



Active citizenship from the perspective of pre-service social studies teachers¹

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Abstract. In this research, it was aimed to determine the perceptions of social studies teacher candidates for "active citizenship" which is defined as the effective participation of the individuals in political and social life in democratic societies. In this descriptive study, descriptive survey model was used as a research model because social studies teacher candidates' perceptions of active citizenship were determined. The study group was determined according to the maximum diversity sample from the purpose sampling methods. In this direction, the study group consists of 40 students from 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students of social studies teacher department. The research data were collected during the academic year of 2017-2018 with the standardized open-ended interview form developed by the researchers. The data were analyzed with content analysis and descriptive analysis. According to the results of the research, the participants were most interested in the concept of effective citizenship at all grade levels, in the categories of citizens with rights and responsibilities, and citizens who could react to the developments in the world and in their own country, at least the citizen who gave importance to scientific development, producing and developing the society in this respect and are aware of their values. Participants should have the most responsibility for the active citizen, at least respecting the differences, adopting solidarity, democratic attitude, philanthropy, scientificness, sensitivity to natural environment and love of nature, history consciousness, self-confidence, independence, peace, equality, self-esteem, sensitivity self-control values. With regard to the skills that an active citizen should possess, they should have the most social participation and observation skills.

Keywords: Social studies, active citizenship, teacher candidates

Received: 13.01.2019

Accepted: 28.08.2019

Published: 15.03.2020

INTRODUCTION

It According to Sunal and Hass (2002), citizenship, which is a process where individuals learn and apply the concept through interaction within their social groups, historically refers to membership in a particular political community (Bellamy, 2008; Halstead and Pike, 2006). While the concept was used within the context of the city-states in the past, today, it is totally associated with a nation state (McCowan, 2009). According to Aristotle, the state is composed of citizens. Each state refers to a particular group of individuals as citizens and the remaining individuals are considered as non-citizen aliens. All states tend to be the state of a society of citizens often described as the nation within specific borders (Brubaker, 2009). However, as a result of globalization, the concept of conventional citizenship has been altered to meet the requirements of contemporary societies. The complexity of the problems confronted in late 20th century and the relational and connected nature of these problems made it difficult to solve these problems with conventional approaches. Thus, citizenship education required a new approach. The new approach encompasses an approach that drives local and global communities based on the concerns of these communities in addition to personal development. Furthermore, while respecting the legacy of the past, the approach is based on the temporal dimensions and protects the interests of the future by considering the problems of the present (Cogan, 2012).

¹ An abstract of the present study was presented as an oral proceeding at the 7th International Social Studies Education Symposium.

The renewed modern citizenship approach entails active, autonomous, and critical thinking citizens who participate in political debates in a democratic environment, are politically literate, and strive for common social objectives according to Pearce and Hallgarten (2000) (Cited in Halstead and Pike, 2006). With the introduction of this new citizenship approach, a different modern citizenship approach has been developed. In this context, several researchers introduced various citizenship approaches such as economic citizenship (Woodiwiss, 2002; Lewis, 2003; DeJaeghere 2013), political citizenship (Geboers et al., 2015; Heater, 2007), liberal citizenship (Gibney 2013; Schuck, 2002), multicultural citizenship (Patton, 2014b; Sleeter 2014), digital citizenship (Blevins, LeCompte and Wells, 2014; Isman and Gungoren, 2014), cultural citizenship (Miller, 2007; Stevenson, 2003), social citizenship (Roche, 2002; Haigh, Murcia and Norris, 2014), democratic citizenship (Mouffe, 2004; Osler and Starkey, 2006) and active citizenship (Atasoy and Koç, 2015; Ersoy, 2014a; Kara, Topkaya and Şimşek, 2012).

Active citizenship, one of the new citizenship approaches, refers to an individual who does not only intervene in the events in the environment but achieves results from this intervention. Nelson and Kerr (2006), who based active citizenship on participation, focused more on participation in civil society. In general, active citizenship reflects social participation, raising concerns and protecting the rights of oneself and others. It also entails an effort to participate in work and everyday life to learn the ever-changing competencies required to conduct vital plans programmatically (Hoskins & Crick, 2010). Thus, Kennedy (2006) reported the traits of an active citizen as follows:

- 1) Conducting conventional political activities such as
 - a) Voting
 - b) Political party membership
 - c) Candidacy in a political institution
- 2) Participating in volunteer social activities such as
 - a) Volunteering in social institutions
 - b) Collecting donations for charity
- 3) Conducting activities that aim to change political and social order such as
 - a) Legal activities such as writing op-eds, collecting signatures
 - b) Illegal activities such as interrupting the traffic, writing graffiti, occupying a building
- 4) Conducting self-organizational activities such as
 - a) Financial self-support
 - b) Being a self-orienting student
 - c) Being a creative problem-solver
 - d) Adopting entrepreneurial values.

Hoskins (2006) argued that 4 dimensions were important for individuals to acquire active citizenship skills that play an important role in coping with the problems brought about by the changes and transformations in scientific, technological, social and cultural fields introduced by globalization. These dimensions were

1. *Background variables (Context)*: Personal and social variables, education level, residential area,
2. *Learning experiences (learning active citizenship)*: Formal and non-formal education,
3. *Individual outcomes (citizenship competencies)*: Cognitive knowledge and skills, affective attitudes, values and desired behavior,
4. *Social outcomes (active citizenship)*: Participatory representative democracy, protest and social change, democracy in terms of participation in social life, human rights, intercultural approach.

Individuals need to acquire citizenship competencies to lead effective and active lives. There is a close correlation between citizenship competencies and active citizenship. Thus, it could be estimated that individuals could become active citizens by acquiring basic citizenship competencies such as knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Formal education plays an

important role in learning experiences of the individuals. Because, in school education, individuals develop citizenship competencies, participatory attitudes, social justice values, democratic citizenship values and cognitive traits that are required for active citizenship competencies (Hoskins, D'hombres, and Campbell, 2008). The development of citizenship competencies is the general objective of social studies course (NCSS, 2010). Social studies aim to train active citizens who can make knowledge-based decisions in the ever-changing national and global conditions due to the impact of the unique characteristics of the current age (Öztürk, 2009). For individuals to become active citizens in the society, social studies education and especially social studies teachers play a significant role. The role played by social studies teachers in a quality education for the acquisition of active citizenship competencies depends on the training of these teachers. In fact, to train teachers as good and active citizens with proposed citizenship competencies in the 21st century, the school environments, which are the prototypes of the society, should improve the citizenship skills of individuals and should respect the human rights (Egüz, 2019). To determine the current status of school environments and for the individuals who are trained in these environments to acquire active citizenship competencies, the views of pre-service social studies teachers on teacher training and active citizenship are of great importance.

Furthermore, it is expected that determination of the activities conducted for pre-service social studies teacher candidates to acquire active citizenship competencies in teacher training and the problems experienced in training would contribute to the literature. Literature review would demonstrate that several studies were conducted on active citizenship. A categorical analysis of these studies demonstrated that the studies were conducted on teacher perceptions about active citizenship competences (Scott, 2012), the impact of formal education on active citizenship (Hoskins, D'hombres and Campbell, 2008), school administration and active citizenship (Deem, Brehony and Heath, 1995), learning to learn and active citizenship competencies (Hoskins and Crick, 2010), development of active citizenship among the students (Kennedy, 2007), active citizenship at schools and in social life (Lawson, 2001), and active citizenship education in social studies (Ersoy, 2014a). Furthermore, there is also a study that investigated the experiences of pre-service social studies teachers on active citizenship in non-governmental organization activities in the literature (Ersoy, 2014b). However, there are no studies that investigated the perceptions of pre-service social studies teachers about active effective citizenship with a holistic approach in the literature. Thus, the present study is considered to fill the above-mentioned gap in the literature.

The Aim of the Study

In the present study that aimed to determine the perceptions of pre-service social studies teachers about active citizenship, the answers to the following research questions were sought: According to pre-service social studies teachers,

- What is the meaning of the active citizenship concept?
- What are the values and skills that active citizens should possess?
- What are the activities conducted or attempted at school that would allow the students to acquire active citizenship competencies?
- What could be recommended to train active citizens as future teachers?

METHODS

The Research Model

In the present descriptive study, descriptive survey model was adopted since it aimed to determine the perceptions of pre-service social studies teachers about active citizenship. Descriptive survey model is a research approach that describes an existing phenomenon quantitatively or qualitatively. The most important feature of this research model is that it describes an existing event or phenomenon as is (Çepni, 2009).

The Study Group

The study group included 40 freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior social studies teacher program students attending Inonu University, Faculty of Education. In the present study, maximum diversity sampling, a purposive sampling method, was used. The main objective was to obtain a relatively small sample with maximum degree of diversity to eliminate the risk of systematic errors (Maxwell, 1996, cited in Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). To ensure maximum diversity, the study group was determined to include participants from all classes. The freshmen participants were coded as A1 ... A10, the sophomore participants were coded as B1 ... B10, the junior participants were coded as C1 ... C10 and the senior participants were coded as D1 ... D10 for ethical reasons.

Data Collection

The study data were collected using a standardized open-ended interview form developed by the authors. The approach included a series of carefully worded questions in a specific order, and each individual was asked the same questions in the same order (Patton, 2014a). This approach reduces “interviewer bias or subjectivity,” which could lead to acquisition of more information from certain participants and less systematic and superficial information from others (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). During the development of the form, initially, a literature review was conducted to ensure content validity. Then, based on the research objectives, both authors developed a question pool that included 12 questions. The questions were submitted for expert opinion of 2 field specialists and the proposed modifications were conducted, the number of questions was reduced to 5, a pilot scheme was conducted with 2 students who did not participate in the main study. After the pilot scheme, further corrections were conducted on the form and the interview form was finalized. The study data were collected between 09. 04. 2018 and 13. 04. 2018. The data collected with the developed form constituted the main data resource in the study.

Data Analysis

Standardized Open-ended Interview Data: In the study, standardized open-ended interview forms were applied to the participants. The interview form data were transferred to Microsoft Word files for analysis.

Data Coding: Before the collected data was coded, both authors read the whole data in the initial phase of the analysis process. Thus, significant dimensions were determined within the scope of the study objectives and an attempt was made to determine the meaning of each dimension. Maximum effort was spent to include all terms and concepts expressed by the participants in the coding process.

Interpretation Techniques: Qualitative analysis is a process of converting data into findings; however, there is no specific formula to conduct this process (Patton, 2014a). In the present study, content and descriptive analysis techniques were used in the interpretation of interview data. In content analysis, the data were first divided into groups and these groups were analyzed and compared. Then, the codes that lead to meaningful concepts from these groups and associate with the same concepts are grouped under a category. In the last stage of the content analysis, themes that reflect the same meaning were obtained from the interpreted data. Content analysis requires an in-depth analysis of the collected data and allows the identification of previously unclear themes and dimensions (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). Descriptive analysis technique was also used in the study. Thus, the collected data were summarized and interpreted based on the previously determined themes in accordance the descriptive analysis. Furthermore, direct quotations were included in the study to clearly reflect the participant views. The most important consideration when presenting direct quotations is to prevent potential bias that these quotations could lead to and to allow the quotations to reflect the general views (Kılıç and Ural, 2005). In the present study, attention was paid to allow the quotations to reflect the general views.

The collected study data were assessed and coded separately by a specialist and a general agreement was obtained between all coders. The consistency of the codes assigned

independently by all researchers was determined with the reliability formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (2015) [Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement)]. Based on the formula, 93% agreement rate was calculated between the codes determined by the two authors (Reliability = 55/55 + 4 = 0.93). The ratio demonstrated that the reliability of the study was high.

FINDINGS

The study findings are presented in “the concept of active citizenship,” active citizenship values and skills,” “the significance of the school in the acquisition of active citizenship skills,” and “recommendations for training active citizens” sections.

Findings on the Concept of Active Citizenship

The first theme obtained based on the participant views expressed in the interview form was “the concept of active citizenship.” The collected interview form data were first labeled, coded and the findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *The views of pre-service teachers on the concept of active citizenship*

Active Citizenship Theme	Frequency (f)
<i>Citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities</i>	
Electoral participation	
Awareness of human rights	33
Abiding by the laws	
Respectful for the right to protest	
Awareness of the supremacy of law	
Awareness and respect for democratic requirements	
Coordination with the state	
Awareness of individual liberties	
<i>Citizens who could react to global and national developments</i>	
Sensitive about global events	
Sensitive about local events	
Skill to adapt to the environment immediately	12
Following the current developments	
Ability to assess the events with a multidimensional approach	
Active participation in social activities	
<i>Citizens who prioritize scientific development</i>	
Versatile use of knowledge	6
Inquisitive	
Eager for training	
<i>Citizens who produce and contribute to social development</i>	
Eager to work	3
Taxpayer	
Prioritizing national interests	
<i>Citizens who are aware of self-values</i>	
Ethical	2
With national values	

Review of the participant responses presented in Table 1 revealed that the pre-service teachers at all grade levels mostly mentioned the category of “citizens who are aware of rights and responsibilities” in the theme of “the concept of active citizenship” (f=33); and thus, pre-service teachers stated that individuals who are aware of human rights, participate in the elections, obey the laws, respect the right to protest, believe in the rule of law, recognize and respect democratic requirements, coordinate with the state, and are aware of their freedoms, exhibit active citizenship traits. A selection of related participant views is presented below:

“An active citizen recognizes his/her rights and responsibilities. For example, active citizen respects the rights of others, serves his/her country, and defends the individual rights (A2).” “An active citizen is aware of his/her responsibilities and rights and does not hesitate to fulfill his/her responsibilities for his/her nation to persevere. Voting, writing a petition, defending individual rights, trying to serve the country are the activities conducted by the active citizen (B2).” “A citizen, who performs a duty assigned to him/her voluntarily, establishes a bond between himself/herself and his/her duties, is called an active citizen. On the July 15th coup attempt, the citizens who became martyrs and veterans were active citizens (C10).” “An active citizen is aware of his/her responsibilities towards the state and society, despite he/she is not a civil servant or an official administration. For example, a citizen, who is meticulous and attentive in taxes and votes in the elections, is an active citizen (D6).”

In the study, the category of “citizens who can react to global and national developments” was the second category (f = 12) in which the participants had the highest consensus. The participants stated that active citizens are sensitive to global and local events, could adapt to the environment, does not remain indifferent to current developments, and has the skills to analyze the events with a multidimensional approach, and pre-service teacher A10 stated the following: “An active citizen is aware of the environment. An active citizen is an exemplary citizen who respects the environment and keeps the environment clean. Likewise, a citizen who could follow global developments closely and react to events that infringe human rights instantly, is an active citizen.” The pre-service teacher did not limit active citizenship with the environment but considered the concept within a global framework.

In the studies, pre-service teachers exhibited the lowest consensus on the categories of “citizens who prioritize scientific developments” (f = 6), “citizens who produce and contribute to social development” (f = 3), and “citizens who are aware of self-values” (f = 3). A selection of related participant views is presented below:

“An active citizen should be aware that he/she should abide by the moral values of the society in almost every field within his rights (B4).” “An active citizen is an individual who produces and loves to produce, seeks knowledge and works (B7).”

Findings on Active Citizenship Values and Skills

The interview form applied to the participants included the question “What are the active citizenship values and skills?” Thus, pre-service teacher responses on the active citizenship values are summarized in Table 2.

Initially, the data presented in Table 2 was analyzed based on the views of the participants about the active citizenship values. Thus, it was determined that the highest consensus among the participants was observed in the category of “responsibility” (f = 21). This was followed by patriotism (f = 14), awareness of cultural heritage (f = 10), tolerance (f = 10), industry (f = 9), ethics (f = 9), honesty (f = 8) categories. This group was followed by respect for diversity (f = 6), solidarity (f = 6), democratic attitudes (f = 5), benevolence (f = 4), scientific approach (f = 4), respect for natural environment and the nature (f = 4), historical awareness (f = 4), self-esteem (f = 3), independence (f = 2), peace (f = 2), equality (f = 2), self-esteem (f = 2), susceptibility (f = 1), and self-control (f = 1) categories. The participant A1 did not provide any views on active citizenship values. A selection of related participant views is presented below:

“The first value that [an active citizen] should have is responsibility. Because a responsible individual supports the current order. I also believe that an active citizen should be sensitive, tolerant and helpful (A8).” “An active citizen should initially recognize his/her rights and responsibilities to fulfill the democratic requirements. Thus, responsibility is the most important value. Because, other values are shaped within this framework. One should also have high self-esteem. Otherwise, one could not engage in politics (B1).” “An active citizen should be aware of cultural values and keep them alive. Also, an active citizen, who understands the meaning of our flag and respects the symbol of the flag, would respect the flags of other nations as a requirement of our cultural values (C10).” “Active citizens should adopt democratic values and try to live based on these values. An active citizen should have responsibilities for social welfare and should know the documents and events associated with the liberation of the nation (D1).”

Table 2. *Active citizenship values*

Values	Frequency (f)
Responsibility	21
Patriotism	14
Awareness of cultural heritage	10
Tolerance	10
Industry	9
Ethics	9
Honesty	8
Respect for diversity	6
Solidarity	6
Democratic attitudes	5
Benevolence	4
Scientific approach	4
Respect for natural environment and the nature	4
Historical awareness	4
Self-esteem	3
Independence	2
Peace	2
Equality	2
Self-respect	2
Susceptibility	1
Self-control	1

The participant responses on the question about active citizenship skills in the structured interview form are presented in Table 3.

The review of the participant responses on active citizenship skills demonstrated that the participants reached a consensus on the categories of “social participation skills” (f = 11) and “observation skills” (f = 11), followed by problem-solving (f = 7), decision-making (f = 6), empathy (f = 5), inquiry (f = 5), innovative, creative and critical thinking (f = 5), communication (f = 5), entrepreneurship (f = 5), multi-perspective (f = 4), spatial perception (f = 4), information and communication technologies (f = 3), temporal and chronological perception (f = 1) skills. Participants A3, A10, C10 and D8 did not provide any views on active citizenship skills. A selection of related participant views is presented below:

“An active citizen could follow the local and global [developments] and make accurate observations (A9).” “[An active citizen] should have critical and constructive thinking skills (B5).” “An active citizen should be connected to the social life. [He/she] should actively participate and intertwine with the society (C9).” “[An active citizen should have] communication, problem solving, decision-making skills (D6).”

Table 3. *Active citizenship skills*

Skills	Frequency (f)
Social participation	11
Observation	11
Problem-solving	7
Decision-making	6
Empathy	5
Inquiry	5
Innovative, creative and critical thinking	5
Communication	5
Entrepreneurship	5
Multi-perspective	4
Spatial perception	4
Information and communication technologies	3
Temporal and chronological perception	1

The Findings on the Significance of the School in Acquisition of Active Citizenship Skills

In the interview form, the question “What are the activities or attempts conducted at the school for the acquisition of active citizenship skills? Do you think these activities are sufficient?” The findings based on the participant responses on this question are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Pre-service teacher views on the significance of the school in acquisition of active citizenship skills*

The Contribution of the School to Acquisition of Active Citizenship Skills	Frequency (f)
The school does not support active citizenship	26
School activities partially contribute to active citizenship	8
The school supports active citizenship	6

The majority of the participants ($f = 26$), who evaluated the significance of school in the acquisition of active citizenship, emphasized that the school activities did not active citizenship and suggested that the schools and educators did not commit to their duties adequately. Eight participants stated that the activities and education at schools contributed to the acquisition of active citizenship skills. They emphasized that the schools especially provided convenient theoretical knowledge; however, the practical applications were not adequate, and the acquired knowledge could not be transferred to real-life situations. Six participants stated that the schools encourage responsibility, activities such as teamwork, planned applications, trips, interviews, and conferences were conducted, and citizenship, law and political science course content had a positive effect on the acquisition of active citizenship skills. A selection of related participant views is presented below:

“Not sufficient. In addition, unfortunately, there is an understanding that life is only about school (A2).” “On certain topics, students are divided into groups in order to support planned studies and feelings of benevolence. Trips, conferences and panels are organized. Citizenship, judicial and political topics are instructed. These courses, of course, are not sufficient without practice (B2).” “Issues related to active citizenship are instructed. Basic rights and responsibilities are explained. In my opinion these are not sufficient. The awareness of individuals is not raised adequately, most of us do not know our rights and duties. Because, everything is based on memorization (C8).” “The school is more interested in the theoretical section than the practical. Particularly in “Citizenship Knowledge” and “Political Science” courses, theoretical knowledge about active citizenship is provided. But, I think that is not quite sufficient (D1).”

Findings on the Recommendations about Training Active Citizens

In this section, to determine the recommendations of the participants about training active citizens, the question “What can you suggest for active citizens as teachers of the future?” was asked. The participant responses are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. *Pre-service teacher recommendations on training active citizens*

Recommendations on Training Active Citizens	Frequency (f)
Organization of practical instructional activities	15
Training responsible individuals	12
Exhibiting model behavior	10
Acquisition of patriotic values	8
Claiming the cultural heritage	7
Inspiring historical awareness	6
Improving susceptibility through model events	5
Supporting research	5
Implementation of systematic parental education activities	4
Improving educational content with active citizenship requirements	4
Organization go trips	4
Development of a multiple perspective towards national and global developments	3
Active use of communications technologies	3
Working for public interest	3
Organizing seminars on active citizenship competencies	2
Knowledge on the characteristics of the local community and environment and development of philanthropy and love of nature	2
Sensitivity about global and local problems	3
Increasing social studies course hours	1
Observation	1
Display of a solution-oriented attitude towards problems	1
Promotion of support and training campaigns	1
Promotion of participation	1
Following current events	1
Being open to innovations	1
A separate course on active citizenship	1
Collaboration	1
Creative thinking	1
Training investigative individuals	1
Instruction of methods to access accurate information	1

Review of the Table 5 demonstrated that the participants predominantly recommended organization of practical instructional activities ($f = 15$) and raising the awareness of individuals about responsibilities ($f = 12$) to train active citizens. The participants also recommended exhibiting model behavior ($f = 10$), acquisition of patriotic values ($f = 8$) and Claiming the cultural heritage ($f = 7$) to train active citizens. Lower number of participants recommended observation, display of a solution-oriented attitude towards problems, promotion of support and training campaigns, promotion of participation, following current events, being open to innovations, a separate course on active citizenship, collaboration, creative thinking, training investigative individuals, and instruction of methods to access accurate information.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the findings of the present study, where the perceptions of pre-service social studies teachers about active citizenship were investigated, demonstrated that pre-service teachers of all educational levels mostly emphasized the category of “citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities” about the concept of active citizenship. However, as Cogan (2012) emphasized, due to the immense problems, difficulties experienced during recent years and the quest for solutions for these problems, it is considered that although this category is included among active citizenship skills, it has not been reflected to behavior adequately. The participants also expressed their views about citizens who are able to react to global and national developments about the concept of effective citizenship the most, and citizens who emphasize scientific developments, citizens who produce and contribute to social development, and citizens who are aware of values categories the least. According to the NCC (1990), the aims of citizenship education include promoting motivation for civic participation through identifying the significance of participatory citizenship and help students to acquire basic citizenship knowledge to develop their values, skills and attitudes (Cited by Edwards and Fogelman, 2005). Thus, it was determined that the above-mentioned aims were consistent with the views of the pre-service teachers.

In the category of citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities, pre-service teachers associated active citizenship with individuals, who participate in the elections, aware of human rights, respect the laws, respect the right to protest, believe in the rule of law, know and respect democratic of democracy, coordinate with the state, and are aware of their liberties. Citizenship Commission (1990) listed the skills and experiences required for active citizenship (Rogers, 1992 cited in Costello, 2005) as follows: ability to discuss or present a coherent perspective, electoral participation, taking responsibility to represent others, for instance, collaborating in a school club, group membership, for instance, submitting a petition to a newspaper or an institution to exercise the right to protest. It was determined that the statements expressed by pre-service teachers about active citizenship were consistent with the above-mentioned skills. Branson and Quigley (1998) also described the citizens based on the ability to act consciously to know and understand their rights and responsibilities about the membership and participation in a democratic society. Thus, it could be suggested that most qualifications expressed by the pre-service social studies teachers in the category of rights and responsibilities were the basic skills that an active citizen should possess. The views of the pre-service teachers in the category of citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities were frequently associated with political literacy. A review of the views of pre-service social studies teachers in this category, the statements except electoral participation and collaboration with the state were not associated with political participation, in other words, implementation level. This could indicate that the implementation dimension of political literacy is inadequate in Turkish education system; and thus, students are trained mainly in the theoretical dimension of political literacy.

In the study, the participants stated that the skills of sensitivity for global and local events, instant adaptation to the environment, sensitivity for current developments and assessment of the events with a multi-dimensional approach could only exist in active citizens in the category of citizens who can react to global and national developments. In a democratic society, citizens are the decision-makers. Thus, citizens are required to assess the positions at global level and to have advanced defensive skills. They are also required to possess developed skills to stay current, analyze the issues, and discuss with other individuals about the public or private industries (Branson and Quigley, 1998). Thus, it could be suggested that one of the most important skills that active citizens should have is the ability to be a citizen who can react to global and national developments.

It was determined that the participants did not agree in the categories of citizens who emphasize scientific development, citizens who produce and contribute to social development, and citizens who are aware of values categories. However, the political literacy movement pioneered by Bernard Crick, Derek Heater and Ian Lister in England in 1970 could be given as

an example that clashes with traditional patterns. This movement argued that political skills and democratic values should be taught (Lister, 1987 cited in McCowan, 2009). These skills, as evidenced in the history, could also be considered among the active citizenship skills.

What is the objective of citizenship education? In fact, citizenship education aims to introduce changes in the society and the lives of individuals. However, it achieves this goal through acquisition of certain competences by the students. These competences generally include three elements: knowledge, skills and values (McCowan, 2009). In the present study, the participants were asked about the active citizenship values and skills. According to the participants of the present study, the most prominent active citizenship value was responsibility, followed by patriotism, sensitivity for cultural heritage, tolerance, industry, ethics, and honesty and the least prominent active citizenship values included respect for diversity, solidarity, democratic attitude, benevolence, scientific values, sensitivity for the natural environment and love of nature, historical awareness, self-esteem, independence, peace, equality, self-respect, sensitivity, and self-control. Various national curricula (e.g., Turkey, the USA, France) included the above-mentioned values as active citizenship values (MNE, 2018; Ministère de L'éducation Nationale, 2015; New York State Education Department, 2016). Cultural perceptions of societies could often be unilateral. Although it is true that there may be different traditions and moral values in different cultural structures, it is necessary for each culture to raise awareness for its basic values (Zecha, 2007). Thus, although there are differences between the value judgments in different societies, basically all societies express similar universal values (Baloğlu Uğurlu, 2014). In this context, it could be suggested that many of these values are active citizenship values.

The second basic factor in citizenship education in democratic societies is citizenship skills (Branson and Quigley, 1998). Conventional citizenship education focused broadly on political institutions, the constitution and national history (Lister, 1987 cited in McCowan, 2009). However, especially during the previous century, the acquisition of skills by the individuals became important in training active citizens (Kafadar, 2019). Thus, the participants emphasized the social participation and observation skills among the active citizenship skills. The description of active citizen by Halstead and Pike (2006) as a citizen who participates in political and other debates and actively displays critical and reflective thinking when necessary was consistent with the participant views in the present study. The pre-service teachers emphasized problem-solving, decision making, empathy, investigation, innovation, creative and critical thinking, communication, entrepreneurship, multiple perspectives, spatial perception, information and communication technologies skills the most, and temporal and chronological perception skills the least. Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21), an organization active in the USA in this field, reported that the 21st century skills that are basic active citizenship skills, should be acquired by the students. These skills (P21, 2016) include a) creativity and innovation, b) critical thinking and problem solving, c) communication, and d) collaboration. It was observed that the views of pre-service teachers on active citizenship skills were similar. Furthermore, it was observed that the types of skills mentioned by the pre-service teachers were greater in number. A holistic analysis of these skills suggested that the skills of social participation, critical, creative, and reflective thinking, innovation, problem solving, communication and collaboration skills could be considered as active citizenship skills.

The participant views on the role of the school in acquisition of active citizenship skills emphasized that the school did not support active citizenship. The participants argued that the school and teachers did not perform their duties adequately. Ersoy (2016) emphasized that social studies courses led to a limited improvement in the students' citizenship skills, the students were passive in classes, and there were limited attempts to improve discussion and collaboration skills of the students. One of the main reasons for these problems include the problems experienced in teacher competencies, and several teachers did not consider themselves sufficient in citizenship and democracy education. The present study findings demonstrated similar problems in acquisition of active citizenship skills by pre-service teachers, especially in the training of social studies teachers. Certain participants stated that school activities and education contributed to the acquisition of active citizenship skills. However, it

was stated by the participants that the schools focused on the instruction theoretical knowledge, experienced problems in transfer of this knowledge to practice, and the knowledge acquired in life was not reflected at schools. Ersoy (2014a) suggested that teachers and students focused on theoretical knowledge due to the exam-centered education system in citizenship education and argued that citizenship education is far from being an education based on practice. Furthermore, it was suggested that students could not apply the active citizenship achievements acquired in social studies courses at school. In the present study, it was demonstrated that that the education and instruction of small age groups allowed the acquisition of theoretical active citizenship skills due to the education system similar to teacher training and experienced problems in practical education. Thus, the inability to reflect the theoretical knowledge to the practice in acquisition of active citizenship skills is experienced in all educational levels from early age to higher education. A small number of participants suggested that the school guided the students to act more responsibly and the course content such as group studies, planned practices, trips, interviews, conferences, especially the citizenship, law and political science course content had positive effects on the acquisition of active citizenship skills.

In the study, the participants mostly suggested organization of practical instructional activities in active citizen training. It could be suggested that this recommendation was of great importance considering the scope of active citizenship. In fact, in a study conducted with early education students and teachers, Ersoy (2014a) emphasized the significance of a democratic school environment and culture in active citizenship education. Furthermore, Ersoy noted that the presence of laws that limit instruction of political issues adversely affects the development of political literacy and political participation skills among the students, suggesting review of the current legislation. The present study findings also demonstrated that problems could be experienced due to educational policies although practical instructional activities were recommended in teacher training. In the study, it was also suggested by the participants that individuals who are aware of their responsibilities, exhibit model behavior, possess patriotic values, and claim cultural heritage should be trained. The participant recommendation to train individuals who exhibit model behavior is a suggestion-oriented instruction approach. However, it could be more effective to conduct practices in which pre-service teachers could actively participate in order to train active citizens. Fewer participants recommended to increase social studies course hours, observe, adopt a solution-oriented approach about the encountered problems, promote aid and training campaigns, promote participatory behavior, follow current events, be open to innovations, to provide a separate active citizenship course, collaborate, creative thinking, train inquiring individuals, and instruct methods to access accurate information. In fact, considering the scope of active citizenship, it could be suggested that most of the recommendations least suggested by the pre-service teachers were of vital importance in the training of future active citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the study, it was revealed that most participating pre-service social studies teachers perceived the concept of active citizenship as a citizen who is aware of rights and responsibilities. However, this conceptualization is not considered adequate for active individuals. Thus, the existing basic practices in teacher training curricula could be reviewed and certain changes could be adopted. Furthermore, the participants stated that there were certain problems in training active citizens in teacher training. Thus, it could be suggested that higher education institutions should go through accreditation and quality assurance processes to ensure quality in higher education institutions.

The data were collected with a standardized open-ended interview form in the study. In future studies, different data collection techniques such as observation and document analysis could be utilized. Also, in future studies, the perceptions of students and teachers in different educational levels on active citizenship and the reasons that affect these perceptions could be investigated in detail.

Comparative studies are of great importance for the observation of the current status in nations. Thus, the active citizenship perceptions of pre-service teachers' perceptions and higher education curricula in various countries could be comparatively analyzed based on the concept of active citizenship.

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