



Examination of the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' democratic values and attitudes towards today's world problems*

Tuba Çengelci Köse, *Anadolu University, Turkey*, tubacengelci@anadolu.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0002-9193-4313

Yakup Azrak, *Anadolu University, Turkey*, yakup-azrak@hotmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-7549-4469

Ömür Gürdoğan Bayır, *Anadolu University, Turkey*, ogurdogan@anadolu.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0002-7455-7237

Abstract. This study was carried out to examine the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems. In this study, a survey design was used based on quantitative research methodology. The research sample consisted of 174 preservice teachers who were studying at the Social Studies Education Program of Anadolu University in the 2017–2018 academic year. During the study, the "Democratic Values Scale" developed by Selvi (2006) was administered to determine the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values. The "Attitude Scale for Today's World Problems," developed by Kılıçoğlu, Karakuş and Öztürk (2012), was employed to determine the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems. In conclusion, it was found that there was a significantly moderate positive correlation between the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems.

Keywords: Preservice social studies teacher, democratic values, today's world problems

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy can overall be defined as people's holding the authority of political power (Hotaman, 2010, p. 31). Although the use of the concept of democracy has political content, over time the concept has transcended the limits of political content, and the meaning of its content has become diversified. In this way, democracy has gained a meaning that refers to attitudes or behaviors (Akin and Özdemir, 2009). Democracy also refers to a lifestyle. The values of democracy take it beyond its political meaning. In that sense, the adoption of democracy as a way of life necessitates people to have certain values (Yazgan, 2013). Democratic values allow people to internalize democracy, and are of importance for societies to gain the consciousness of democracy and to effectively achieve democracy. Participation, equality, freedom and pluralism are the values that come to the fore when democratic values are the point of discussion (Uygun and Engin, 2014). These values provide gains in such matters as the ability of people to establish good relations with other people, to fulfill their rights and responsibilities of citizenship and to express themselves better. Moreover, a life in which fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed in the context of the supremacy of law is also possible with democratic values (Kala, 2015).

The grand task to have people gain democratic values falls to educational institutions. Educational institutions are among the most suitable environments for people to adopt the culture of democracy and, consequently, achieve democratic values. Teachers are the most important people who will help people gain democratic values in educational institutions. Selvi

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(2006) has argued that democratic values of teachers allow students to share thoughts, feelings, attitudes and values among themselves. If teachers have democratic values, this plays a facilitative role to help students gain such values. Whether teachers observe democracy in classroom management practices is also directly proportional to whether they have democratic values. In this context, helping students gain democratic values and democratic implementation of classroom practices depend on teachers' having democratic values (Akin and Özdemir, 2009).

Teachers who have democratic values are expected to demonstrate behaviors such as the adoption and conservation of a culture of democracy, as well as to be sensitive to the problems that are occurring in the society and the world where the teachers live. This is because democratic values require being responsible in every way for the society and the world in which one lives. When viewed from this perspective, today the world is facing problems that are very difficult to get out of and will take a long time to solve. Such problems upset the world's ecosystem and negatively affect all life on Earth (Özey, 2008). Today, problems of the world are growing rapidly, and countries become more concerned about the gravity of such problems. The reason for this situation is that such problems cross borders of countries, and the adverse effects caused by such problems are observed across the world. In recent years, problems such as climate change and changes in natural vegetation have caused many countries around the world to cooperate and such problems that threaten the whole world to be regarded as global issues (Baykal and Baykal, 2008). Today's world problems are generally examined under the following headings: problems that are caused by climate characteristics, problems arising from soil and vegetation properties, problems related to populations and settlements, environmental problems, problems related to mining and industrialization, and energy problems (Özey, 2008). It is, of course, possible to increase the number of these areas of problems. Teachers are one of the most important factors in educating young people to be sensitive to environmental and world problems. Therefore, it is essential for teachers themselves to develop attitudes towards world problems and to teach their students' knowledge, skills, values and habits about these world problems.

Young people of society learn democratic values and to be sensitive to problems around them and in the world to a large extent in educational institutions. Social Studies is one of the courses that serves this purpose in educational institutions. This is because social studies are a field of study that addresses the interaction of human beings with their natural and social environment through a cross-disciplinary approach in the context of the past, present and future, and that aims to educate democratic people who have the knowledge, skills and values needed by a democratic society (Doğanay, 2005). Accordingly, the specific objectives of the curriculum of the Social Studies course are related to the development of students as democratic citizens and for them to develop sensitivity to the problems occurring in their countries and in the world. Students are expected to gain awareness about the finiteness of natural resources and to show sensitivity to national and universal issues within the conception of a democratic citizenship (MEB, 2018, p. 8).

In the curriculum of the Social Studies course, not only the aforementioned specific objectives, but also the skills such as environmental literacy and social participation, and the values such as justice, equality, freedom and responsibility are included to help students learn democratic values and gain sensitivity to today's world problems. When all these are taken into account, teachers in the Social Studies course have a responsibility to educate students as people who contribute to the society in which they live in every way and are sensitive to the problems they experience in their environment and in the world, and as democratic citizens of the future. For this reason, social studies teachers and therefore preservice social studies teachers are expected to have strong and interrelated democratic values and attitudes towards today's world problems.

A review of the literature shows that there are studies on democratic values and attitudes of preservice social studies teachers and other preservice teachers (Akin and Özdemir, 2009; Genç and Kalafat, 2008; Gömleksiz and Kan, 2008; Kala, 2015; Karadağ, 2015; Karahan, Sardoğan, Özkamalı and Dicle, 2006; Karatekin, Merey and Kuş, 2013; Nalçacı and Ercoşkun, 2006; Oğuz, 2011; Taşdan and Akin, 2009; Uluçınar, 2012; Yazıcı, 2011; Yazgan, 2013; Yılmaz,

2011), and preservice teachers' attitudes towards the environment and towards the problems of today's world (Erol, 2005; Akıllı and Yurtcan, 2009; Kahyaoğlu and Özgen, 2012; Özgen, 2012; Sever and Yalçınkaya, 2012; Güven, 2013; Öcal, 2013; Özmen, 2015; Karakuş and Demir, 2017; Şeyihoğlu, Sever and Özmen, 2018). However, there is no study in the literature examining the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems. In this scope, this study was carried out to examine the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems. To this end, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values?
2. What are preservice social studies teachers' levels of attitudes towards today's world problems?
3. Are there any significant differences between preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and
 - a) their genders,
 - b) their grade levels,
 - c) whether they have taken the Today's World Problems course, and
 - d) whether they have taken the Values Education in Social Studies course?
4. Are there any significant differences between preservice social studies teachers' levels of attitudes towards today's world problems and
 - a) their genders,
 - b) their grade levels,
 - c) whether they have taken the Today's World Problems course, and
 - d) whether they have taken the Values Education in Social Studies course?
5. What is the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems?

METHODS

Research Design

In this study, which was carried out to examine the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems, a survey design was utilized. The survey design aims to describe a situation that occurred in the past or still exists, as it is (Karasar, 2015, p. 77). In the study, the quantitative research approach was used in this context.

Sample

The research sample was composed of a total of 174 preservice teachers studying as freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior students at the Social Studies Program of the Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education at Anadolu University in the 2017–2018 academic year. The research sample was selected through the convenience sampling method. In this type of sampling, people in the immediate vicinity who are easy to reach and willing to participate in the research are included in the sample (Erkuş, 2011, p. 106). Table 1 shows the personal information of the preservice teachers who participated in the study.

As seen in Table 1, 97 of the preservice teachers who participated in the study were female, and 77 were male. Of the preservice teachers, 43 were freshmen, 50 were sophomores, 40 were juniors, and 41 were seniors. Of the preservice teachers, 59 had taken the Today's World Problems course but 115 had not. And 51 of the preservice teachers had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course but 123 had not.

Table 1. Personal information of preservice teachers participating in the study

Personal Information		<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Female	97	55.7
	Male	77	44.3
Grade Level	1	43	24.7
	2	50	28.7
	3	40	23.0
	4	41	23.6
Had Taken the Today's World Problems Course	Yes	59	33.9
	No	115	66.1
Had Taken the Values Education in Social Studies Course	Yes	51	29.3
	No	123	70.7
Total		174	100

Data Collection

The data of the study were collected through a Personal Information Form, the Democratic Values Scale and the Attitude Scale for Today's World Problems. Gender, grade level, and whether or not the participants had taken the "Today's World Problems" or "Values Education in Social Studies" courses, which constituted the independent variables of the study, were collected through the Personal Information Form.

During the study, the "Democratic Values Scale" developed by Selvi (2006) was administered to determine the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values. The scale was designed to have 5-point Likert type responses where 5 = "completely agree," 4 = "agree," 3 = "undecided," 2 = "disagree" and 1 = "not at all." The scale consisted of a total of 24 items and 3 sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions were "right to education," "solidarity," and "freedom." There were 9 items in the "right to education" and "solidarity" sub-dimensions, and 6 items in the "freedom" sub-dimension. The original scale explained 44.81% of the total variance. Cronbach's Alpha value for the overall scale was .87. Cronbach's Alpha values for the sub-dimensions of the scale were .84 for "right to education," .82 for "solidarity," and .70 for "freedom." Cronbach Alpha value of the scale in this study was calculated to be .86. Cronbach's Alpha values for the sub-dimensions of the scale in this study were .89 for "right to education," .86 for "solidarity," and .88 for "freedom."

The "Attitude Scale for Today's World Problems," developed by Kılıçoğlu, Karakuş and Öztürk (2012), was employed to determine the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems. The scale was designed to have 5-point Likert type responses where 1 = "strongly disagree," 2 = "agree," 3 = "undecided," 4 = "agree" and 5 = "strongly agree." The scale consisted of a total of 24 items, and these items grouped under three factors. These factors were "anxiety," "sensitivity," and "desire for a solution." There were 9 items in the "anxiety" and "sensitivity" factors, and 6 items in the "desire for a solution" factor. The original scale explained 50.02% of the total variance. Cronbach's Alpha value for the overall scale was .92. Cronbach's Alpha values of the three factors were .87 for "anxiety," .84 for "sensitivity," and .81 for "desire for a solution." Cronbach Alpha value of the scale in this study was calculated to be .92. The values for the sub-dimensions of the scale in this study were .90 for "anxiety," .84 for "sensitivity," and .88 for "desire for a solution." The scale was considered to be confirmed based on the fit indices found in the confirmatory factor analysis carried out by Kılıçoğlu, Karakuş and Öztürk (2012): χ^2 (df = 249, N = 477) = 3.14, $p < .000$, RMSEA = .067, S-RMR = .060, GFI = .88, AGFI = .85, CFI = .88, NNFI = .87

Data Analysis

The data of the study were analyzed using the SPSS 22.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) package program. The arithmetic average of the scores of the preservice social studies teachers were taken in order to determine their levels of democratic values and attitudes towards today's world problems. According to the normality test results, it was found that the data were

not normally distributed. Because the size of the group participating in the study was larger than 50, Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was carried out. The results of the test were significant ($p = .000$) for the preservice teachers' scores on both democratic values and today's world problems, which indicated that the data were not normally distributed. Moreover, the skewness and kurtosis values for democratic values scores were -2.725 and 13.047 , respectively. The skewness and kurtosis values for today's world problems scores were -1.498 and 3.663 , respectively. Therefore, arithmetic means, Mann Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis H test and Pearson Correlation analysis were utilized when analyzing the data. In other words, non-parametric Mann Whitney U tests were carried out to analyze whether there were differences in the levels of democratic values and attitudes towards today's world problems depending on dichotomous categorical variables such as gender, and whether the participants had taken the Today's World Problems course and/or the Values Education in Social Studies course. Along the same line, non-parametric Kruskal Wallis H tests were carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the levels of democratic values and attitudes towards today's world problems depending on categorical variables with multiple options such as grade level. Pearson Correlation analysis was carried out to determine the correlation between the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems. However, because the data were not normally distributed, the Spearman correlation coefficient was used.

RESULTS

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Democratic Values

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics on the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values

Democratic Values	n	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	M	SD
Right to Education	174	9	45	41.81	4.79
Solidarity	174	10	45	39.38	5.19
Freedom	174	12	26	19.91	2.56
Total	174	34	114	101.11	10.34

As seen in Table 2, the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values were high ($M = 101.11$). In terms of the sub-dimensions of democratic values, the preservice teachers had high scores of right to education ($M = 41.81$) and solidarity ($M = 39.38$) and a moderate score of freedom ($M = 19.91$).

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes towards Today's World Problems

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics on the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems. As seen in Table 3, it is understood that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems were strong ($M = 106.77$). In terms of the sub-dimensions, the preservice teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems were also strong in terms of the anxiety ($M = 42.17$), sensitivity ($M = 39.84$) and desire for a solution ($M = 24.75$) sub-dimensions.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems

Attitudes Towards Today's World Problems	n	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	M	SD
Anxiety	174	14	45	42.17	4.38
Sensitivity	174	15	45	39.84	5.09
Desire for a Solution	174	10	30	24.75	4.61
Total	174	49	120	106.77	12.16

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Democratic Values by Gender

A Mann Whitney U test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values depending on gender. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4. Mann Whitney U test results on preservice social studies teachers' democratic values by gender

Gender	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Female	97	96.50	9360.50	2861.500	.008*
Male	77	76.16	5864.50		

*p < .05

As seen in Table 4, the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values differed significantly depending on gender (U = 2861.500, p < .05). Considering mean ranks, females were found to have greater mean scores. According to these findings, it can be said that gender affects the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values.

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Democratic Values by Grade Levels

A Kruskal Wallis H test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values depending on grade levels. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis H test results on preservice social studies teachers' democratic values by grade levels

Grade Level	n	Mean Rank	df	χ^2	p
1	43	76.80	3	4.407	.221
2	50	88.28			
3	40	99.83			
4	41	85.74			

As can be seen from Table 5, it was found that the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ significantly depending on grade levels, χ^2 (df = 3, n = 174) = 4.407, p > .05. According to these findings, it can be said that grade levels do not affect the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values.

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Democratic Values by Whether They Had Taken the Today's World Problems Course

A Mann Whitney U test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values depending on whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course. Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6. Mann Whitney U test results on preservice social studies teachers' democratic values by whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course

Whether to Have Taken the Today's World Problems Course	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Yes	59	87.81	5180.50	3374.500	.954
No	115	87.34	10044.50		

As seen in Table 6, the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course ($U = 3374.500, p > .05$). According to these findings, it can be said that the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values were not affected by whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course.

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Democratic Values by Whether They Had Taken the Values Education in Social Studies Course

A Mann Whitney U test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values depending on whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course. Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7. Mann Whitney U test results on preservice social studies teachers' democratic values by whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course

Whether to Have Taken the Values Education in Social Studies Course	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Yes	51	94.36	4812.50	2786.500	.247
No	123	84.65	10412.50		

As seen in Table 7, the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course ($U = 2786.500, p > .05$). According to these findings, it can be said that the preservice social studies teachers' democratic values were not affected by whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies.

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes towards Today's World Problems by Gender

A Mann Whitney U test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems depending on gender. Table 8 shows the results.

As can be seen from Table 8, the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems were found to differ significantly depending on gender ($U = 2832.500, p < .05$). Considering mean ranks, females were found to have greater mean scores. According to these findings, it can be said that gender affects the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems.

Table 8. Mann Whitney U test results on preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems by gender

Gender	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Female	97	96.80	9389.50	2832.500	.006*
Male	77	75.79	5835.50		

* $p < .05$

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards Today's World Problems by Grade Levels

A Kruskal Wallis H test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems depending on grade levels. Table 9 shows the results.

Table 9. *Kruskal Wallis H test results on preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems by grade levels*

Grade Level	n	Mean Rank	df	χ^2	p
1	43	89.19	3	5.398	.145
2	50	99.41			
3	40	82.69			
4	41	75.90			

As can be seen from Table 9, it was found that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems did not differ significantly depending on grade levels, χ^2 (df = 3, n = 174) = 5.398, p > .05. According to these findings, it can be said that grade levels do not affect the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems.

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards Today's World Problems by Whether They Had Taken the Today's World Problems Course

A Mann Whitney U test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems depending on whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course. Table 10 shows the results.

Table 10. *Mann Whitney U test results on preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems by whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course*

Whether to Have Taken the Today's World Problems Course	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Yes	59	80.03	4722.00	2952.000	.161
No	115	91.33	10503.00		

As seen in Table 10, the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course (U = 2952.000, p > .05). According to these findings, it can be said that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems were not affected by whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course.

Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards Today's World Problems by Whether They Had Taken the Values Education in Social Studies Course

A Mann Whitney U test was carried out to analyze whether there were significant differences in the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems depending on whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course. Table 11 shows the results.

Table 11. Mann Whitney U test results on preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems by whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course

Whether to Have Taken the Values Education in Social Studies Course	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Yes	51	80.35	4098.00	2772.000	.227
No	123	90.46	11127.00		

As seen in Table 11, the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course ($U = 2772.000$, $p > .05$). According to these findings, it can be said that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems were not affected by whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course.

The Relationship between Preservice Social Studies Teachers' Levels of Democratic Values and Their Attitudes Towards Today's World Problems

Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems. Table 12 shows the results.

Table 12. Pearson Correlation analysis results on the correlation between the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems

		Level of Democratic Values	Attitudes Towards Today's World Problems
Level of Democratic Values	r	1.000	.510**
	p	.	.000
	n	174	174
Attitudes Towards Today's World Problems	r	.510**	1.000
	p	.000	.
	n	174	174

**p < .01

As can be seen from Table 12, there was a significantly positive and moderate correlation between the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems ($r = .510$, $p < .01$). According to these findings, it can be said that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems increase as their levels of democratic values increase.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study, it was found that the preservice social studies teachers had high levels of democratic values. Relevant research also supports the findings of the study. Moreover, Akın and Özdemir (2009), Oğuz (2011), Uluçınar (2012), Yazıcı (2011) and Yılmaz (2011) have also concluded that preservice teachers have high levels of democratic values. The preservice teachers' democratic values were found to be high in terms of the right to education and solidarity sub-dimensions, and moderate in terms of the freedom sub-dimension. Similar to this study, Akın and Özdemir (2009), Oğuz (2011) and Yılmaz (2011) have also found that preservice teachers have strong democratic values in terms of right to education and solidarity, and moderate in terms of freedom. However, Yazıcı (2011) has found that preservice social studies teachers' democratic values are strong in terms of not only the right to education and solidarity sub-dimensions but also the freedom sub-dimension. The fact that the preservice

teachers had strong democratic values in terms of the right to education and solidarity might have stemmed from their belief that all people in the community should have the right to education, and that they should use this right by collaborating with teachers and other students. The fact that the preservice teachers had a moderate level of democratic values in terms of freedom may be explained by the fact that they had some concerns about the balance between the use of freedoms and classroom management. In this context, it can be argued that practices to promote the reflection of the value of freedom in the classroom environment will be useful for preservice teachers.

In the study, the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems were found to be strong in terms of the overall scale and in all sub-dimensions of the scale. In line with this result of the study, Şeyihoğlu, Sever and Özmen (2018) have come to the conclusion that preservice social studies and geography teachers are fairly sensitive to today's world problems. However, Kahyaoğlu and Özgen (2012) and Güven (2013) have found that preservice teachers have a moderate level of attitudes towards environmental problems. Given the results of the study, the preservice social studies teachers' strong attitudes towards today's world problems may have been due to their desire to live in better environmental conditions. It can also be said that the fact that they had taken the Today's World Problems course and similar courses at the undergraduate level was one of the reasons for this situation. However, some of the research conducted in the literature (Groves and Pugh, 1999; Khalid, 2003) has shown that preservice teachers have misconceptions about environmental problems such as greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer and acid rains. In this context, it can be said that preservice teachers' sensitivity to world problems should be supported with up-to-date and valid information.

In the study, the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values were found to differ significantly based on gender, in favor of female preservice teachers. This result of the study is in line with the conclusion reached by Nalçacı and Ercoşkun (2006), which claims that there is a significant difference in democratic attitudes of preservice social studies teachers based on gender in favor of female preservice teachers. In addition to that, Uluçınar (2012) also found that preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values differed significantly based on gender, in favor of female preservice teachers. Likewise, Genç and Kalafat (2008) and Gömleksiz and Kan (2008) also found that preservice social studies teachers' democratic attitudes differed significantly based on gender, in favor of female preservice teachers. There are also studies with results that are not in line with this result of the study. Yazıcı (2011) found that preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ significantly based on gender. Similarly, Oğuz (2011) found that preservice teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ significantly based on gender. Karatekin, Meray and Kuş (2013) examined democratic attitudes of preservice teachers in relation to gender and found a similar result. Considering the results of the present study, the female preservice teachers' democratic values were stronger than those of the male preservice teachers, which can be said to result from the idea that the female preservice teachers adopted and cared more about democratic values.

Another finding of the study was that the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ significantly depending on grade levels. This result of the study is supported by Yazıcı's (2011) result that there is no significant difference in preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values depending on grade levels. Likewise, Nalçacı and Ercoşkun (2006) have found that there is no significant difference in preservice social studies teachers' democratic attitudes depending on grade levels. Uluçınar (2012), who examined preservice teachers' democratic values in relation to grade levels, and Genç and Kalafat (2008), who examined democratic attitudes, reached similar conclusions. However, Karahan et al. (2006) found that there was a significant difference in preservice teachers' democratic attitudes depending on grade levels. Based on the result of the study, it is quite interesting that although they had taken various courses on values education during their undergraduate education, there was no significant difference between the freshmen preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and the levels of those from other grade levels. It can be said that the preservice teachers had come to the program with some pre-knowledge related to democratic

values. In this context, it can be argued that efforts to increase the number of instructional objectives on democratic values in teacher education programs are necessary. Another result was that the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course. The fact that there was no significant difference in the preservice teachers' levels of democratic values based on whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course may be due to the preservice teachers' inability to sufficiently establish a relationship between today's world problems and democratic values. Similarly, the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course.

In the study, the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems were found to differ significantly based on gender, in favor of female preservice teachers. This result of the study is in line with the conclusion Öcal (2013) has reached, which claims that there is a significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards environmental problems based on their gender. Similarly, Erol (2005), Akıllı and Yurtcan (2009), Kahyaoglu and Özgen (2012), and Özgen (2012) have found that there is a significant difference between preservice teachers' attitudes towards environmental problems based on their gender. However, Sever and Yalçınkaya (2012) found that there was no significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards the environment based on their gender. Considering the result of the study, the fact that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems differed based on gender in favor of female preservice teachers may have stemmed from the claim that the female preservice teachers had a desire to live in a better environment and a better world, and therefore, were more sensitive to environmental problems and world problems.

Another finding of the study was that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems did not differ significantly depending on grade levels. This result of the study parallels the conclusion Öcal (2013) has reached, which claims that there is no significant difference in preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards environmental problems based on their grade levels. Similarly, that result also parallels Özgen's (2012) result that there is no significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards environmental problems based on their grade levels. However, there are studies which report a significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards the environment depending on grade levels. Akıllı and Yurtcan (2009) found that there was a significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards the environment depending on grade levels. Similarly, Sever and Yalçınkaya (2012) found that there was a significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards the environment based on their grade levels. Based on the result of the study, it is quite interesting that although they had taken various courses on environmental education and today's world problems during their undergraduate education, there was no significant difference between the freshmen preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems and the attitudes of those from other grade levels. It can be said that this result stems from the past lives of the preservice teachers and the cultural environment in which they grew up. Another result was that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Today's World Problems course. Erol (2005) also found that there was no significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards the environment depending on whether they had taken courses about the environment during their secondary or high school years. However, Akıllı and Yurtcan (2009) found that there was a significant difference in preservice teachers' attitudes towards the environment depending on the status of whether they had taken courses about the environment.

It is interesting that some of the preservice social studies teachers had taken the Today's World Problems course but did not significantly differ from those who had not taken the course. Similarly, the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems did not differ depending on whether they had taken the Values Education in Social Studies course. This result may have been due to the inability of the preservice teachers to adequately associate

the content of the Values Education in Social Studies course with today's world problems. Moreover, it has been discussed in the literature that instead of conveying theoretical knowledge to students, their learning by serving is useful in gaining awareness especially of social problems (Cohen, 2006; Robinson and Kecskes, 2010). In this context, it can be said that it would be useful to organize instructional activities that will allow students to learn by doing, by experience and by taking responsibility to improve their affective characteristics.

In conclusion, it was found that there was a significantly moderate positive correlation between the preservice social studies teachers' levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems. According to this result of the study, it can be said that the preservice social studies teachers' attitudes towards today's world problems increase as their levels of democratic values increase. However, this relationship is a moderate relationship. It is quite intriguing that although the preservice teachers had strong democratic values as well as attitudes towards today's world problems, the correlation between their levels of democratic values and their attitudes towards today's world problems was moderate. This moderate correlation may be due to the fact that the preservice social studies teachers may not be sufficiently aware of the requirements of being a person who was sensitive to the environment, the society and the world in the context of democratic values. In this respect, it can be said that it would be useful to address democracy and democratic values in teacher education together with sensitivity on a national and universal scale.

The following recommendations can be made in line with the results of the study:

- The Values Education in Social Studies and Today's World Problems courses in teacher education can be given in a way that allows students to learn by doing and experience.
- Research can be carried out to determine the effectiveness of the Values Education in Social Studies and Today's World Problems courses.
- More emphasis can be put on today's world problems in the Values Education in Social Studies course.

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