The Attitudes of Social Studies Teacher Candidates towards Social Justice

Sercan Bursa[1], Uğur Gezer[2] and A. Figen Ersoy[3]

Abstract
This study aims to determine the social justice attitudes of social studies teacher candidates and to examine these attitudes in terms of various variables. It employed a parallel mixed design to examine whether   the findings overlap with each other. The study group consists of 188 teacher candidates studying at the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of the social studies teaching undergraduate program in a state university in Turkey. Qualitative data were obtained from eight teacher candidates determined according to the maximum diversity sampling from the study group. Quantitative data were collected through social justice scale and a semi-structured interview form. The quantitative data of the study were analysed by independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA, and qualitative data were analyzed by inductive analysis method. Findings revealed first that social justice attitudes of social studies teacher candidates were generally at a good level. Second, teacher candidates expressed social justice with concepts such as justice, equality, distribution of resources and regulation of social relations. Third, the social justice attitudes of teacher candidates did not differ depending on the gender and their grade. Fourth, while the educational status of the father was not effective on the social justice attitudes of the teacher candidates, the educational status of the mother was effective. Fifth, the level of social justice attitudes of teacher candidates who are members of non-governmental organizations and who work effectively is higher than the level of social justice attitudes of other teacher candidates. Finally, teacher candidates who use social media frequently have higher social justice attitudes compared to teacher candidates who rarely or never use social media.

Key Words: Social justice, social studies teacher candidate, attitude, parallel mixed design

Introduction

One of the most popular concepts in the twenty-first century is social justice. Many social events and phenomena such as rapid population growth, intense migration movements, increased inequalities in income distribution, epidemics, imbalances in reaching social benefits, as well as technological and cultural developments have been effective in the development of the concept of social justice. The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution are two important phenomena in the development of social justice (Gürkan, 2008). While the ideas of equality, freedom and fraternity that developed with the French Revolution pointed to the basic principles of the understanding of social justice, the social and economic problems that emerged with the Industrial Revolution strengthened the understanding of social justice (Gürkan, 2008).

[1] Anadolu University, Turkey, sercanbursa@anadolu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-6976-3581
[2] Yozgat Bozok University, Turkey, ugur.gezer@bozok.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-6752-7526
[3] Anadolu University, Turkey, arifee@anadolu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-6144-2636

Another important development that was influential in the development of the understanding of social justice is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the UN in 1948. With the UDHR, an important step has been taken towards ensuring individual freedom and economic security, empathy and social responsibility, awareness of oppression and inequalities, as well as the acceptance of cultural, political, and religious diversity. In parallel with these developments, academic studies on social justice emerged.

Although the concept of social justice is usually explained on the basis of the concept of justice, it has different meanings. Theories about the concept of justice date back to Plato and Aristotle. In the ancient period, justice was defined by Plato as everyone doing their part and having their own share (Topakkaya, 2008). However, in time, in addition to the justice that individuals want to have in the legal field, some needs such as respect, justice, equality, security and freedom in daily life point to the concept of social justice rather than the concept of justice (Rebore, 2001). While the concept of justice entails the existing rules to be applied fairly to everyone, the concept of social justice works to eliminate the practices that include injustice and inequality beyond the existing rules (Öztürk, 2014). Many definitions have been made on the concept of social justice. While Dantley and Tillman (2010) describe social justice as a concept related to the elimination of these injustices experienced by individuals who are not adequately represented in daily life and cannot benefit from social opportunities adequately; Moffat, Hanley, and Wilson (2001) define social justice as closing income imbalances between the wealthy and the poor, protecting human rights, and having equal opportunities for all individuals in social life. The widely accepted definition of the concept of social justice was made by Bell (2007). Bell expresses social justice as both a goal and a process. Bell defines social justice as "a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure." (2007, p.4) and emphasizes that with social justice, individuals in the society will participate fully and equally in the democratic decision-making processes of the individual, and they will be responsible for other people and societies. In addition to the protection of rights in general, it is highlighted in the definitions of social justice that economic, social, political relations existing in social life should be regulated and the requirements of a democratic society should adequately be met (Grant & Gibson, 2013).

There are many factors that affect how strong the belief in social justice is and the development of social justice awareness in individuals. These factors are historical, social, and economic (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). These factors emerge as a reflection of the behaviors that individuals can do and cannot do due to various obstacles in the society that they live in. Variables such as having a disadvantage, educational status, racial differences, economic level, family, and gender have an impact on the social justice awareness of individuals (Nieuwenhuis, 2010; Torres-Harding et al., 2014).

The increasing perception of social justice imposes a responsibility on the states in order to raise citizens as individuals with social justice awareness. Thus, social justice education started to be given as a part of citizenship education. Studies on how social justice education should be underline critical thinking and democratic solutions to inequalities. While Grant and Agosto (2008) define social justice education as providing an understanding of the distribution of justice and thinking about why inequitable practices exist, Carlisle, Jackson, and George (2006) state that social justice education is a reform movement carried out in educational environments to strengthen equality locally and globally between social groups. Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997), on the other hand, emphasize that social justice education is a field that aims to raise citizens who can critically evaluate social institutions and work in cooperation with individuals with different characteristics in a democratic way. One of the most important ways for individuals to learn basic knowledge and skills related to the concept of social justice is the education they receive at school. Social studies, one of the courses given to students, has a very important role in terms of social justice.

Social studies course is a basic course in order to provide students with some competencies on social justice and to raise individuals with a developed social justice awareness. According to NCSS (National Council for Social Studies, 1994), one of the components needed for a strong social studies education is social justice education, because social justice education to be given within the social studies course will help to raise citizens who can fight against injustice and inequalities and make efforts to create a better world. Teachers have an important role in providing students with knowledge, skills and values related to social justice within the social studies course, because teachers' values, beliefs, experiences, and practices directly affect students' perspectives on social justice (Banks & Banks, 2007). The fact that teachers have an important role in social justice education requires attention to the issue of teacher training. Therefore, it is considered necessary for the teachers to be trained to have a developed consciousness in terms of social justice and to be equipped with the skills to provide their students with knowledge, skills and values related to social justice. For this reason, it is important for social studies teacher candidates to have positive attitudes towards social justice. However, when the literature is examined, it is seen that there are very few studies on the determination of attitudes of social studies teacher candidates towards social justice. Therefore, this study aims to determine the social justice attitudes of social studies teacher candidates and to examine these attitudes in terms of various variables. It is thought that findings of this research will contribute to the literature. Within the scope of the research purpose, the research questions posed for this study are as follows:

1- What is the level of social studies teacher candidates' attitudes towards social justice?

2- Do social studies teacher candidates' attitudes towards social justice differ according to the variables of gender, grade, mother's education level, father's education level, membership in non-governmental organizations and the frequency of social media use?

3- What are the views of social studies teacher candidates on social justice?

4- How do social studies teacher candidates define social justice?

Method

Research Design

This study employed mixed method in which both quantitative and qualitative methods are used together. By using the strengths of quantitative and qualitative research methods together, mixed method provides more in-depth and detailed findings about the research problem (Creswell & Plano, 2007). Parallel mixed design was used in this study (Creswell, 2013). In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time, and they are examined whether the findings overlap with each other. A research report is created by comparing and correlating quantitative and qualitative findings (Creswell, 2013). In this study, quantitative data were collected through the "Social Justice Scale" and qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews about social justice with teacher candidates. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Anadolu University Ethics Committee, the purpose of the research was explained to the study group, and the study was conducted with volunteers.

Study Group

The study group consisted of a total of 188 teacher candidates who were in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of Anadolu University Faculty of Education Social Studies Teaching undergraduate program in the 2018-2019 academic year.

188 teacher candidates, 89 female and 99 males, participated in the quantitative part of the study. The demographic information of the participants is as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of the Teacher Candidates who Participated in the Social Justice Attitude Scale

Variable	Categories	f	%
Gender	Female	89	47,3
	Male	99	52,7
Grade	1st Grade	44	23,4
	2nd Grade	48	25,5
	3rd Grade	41	21,8
	4th Grade	55	29,3
Mother's Education Level	Illiterate	31	16,5
	Primary School	93	49,5
	Secondary School	33	17,6
	High School	29	15,4
	University	2	1,1
	Graduate	0	0
Father's Education Level	Illiterate	3	1,6
	Primary	95	50,5
	Secondary	36	19,1
	High School	35	18,6
	University	18	9,6
	Graduate	1	0,5
Membership in Non-Governmental Organization	Yes	93	49,5
	No	95	50,5
Frequency of Social Media Use	Not Using	13	6,9
	Rarely	38	20,2
	Often	58	30,9
	Regularly	79	42,0
Total		188	100,0

The qualitative data of the study were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with 8 teacher candidates. The teacher candidates who participated in the interview were determined by the maximum diversity sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods (Patton, 2014). In this regard, it was tried to ensure that all quantitative independent variables in the study, such as gender, grade, educational status of parents, participation in NGOs and frequency of social media use were represented in the participant group. The demographic information of the teacher candidates participating in the interview in the qualitative part of the study is as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Demographic Information of the Teacher Candidates Participating in the Interviews

Code Name	Gender	Class	Mother's Education Level	Father's Education Level	Members hip in NGO	Frequency of Social Media Use
Kemal	Male	2nd Grade	Secondary	High School	Yes	Often
Nuray	Female	3rd Grade	High School	High School	Yes	Often
Aydın	Male	4th Grade	University	University	Yes	Often
Ayhan	Male	1st Grade	Illiterate	Secondary	No	Regularly
Duygu	Female	3rd Grade	Primary	University	No	Regularly
Ahmet	Male	4th Grade	Secondary	High School	No	Rarely
Eda	Female	2nd Grade	Secondary	High School	Yes	Regularly

Data Collection Tools

The first data collection tool of the study, called "Social Justice Scale" was developed by Torres-Harding et al. (2012). The scale consists of 24 Likert type items, and each item is represented by seven options; from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Participants are required to mark 1 if they "strongly disagree", 7 if they "strongly agree" and 4 if they are "undecided". If the participants see themselves somewhere between "strongly disagree" and "I am undecided", they should choose the options of 2 or 3, and if they consider themselves as somewhere between "I am undecided" and "I totally agree", they should choose the options of 5 or 6 options. All items in the scale are grouped under four factors: attitude towards social justice, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and tendency to exhibit behavior. While there are 11 items in the first factor, the second factor consists of five items, and the third and fourth factors each consists of four items. The factor structure of the Social Justice Scale, which was adapted into Turkish by Cırık (2016), was determined by confirmatory factor analysis. As a result of the reliability analysis, it was revealed that the alpha coefficients varied between .82 and .95 in the factors. It is seen that the Social Justice Attitudes factor has the strongest weight among the factors.

To collect qualitative data of the current study, semi-structured interviews, which were also the second data collection tool, were conducted with 4 female and 4 male teacher candidates studying at different grades. For this purpose, a semi-structured interview form was developed. The interview questions were prepared by the researchers considering the variables in the quantitative dimension of the study and were evaluated by field experts and the interview form was finalized conducting a pilot interview. Both quantitative and qualitative data of the study were collected from only volunteer participants.

Data Analysis

The total scores the participants obtained from each item and the whole scale were used to determine the attitudes of teacher candidates towards social justice. The normality of the data distribution was examined in order to determine which tests would be used to reveal the changes in the social justice attitudes of the participants based on various variables. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics, kurtosis, skewness and Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test values.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics and Normality Values of the Scores Obtained from the Scale

Scale	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	Kurtosis	Skewness	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
Social Justice Attitude Scale	188	135,77	14,89	-.705	.184	.054

As shown in table 3, the kurtosis and skewness values of the scale scores are between +1 and -1. In addition, Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test value was found to be significant (p>.05). These results suggest that the participants have a normal distribution in terms of their social justice attitude scale scores (Huck, 2012).

The fact that the data showed normal distribution, independent sample t-test was performed to find out whether there was a significant relationship between the social justice attitudes of the participants and the variables of gender and membership in non-governmental organizations. One-way ANOVA test was used to determine whether the social justice attitude scores of the participants made a significant difference according to the variables of grade, mother's education level, father's education level and frequency of social media use.

Qualitative data collected within the scope of the research were analyzed inductively. Based on the variables of the study, the qualitative data from which the views of teacher candidates on social justice were obtained were transcribed and then the codes and themes were formed. Thus, by interpreting the qualitative and quantitative data together, the social justice attitudes of teacher candidates and the variables affecting these attitudes were tried to be determined. Nvivo12 qualitative data analysis package program was used in the analysis of qualitative data.

Findings

1. The attitudes of Social Studies teacher candidates towards social justice

Descriptive statistics regarding the scores of social studies teacher candidates from the social justice attitude scale are given in Table 4.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Scores of Social Studies Teacher Candidates from the Social Justice Attitude Scale

	n	Min	Max	$\bar{x}$	sd
Social Justice Attitude Scale	188	91	160	135,77	14,89

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the mean score of social justice attitude scale of social studies teacher candidates (n=188) is 135.77. The lowest score that the participants can get from the scale is 24, and the highest score is 168. In this context, considering that the mean score is 135.77, it can be said that the attitudes of social studies teacher candidates towards social justice are generally at a good level. The qualitative findings of the study also support this result. It is seen that most of the teacher candidates often refer to concepts found in the literature such as justice, equality, distribution of resources, and regulation of social relations to explain the concept of social justice. The participants defined social justice as follows:

Ayhan: "Justice among people"

Nuray: "Fair distribution of education and health"

Kemal: "Equal use of some opportunities by the public such as education, health, transportation"

Seval: "Living equally"

Duygu: "Equal sharing of income"

2. Variables affecting the attitudes of social studies teacher candidates towards social justice

Independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to determine whether social studies teacher candidates' scores on social justice attitude scale differ statistically according to various variables. Table 5 shows the results of the independent sample t-test, which was conducted to determine whether the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates differ significantly by gender.

Table 5.

Independent Sample t-test Results Regarding Social Justice Attitude Scores of Teacher Candidates by Gender

Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	t	p
Female	89	135,79	14,40	186	.018	.98
Male	99	135,75	15,40			

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the social justice attitude scores of the participants do not differ significantly by gender [$t_{(186)}$=.018, $p > .05$]. It can be said that the social justice attitude scores of female teacher candidates $\bar{X}$=135,79; sd=14,40) are

very close to social justice attitude scores of the male teacher candidates ($\bar{X}$=135,75; *sd*=15,40). Qualitative findings are also consistent with this finding. There is no significant gender difference in the definition of social justice. It is seen that male and female participants generally use similar expressions in defining social justice. Kemal, one of the participants, defines social justice as "the people's equal use of certain opportunities such as education, health and transportation". Similarly, Nuray defines social justice as "the fair distribution of education, health and social services".

Table 6 shows the results of the ANOVA conducted to determine whether the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates, which is another variable of the study, differ significantly according to grade.

Table 6.
One-way ANOVA Results on the Social Justice Attitude Scores of Social Studies Teacher Candidates According to Their Grade

Grade of Education	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	F	p
1st Grade	44	136,02	17,27			
2nd Grade	48	134,64	13,49	3	1,038	.37
3rd Grade	41	133,31	11,75	184		
4th Grade	55	138,40	16,04			

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates do not differ significantly according to their grade [$F_{(3-184)}$=1,038, *p* > .05]. Although there are no statistically significant differences between the years they study, it can be said that the social justice attitude scores of the 4th year teacher candidates ($\bar{X}$=108.40; *sd*=16.04) are higher than the other years of education levels. The qualitative findings of the study also support this finding. It is seen that some of the 4th year teacher candidates define social justice and other concepts related to social justice more comprehensively than other teacher candidates. In this regard, one of the teacher candidates studying in the 1st year, Ayhan, defined social justice as *"Justice among people"*, while Aydın, one of the 4th year teacher candidates, defined social justice with the following statements:

> *I think social justice can be defined as individuals having equal rights and responsibilities both in society and before the law. In other words, I can define social justice as the fact that the role of individuals in society is not found strange and their point of view in society is not ridiculed by others.*

The ANOVA results regarding whether the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates differ according to their mother's educational status are given in Table 7.

Table 7.

One-way ANOVA Results on the Attitude Scores of Social Studies Teacher Candidates towards Social Justice according to Their Mother's Educational Status

Mother's Education Level	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	F	p	Difference
Illiterate	31	126,51	17,98				2>1
Primary	93	135,35	12,63	3	7,161	.001*	3>1
Secondary	33	140,75	15,81	184			4>1
High School	31	141,00	14,89				

*p<.01; Categories: Illiterate=1, Primary=2, Secondary=3, High School=4

Table 7 shows that the social justice attitude scores of the participants differ statistically depending on the educational status of their mothers [$F_{(3-181)}$=7,161, $_p$<.01]. It is seen that there is a linear increase in the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates as the educational level of their mothers increases. As a result of the Post Hoc test, which was conducted to determine if there were significant differences depending on the mothers' educational status, The social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates whose mothers graduated from primary ($\bar{X}$=135,35; *sd*=12,63), secondary ($\bar{X}$=140,75; *sd*=15,81), and high school ($\bar{X}$=141,00; *sd*=14,89) were significantly higher than the social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates whose mothers were illiterate ($\bar{X}$=126,51; sd=17,98). Similar to the quantitative findings, the qualitative findings also show that teacher candidates whose mothers have higher level of education define the characteristics of individuals with social justice in more detail. While Duygu, whose mother's education level is at primary school level, explains the characteristics of an individual with social justice by the expressions of "empathizes, does not favor nepotism and does not discriminate", Kemal, whose mother's education level is at secondary school level labels an individual with social justice as democratic, respectful of human rights and thinks of others. On the other hand, Aydın whose mother has bachelor's degree, defines an individual with social justice as follows:

In my opinion, the most distinctive feature of an individual with social justice is that (s)he can be tolerant. The ability to empathize must be very strong at the point of understanding the other person. Apart from this, (s)he should be improving himself (herself), (s)he should be open to innovations, (s)he should be constantly researching in scientific and other subjects. (S)he needs to be able to approach other people's lives more fairly.

The ANOVA results regarding whether the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates differ depending on their father's educational status are given in Table 8.

Table 8.

One-way ANOVA Results on the Attitude Scores of Social Studies Teacher Candidates towards Social Justice according to Their Father's Educational Status

Father's Education Level	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	F	p
Primary	98	134,45	14,32			
Secondary	36	133,38	17,99	3	2,230	.08
High School	35	138,25	14,01	184		
University	19	142,52	10,86			

When Table 8 is examined, it is seen that the social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates do not have a statistically significant difference depending on their father's education level [$F_{(3-184)}$=2,230, $p > .05$]. Although ANOVA results showed no statistically significant differences in social justice attitudes of the participants according to their fathers' educational status, it can be said that the mean scores of social justice attitudes of teacher candidates according to their father's education level increased linearly from primary to university. Similarly, qualitative findings also support this situation. There is no significant difference in the statements of teacher candidates according to the educational status of their fathers while defining social justice education. While Duygu, whose father has undergraduate level of education, defined social justice education as "teaching not to discriminate against race, religion, etc. in the course", Ahmet, whose father's education level is at high school, explains social justice education more comprehensively with the following statements:

I think social justice education includes raising individuals who have awareness, and one of the most important elements in this awareness is to tolerate each other. When I consider about social studies course, I think that no course can replace social studies course. While all lessons are theoretical, social studies is a lesson that we can directly associate with life. But as I said, social studies course has become such a theoretical course today that it's as if we have nothing to do with practice and learn nothing about real life. In fact, there are many units related to our cultural characteristics in secondary school programs in terms of social justice education. Cultural differences should also be mentioned there.

Table 9 shows the independent sample t-test results regarding whether the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates differ according to their being members of a non-governmental organization.

Table 9.

Independent Sample t-test Results Regarding Social Justice Attitude Scores of Teacher Candidates according to Their Being Members of a Non-Governmental Organization

Membership in NGO	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	t	p
Yes	93	141,18	11,31	186	5,263	.001
No	95	130,48	16,09			

*p <.01

When Table 9 is examined, it is seen that the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates differ statistically according to their membership in non-governmental organizations [$t_{(186)}$=5,263, *p* < .01]. It was found that the social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates who are members of any non-governmental organization ($\bar{X}$=141,18; *sd*=11,31) are higher than the social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates who are non-member ($\bar{X}$=130,48; *sd*=16,09). It is noteworthy that the qualitative findings of the study also support this finding. Four of the teacher candidates state that they actively participated in the work of some NGOs during their undergraduate education. The views of these teacher candidates, who are involved in free lectures and school library projects in the Halkevleri Derneği (Community Centers Association), TEGV (The Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey), TEMA (The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats), and Youth Centers, on the teaching of social justice to children differ from those who do not work in NGOs. Teacher candidates who are actively involved in NGOs emphasize the rights of individuals and the protection of these rights, as well as teaching the concepts of justice and equality. Nuray, one of the participants, states that students should watch TV and read books with a critical perspective, that they should participate in NGOs and that she wants to create a democratic classroom environment. Eda, another NGO volunteer teacher candidate, uses the following statements about social justice education in the social studies course:

> *I want my students to be equitable and treat fair. I want them to know that equal and fair are not the same thing. I want them to be aware of their rights. For example, I want them to be aware that education and health services are free in socially fair places. I want them to fight for their rights. I want them to be responsive to inequality and injustice. I use newspaper news and case studies. There may be polarization between students. At this point, the teacher should provide control and create a tolerant environment.*

Table 10 shows the ANOVA results whether the social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates, which is another variable of the study, differ significantly according to social media use.

Table 10.

One-way ANOVA Results on Social Justice Attitude Scores of Social Studies Teacher Candidates according to Social Media Use

Frequency of Social Media Use	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	F	p	Difference
Not Using	13	129,15	18,12				
Rarely	38	128,63	18,94	4	5,551	.001*	3>2
Often	58	138,29	12,39	184			4>2
Regularly	79	138,45	12,44				

*p<.01; Categories: Not Using=1, Rarely=2, Often=3, Regularly=4

When Table 10 is examined, it is seen that the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates show a statistically significant difference according to the frequency of social media use [$F_{(4-184)}$=5,551, *p*<.01]. As a result of the Post Hoc test, it was seen that this statistical difference was due to the fact that the social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates who use social media frequently ($\bar{X}$=138,29; *sd*=12,39) and regularly ($\bar{X}$=138,45; *sd*=12,44) are higher than the social justice attitude scores of the teacher candidates who rarely use it ($\bar{X}$=128,63; *sd*=18,94). In other words, it can be said that as the frequency of social media use increases, the social justice attitude scores of teacher candidates also increase. However, qualitative findings do not fully correspond to this result of the quantitative data. Although some of the teacher candidates with a higher frequency of social media use have more inclusive views on social justice, it is not possible to say that all of them have a high awareness of social justice. Despite being one of the participants who frequently use social media, Seval uses the phrase "social media should set an example for social justice" when referring to the relationship between social media and social justice. This suggests that although some participants have a high frequency of social media use, their attitudes towards social justice are not supported by the significant difference in quantitative findings. On the other hand, there are also participants who have high frequency of social media use and offer comprehensive views on social justice in accordance with the literature. Aydın, one of these participants, states that social media does not contribute much to the strengthening of social justice in societies with the following expressions:

Frankly, I find social media insincere. One day my sister was eating meatballs at home, and then took a picture of it. I said what are you doing, she said I will share it on Instagram, she said. I said why are you doing such a thing? She said my friends also share these kinds of photos. Then I replied what if there are those who desire to eat and cannot afford it. But she doesn't think about them. On social media, we sometimes act like angels with such a good mood, but we are not like that in our real life. What we call social injustice is something that upsets people. Even if people constantly see injustices, they still do not use social media. The aim is to spend time on

social media, so no one wants to deal with the problem with an injustice right next to them. On social media people say I understand your problem and try to give advice, but they do not act to solve the problems.

Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestion

The findings of the current study showed that social justice attitudes of social studies teacher candidates are at a good level. The fact that teacher candidates use concepts such as justice, equality, distribution of resources and regulation of social relations in parallel with the literature while defining social justice supports this result. There is no study in the literature that aims to determine the social justice attitudes of social studies teacher candidates. However, in the study conducted with university students by Torres-Harding et al. (2014) students' perceptions of social justice were grouped under three headings: equality of opportunity and rights, social acceptance of all people, promoting justice and fighting against injustices. Teacher candidates in this study used the terms of justice and equality when describing social justice. Therefore, the findings of the current study show similarities with the findings of Torres-Harding et al. (2014). Similarly, Tannebaum and Cridland-Hughes (2015) state that social studies teacher candidates often refer to social justice, multiculturalism, participatory citizenship, and critical thinking under the title of controversial topics. Çengelci Köse, Gürdoğan Bayır, Köse and Yıldırım Polat (2019) revealed the views of pre-school education, primary school education and social studies teacher candidates on the value of justice in the study they conducted. In this study, teacher candidates touched on topics such as the regulatory, balancing, distributing, social, equity and sense of injustice in relation to justice. In the study of Bursa and Ersoy (2016), social studies teachers interpret social justice as equality, justice, respect, tolerance, and human rights. Social studies teacher candidates of this study preferred to explain social justice with expressions such as justice, distribution of resources and justice in real life.

One of the important indicators of social justice in real life is gender equality in every sphere of life. In this study, it is seen that gender does not make a significant difference in the social justice attitudes of teacher candidates. Similarly, Olowookere et al. (2020) found no significant difference between male and female participants on distributive justice. Another study conducted by Kulik et al. (1997) concluded that there was no significant gender difference in procedural justice, known as the justice observed in decision making process. These results show that the findings of this study were in line with the previous findings in the literature.

In the study, although education year of the teacher candidates was not a variable that affected their social justice attitudes significantly, it was observed that the mean scores of social justice attitudes of the teacher candidates studying at the 4th year were higher than others. It can be said that this result is due to the fact that these subjects are included in the curriculum of the teacher education program. According to NCSS (Na-

tional Council for Social Studies, 1994), social justice education is an important aspect that effective social studies education should possess. Similarly, McGee and Hostitler (2014) emphasize that promoting the belief of social justice in individuals is one of the aims of the social studies course. Although the concept of social justice is partially included in the courses in social studies teacher training programs, concepts such as justice and equality are frequently mentioned. At the same time, these concepts are included under the title of values education in the Social Studies Curriculum. Teacher candidates frequently work on the Social Studies Curriculum and do microteaching practices during their teacher education and these concepts are acquired more deeply by the teacher candidates at the 4th year. Thus, teacher candidates frequently use the terms of justice and equality while defining the concept of social justice.

This study revealed that while the educational status of fathers is not effective on the social justice attitudes of the teacher candidates, the educational status of mothers is effective. This finding can be explained by the fact that the mother has a more important role in raising children and shaping their values. In his study, Santrock (2011) states that the mother plays a more active role in parenting because it is seen as the basic assumption of the society and cultural influences. This also applies to the value acquisition of the children. Mothers are more influential than other family members in the development of the values of individuals (Smith & Hart, 2004). Therefore, the findings of this study regarding the role of mothers on the social justice attitudes of the teacher candidates are similar with the literature.

Another result of the study is that the social justice attitude of teacher candidates who are members of NGOs and work effectively is higher than the others. One of the main purposes of NGOs is to increase the level of social justice in society (Kirk, 2012). In addition, one of the basic qualities of an individual with a high awareness of social justice is to raise social justice in the society and to be involved in NGOs as a means of participation in democracy. In this context, it is an expected finding that teacher candidates who are members of NGOs have high social justice attitude, which also overlaps with the literature.

The final finding of this study is that social justice attitudes of teacher candidates who frequently use social media were found to be more positive. Social media is used for hobbies, likes, sharing and communication, as well as for purposes such as creating social awareness, making the voices of the weak, and the victims of injustice heard by the crowds. Schejter and Tirosh (2015) highlight the importance of social media in creating an environment where disadvantaged groups can make their voices heard more. Similarly, Zavattaro (2020) emphasizes the change that social media can create in society and its contribution to the promotion of social justice. Therefore, social justice attitudes of teacher candidates who use social media frequently is more positive, which is in line with the literature.

In line with the results of the study, in order to improve the social justice attitudes

of social studies teacher candidates, social justice education should be included in teacher education programs and students can be encouraged to be members of NGO. In addition, quantitative studies can be conducted with a large sample to determine the social justice attitudes of teacher candidates who will work in different disciplines and levels. In addition, applied research can be conducted to improve the social justice education competencies of teacher candidates.

*A part of the findings was presented as an oral presentation at the 2nd International Academic Research Congress held in Alanya, Turkey, 2017.

References

Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (Ed.). (1997). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook.* New York: Routledge.

Banks, J. A., & Banks C. M. (2007). *Multicultural education, issues and perspectives.* (6. Baskı). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Bell, L. A. (2007). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice.* (pp. 1–14). New York: Routledge.

Bursa, S., & Ersoy, A. F. (2016). Social studies teachers' perceptions and experiences of social justice. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 64,* 319–340.

Carlisle, L. R., Jackson, B. W., & George, A. (2006). Principles of social justice education: The social justice education in schools project. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 39*(1), 55–64.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Araştırma deseni.* Ankara: Eğiten.

Creswell, J., & Plano, C. V. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Çengelci Köse, T., Gürdoğan Bayır, Ö., Köse, M., & Yıldırım Polat, A. (2019). Öğretmen adaylarının bakış açısıyla adalet değeri. *Kalem Eğitim ve İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi, 9*(1),67-93.

Dantley, M. E., & Tillman, L. C. (2010). Social justice and moral transformative leadership. Marshall, C., & Oliva, M. (Ed.), *Leadership for social justice içinde* (2. Baskı, s. 19-34). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Fraenkel, J. R, Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2011). *How to design and evaluate research in education.* Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Grant, C. A., & Gibson, M. L. (2013). "The path of social justice": A human rights history of social justice education. *Equity & Excellence in Education. 46*(1), 81-99. doi:10.1080/10665684.2012.750190.

Griffiths, M. (2003). *Action for social justice in education: Fairly different.* Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Gürkan, Ü. (2008). Sosyal adalet. In Güriz, A. (Ed.), *Adalet kavramı* (pp.115-124). Ankara: Ankamat.

Kirk, M. (2012). Beyond charity: Helping NGOs lead a transformative new public discourse on global poverty and social justice. *Ethics & International Affairs, 26*(2), 245.

Kulik, C. T., Lind, E. A., Ambrose, M. L., & MacCoun, R. J. (1997). Understanding gender differences in distributive and procedural justice. *Social Justice Research, 10*(1), 109-109.

McGee, E. O., & Hostetler, A. L. (2014). Historicizing mathematics and mathematizing social studies for social justice: a call for ıntegration. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 33*(1), 28-34.

Moffatt, I., Hanley, N., & Wilson, M. D. (2001). Definitions and principles of sustainable development. Moffat, D., Hanley, N.I., & Wilson, M. D. (ed), *Measuring and modelling sustainable development: Principles, analysis and policies içinde* (pp. 1-14). Informa Health Care.

NCSS. (1994). *Expectations of excellence: Curriculum standards for social studies.* Washington, D.C. New York.

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2010). Social justice in education revisited. *Education Inquiry, 1*(4), 269-287.

Olowookere, E. I., Odukoya, J. A., Omonijo, D. O., Adekeye, O. A., Igbokwe, D. O., Elegbeleye, A. O., & Okojide, A. C. (2020). *Academy of Strategic Management Journal, 19*(2), 1-8.

Öztürk, F. (2014). *Sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin küresel eğitim bilgi, deneyim ve uygulamaları.* Unpublished MA dissertation. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Nitel araştırma ve değerlendirme yöntemleri.* Ankara: Pegem Akademi.

Rebore, R. W. (2001). *The ethics of educational leadership.* Prentice-Hall Inc, New Jersey.

Santrock, J. W. (2011). *Yaşam boyu gelişim: Gelişim psikolojisi.* Ankara: Nobel Akademi.

Schejter, A. M., & Tirosh, N. (2015). "Seek the meek, seek the just": Social media and social justice. *Telecommunications Policy, 39*(9), 796-803.

Smith, P. K., & Hart, C. H. (2002). *Blackwell handbook of childhood social development.* Wiley-Blackwell.

Tannebaum, R. P., & Cridland-Hughes, S. A. (2015). Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Conceptions of and Experiences with Discussion as a Pedagogical Approach: A Case Study. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 9*(2), n2.

Topakkaya, A. (2008). Adalet kavramı bağlamında Aristoteles-Platon karşılaştırması. *Felsefe ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi,* 6, 27-46.

Torres-Harding, S. R., Steele, C., Schulz, E., Taha, F., & Pico, C. (2014). Student perceptions of social justice and social justice activities. *Education, Citizenship and*

Social Justice, 9(1), 55-66.

Zavattaro, S. M. (2021). Taking the social justice fight to the cloud: Social media and body positivity. *Public Integrity, 23*(3), 281-295.