anadolu)	A1, A2, A8, A14, A29	5
Southeastern Anatolia (G. Doğu Anadolu)	A4, A18, A24, A27,	4
Marmara	A6, A7, A30	3
Black Sea (Karadeniz)	A13, A26	2
Mediterranean (Akdeniz)	A25	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

Table 5 shows that the highest number of studies was performed in Central Anatolia (İç Anadolu) Region (f=9). Distribution according to other sample regions is given in Table 5.

**Table 6.** Distribution of research by thesis types

Thesis Type	Code	f
Master's	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, 25, A26, A27, A28, A29, A30	28
Doctorate	A23, A24	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

When Table 6 is examined, it can be seen that the most work is the master's thesis (f = 28). Distribution of the other thesis type is given in Table 6.

**Table 7.** Distribution according to research models

Research Model	Code	f
Screening model	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, A23, A24, A25, A26, A27, A28, A29, A30	29
Experimental model	A12	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

When Table 7 is examined, it is found that the most study is done in the screening model (f = 29) according to the research model. The distribution of the other model is shown in Table 7.

**Table 8.** Distribution according to research methods

Research Method	Code	f
Quantitative	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A9, A10, A12, A13, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, A26, A27, A28, A29	22
Qualitative	A7, A8, A11, A14, A23, A24, A30	7
Mixed	A25	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

When Table 8 is examined, it is determined that the most studies are made by quantitative method (f = 22) according to the research method. The distribution of other methods is given in Table 8.

**Table 9.** Distribution according to research results

Research Results	Code	f
Insufficient time	A5, A7, A8, A9, A13, A15, A18, A20, A21, A22, A23, A26, A27, A28, A29, A30	16
Lack of tools, equipment and resources	A1, A7, A11, A14, A17, A20, A21, A23, A26, A27, A28, A29, A30	13
Inadequate curriculum	A8, A11, A13, A16, A17, A18, A21, A22, A24, A26, A27, A28	12
Low readiness	A9, A10, A11, A13, A20, A23, A30	7
Teacher qualifications	A11, A12, A14, A15, A16, A18, A19	7
Crowded classes	A3, A5, A7, A9, A11, A25, A30	7
Insufficient textbooks	A13, A14, A18, A22, A23	5
Problems in the evaluation phase	A1, A2, A3, A20	4
insufficient classroom physical facilities	A7, A20, A23	3
Problems in the preparation phase	A2, A4, A16	3
Lack of role model	A6, A25	2
Lack of social studies classrooms	A9, A28	2
Inadequate guidance service	A14, A19	2
Examination system	A15, A28	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>

When Table 9 is examined, it is found that the most time is insufficient (f = 16) according to the research result. Distribution according to other research results is given in Table 9.

**Table 10.** Distribution according to research proposals

Research Proposals	Code	f
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In-service training	A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A14, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, A24, A25, A26, A27, A28, A29	24
Tools, equipment and resource support	A1, A4, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A23, A26, A27	15
Organizing program and textbooks	A6, A12, A13, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A21, A22, A23, A24, A27, A28, A29	15
suitability for student	A4, A5, A6, A10, A14, A16, A19, A22, A23, A24, A26, A28, A29, A30	14
Course hours should be increased	A7, A13, A14, A15, A17, A18, A21, A22, A26, A27, A28, A30	12
Reducing the number of class students	A5, A9, A11, A16, A20, A30	6
Physical conditions should be improved	A7, A9, A13, A14, A23, A27	6
School-family collaboration	A5, A7, A10, A14, A19, A25	6
Creating a social studies class	A7, A14, A16, A28	4
Arrangement of measurement and evaluation	A1, A16, A20	3
Regulation in exam system	A15, A28	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>

In Table 10, in-service training ( $f = 24$ ) is the most recommended according to the research recommendations. Distribution according to other recommendations is given in Table 10.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The prominent problems in research; problems of teaching of the course, problems of program and textbook, problems in teaching of geography subjects and problems encountered in teaching of history subjects.

In literature it is possible to see studies that reach similar results with regard to teaching problems, curriculum and textbook problems (Aydın, 2004; Karasoy, 2004; Köroğlu, 2006; Tahiroğlu, 2006; Yılmaz, 2010a; Alataş, 2010; Yavuz, 2010; Akdeniz & Kapıcıoğlu, 2011; Akşit, 2011; Tangülü & Çıdacı, 2014; Akmehmetoğlu, 2014; Yener, 2014; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015; Gönenç & Açıkalın, 2015; Karaca, 2017; Tonga, 2017; İbrahimioğlu, 2018; Tuncer, 1999; Kırtay, 2007; Sağlam, 2014; Akdeniz, 2008; Ekici, 2018; Baydar, 2009; Arslantaş, 2006).

There are similar studies related to the problems experienced in the teaching of history subjects in social studies course (Salik, 2007; Karakök, 2011; Aktaş, 2010; Sagay, 2007). There are similar studies related to the problems experienced in the teaching of history subjects in social studies course (Yuvacı, 2018; Göç, 2008; Akşit, 2016; Ünal, 2012).

The most academic thesis about the problems and solutions of social studies teaching was done in 2006, 2007 and 2010. There were no dissertations in 2005, 2013 and 2015. The number of researches increased between 2006-2011. The university with the highest number of dissertations on the subject of the research is Atatürk University and Selçuk University. When we look at the universities where theses are made, an interesting result emerges. There are fewer studies in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, both in established universities and in provinces with high number of universities. The highest number of dissertations was conducted in the Central Anatolia (İç Anadolu) Region and the least number of studies were conducted in the Mediterranean Region. When the sample regions are examined, the study in the Mediterranean (Akdeniz) Region is scarce and decreases the power of generalization. The more regions the samples address, the more generalization power is thought to increase.

The majority of graduate theses are master's theses. Two of the 30 theses are doctoral theses and the others are master's theses. It is seen that there are not enough doctoral studies and after 2016 doctoral studies started. Most of the researches were prepared by screening model. One of the 30 theses is experimental model and the others are screening model. Most of the theses were prepared by quantitative method. 22 of the 30 theses were designed with quantitative, 7 with qualitative and 1 with mixed method. It is thought that it will be more beneficial to increase the experimental researches about the problems encountered in social studies teaching. In addition, action researches that focus on problems and solutions can be recommended.

In the results of the research theses, it was revealed that most time and course hours, tools, resources and curriculum were insufficient. In the literature, there are studies that reach similar conclusions about the lack of time (Arslantaş, 2006; İncekara, 2011; Çalışkan, 2010; Işık, 2011, Akdeniz & Kapıcıoğlu, 2011; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015; Gönenç & Açıkalın, 2017), lack of equipment and resources (Işık, 2011; Yılmaz & Tepebaş, 2011; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015; Gönenç & Açıkalın, 2017) and insufficient curriculum (Arslantaş, 2006; Işık, 2011; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015; Tangülü & Çıdacı, 2014; Tuncer, 1999; Kırtay, 2007; Sağlam, 2014; Akdeniz, 2008; Ekici, 2018; Baydar, 2009).

In the research theses, some suggestions are made such as in-service training, tools, equipment and resource support, arrangement of program and textbooks, appropriate course teaching and increasing the hours of the course. The recommendations in many studies in the literature coincide with our research (Arslantaş, 2006; Çalışkan, 2010; Işık, 2001; Memişoğlu & Köylü, 2015).

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