The Awareness of Social Studies Teacher Candidates' Regarding Special Area Competencies and the Overlap Level of These Competencies with Social Studies Degree[*]

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The purpose of this research is to determine the social studies teacher candidates' opinions about to what extend they have *Social Studies Teacher Special Field Competencies (SSTSFC)*. This research also aims to discover possible relationship between the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) Teaching Area Knowledge Exam and the Social Studies Degree Program. The authors made use of qualitative research design with semi-structured interviews for data collection purposes in this study to determine social studies teacher candidates' opinions about SSTSFC. The participants of the study consisted of 8 (6 male, 2 female) social studies teacher candidates who took all content knowledge courses in 2014-2015 academic year at Bartın University. The authors applied content analysis method to analyze the data. The results of the study showed that social studies teacher candidates evaluated themselves as inadequate in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching competencies, which composed SSTSFC. Teacher candidates also stated that they feel inadequate in monitoring and evaluating skills for both theoretically and practically. In addition, participants classified themselves as inadequate in managing and organizing teaching process. They also stated that social studies teacher education program should more focus on practicing.
Keywords: social studies, teacher candidates, special area, competencies, social studies degree.

Introduction

Development level of the countries is closely related with how much they give importance to their education system. Today, the countries placing on the top of the most developed countries are also placed on the top of having potential of attracting and bringing highly qualified people to their countries to work (Akbulut, 2014). The higher education curricula must respond to the need to nurture educated and well-qualified individuals to support the development of their countries. In accordance with their missions, universities must provide and keep up with the scientific and technological understanding of the current developments (Deniz & Ersoy, 2016; Ersoy & Ugur, 2015; Kenna & Russell, 2018; Tunay, 1994). Faculties should promote creating scientific knowledge, implementing these sets of knowledge to daily problems, and discussing the results of these results instead of forcing memorization. Faculties should also create environments to provide improvements on the abilities of the faculty members to work individually, the ability to create original ideas, and time organizing skills (Inam, 1994). There are similar expectations from social studies teachers regarding with their professional characteristics (Gürel, 2016). In this context, social studies teacher candidates must have required skills in the 21st century (Hoffmann, 2017; Mauch & Tarman, 2016; Tarman & Kilinc, 2018; Tarman & Acun, 2010; Tarman, Baytak, & Duman, 2015; Kayaalp, 2016; Tarman & Baytak, 2011; Valiandes & Tarman, 2011; Yigit, 2018; Yigit &Tarman, 2013).

Within the scope of National Education Development Project, funded by the Turkish Government through a loan from the World Bank, the curricula in faculties of Education were re-constructed by Council of Higher Education (YÖK) these changes started to be implemented in 1998 (Tarman, 2010, 2016, 2017). Moreover, National Teacher Training Committee were established in 1997 to ensure the continuity of the reform movement. The purpose of the National Teacher Training Committee is to set and implement national criteria for pre-service teacher training, to assess teacher education quality and to develop quality control standards, and to establish national standards related to knowledge, skills and competences which are required for teachers (YÖK, 2007). Through this reform, method courses in social studies started to be emphasized more. After the result of these comprehensive changes, teacher-training programs were updated

and revised in 2006-2007 academic year (Aydin & Aslan, 2016; Kilinc, Tarman & Aydin, 2018; Kilinc, 2017; 2016; 2015; 2014; Yigit & Tarman, 2016).

Basic Law of National Education numbered 1739, article 45 states the qualification of teachers and selection of teachers as; "Teacher candidates' general knowledge, special field teaching competencies, and pedagogical training competencies shall be determined by the Ministry of Education" (MEB, 2002). Moreover, in March 1999, National Ministry of Education and Teacher Qualification Commission, which includes university representatives, determined the teaching competencies which consists of general knowledge and skills, educating-teaching competencies, and special field knowledge and skills. These competencies were published under the title of "Teacher Competencies" by National Ministry of Education. These competencies came into force in July 12, 2002.

National Ministry of Education defined the term "competencies" as; "required knowledge, skills and attitudes to make teaching more effective and efficient in specific fields" (MEB, 2008a). Teacher competencies can be considered in three different headings: special field, vocational, and pedagogical competencies. These competencies are influential in determining teacher-training policy, regulating in-service training, selecting teachers, assessing teachers' performance, and providing career development opportunities for teachers.

National Ministry of Education announced that Social Studies Teacher Special Field Competencies *(SSTSFC)* came into force in July 25, 2008 through 2391 numbered law. Special Field Competencies should be considered together with general teaching competencies. Special Field Competencies consisted of field competencies, content, competencies and performance indicators. There are five main competencies, 20 sub-competencies, and 132 performance indicators in the Social Studies Teacher Special Field Competencies. The performance indicators are divided into three categories; A1, A2, and A3. The level of A3 contains both A2 and A1 levels; and A2 level contains A1 level (OTMG, 2008). Performance indicators were designed based on primary and pre-school education programs.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) made the most accepted definition of social studies. According to the NCSS (1994, p. 3) social studies is:

> *"Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop*
> the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world."

Damgacı, in addition to this area, mentioned citizenship education and discussed the place of citizenship education in the Turkish Education System in the historical process and emphasized the importance of citizenship education in social sciences (Damgaci, 2016). Citizenship education should be considered as supporting diversity and pluralism and a field of great importance in the social sciences in focus of recognize the place and rights of individuals in society (Damgaci & Aydin, 2017).

National Ministry of Education (MEB, 2005, p.46) defines social studies as:

"social studies is an elementary and middle school course which examines human interactions with its social and physical environment in the past, present, and future; includes social sciences such as history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, political science and law and civics".

It can be concluded from these definitions that what kind of information should be teach in social studies and which competencies that social studies teachers must have. Also, these social sciences, which were mentioned in both definitions, form Social Studies Special Field. It is expected that each social studies teacher has these special field knowledge (MEB, 2008a).

Considerable amount of attention was given to the competencies in special field of teaching during the recent years and it affects teacher-training policy in Turkey. Especially in the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS), which Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM) is responsible for organizing, teacher candidates must take Teaching Area Knowledge Exam for several branches. Teaching Area Knowledge Exam scores affects %50 of the total test scores. Social Studies is one of the fields that teacher candidates must take this test. There are 50 questions in the Social Studies Teaching Area Knowledge Exam. The question distributions are as follows: History 14 questions (%28), geography 10 questions (%20), political science 4 questions (%8), anthropology, social psychology, the foundation of

social studies, philosophy, economics, and other social sciences disciplines 12 questions (%24), and content knowledge test 10 questions (%20). Content area courses should be more considered in preparing pre-service social studies teachers in order to nurture them as good teachers; because good teachers have not only pedagogical knowledge and general culture; but also have sufficient content area knowledge (Cankoy, 2010; Demirel, 1999; MEB, 2009).

Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Teacher Training and Education informed Colleges of Education and universities about teacher competencies and wanted them to nurture teacher candidates with these competencies (Mahiroglu, 2004). However, there is no research about how and to what extend teacher candidates gain these competencies while they are taking courses at universities. Teacher candidates have to take KPSS in order to become a teacher. There is a debate between educators whether or not KPSS assesses teacher competencies.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to determine social studies teacher candidates' opinions about to what extent they have Social Studies Teacher Special Field Competencies. This research also aims to discover possible relationship between KPSS Teaching Area Knowledge Exam and Social Studies Degree Program.

Research Questions

The main research question of the study is what are the opinions of social studies teacher candidates about Social Studies Teacher Special Field Competencies?

There are three sub-questions of the study:

- What are the opinions of social studies teacher candidates about their undergraduate education they received at university?
- What are the opinions of social studies teacher candidates about pedagogical, vocational, and special field competencies?
- What are the opinions of social studies teacher candidates about the relationship between KPSS Teaching Area Knowledge Exam and Social Studies Degree Program?

Methodology

This study implemented qualitative research design with semi-structured interview technique. In qualitative studies, the researchers attempt to gather information on cases which they notice but cannot acquire detailed information (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008). This study aimed to extensively examine the views of Social Studies teacher candidates on their field competencies.

Study Group

The participants of the study consisted of 8 (6 male, 2 female) high achieving senior social studies teacher candidates who took all content knowledge courses in 2014-2015 academic year at Bartin University. Purposeful sampling method was chosen for the selection process of the study group (Palinkas et al., 2013). The study group was created by taking into consideration the academic success in mandatory field subjects and grade per average scores. The main point in this strategy is that the cases to be chased are rich in terms of giving information (Patton, 2014). This assumption was taken into consideration in this study. The information regarding the academic success and gender are given in Table 1.

Table1.
Demographic Information Related to the Teacher Candidates

Aliases	Gender	Academic Success Averages
F1	Female	3,37
F2	Female	3,40
M1	Male	3,33
M2	Male	3,25
M3	Male	3,13
M4	Male	3,33
M5	Male	3,42
M6	Male	3,50

As stated in Table 1, the total number of teacher candidates is eight. Two of them are female, six are male. All the participants have scores which are higher than 3,00. In a system the highest score is 4,00, these numbers are interpreted as high. Moreover, the fact that the majority of the students in Social Studies program are male explains the current distribution of gender in this study.

Data Collection

The authors used semi-structured interviews to collect data in this research. Interview is considered as the major data collection method in phenomenology studies (Englander, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The semi-structured interviews conducted with the teacher candidates took place in an environment which aimed to make the teacher candidates feel themselves comfortable to state their views. Moreover, the teacher candidates were encouraged to state their views. The necessary permissions were obtained from the participants and these interviews were recorded via a voice recorder. The interviews took 30-45 minutes. Then, these recordings were transferred to computer and the transcripts were prepared for analysis.

Data Collection Tool

As the data collection tool, semi-structured interview forms were used in this study. Preparing forms which include interview question to guide the interview is considered important (Lichtman, 2013). The semi-structured interview form in this study was prepared by the researchers by taking into consideration the research questions. In order to provide content validity, the authors reviewed the related literature and took three field experts' opinions. In accordance with the field experts' recommendations, the authors added extra questions and some probing questions. For the pilot study, the authors interviewed with two teacher candidates and tested the clarity of the questions. After the pilot study, the authors finalized the semi-structured interview form. The final version of the semi-structured interview form consisted of seven questions. The number of questions is appropriate for a qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). The basic questions included in the interview form are as follows:

- Do you think that the undergraduate degree education you receive regarding Social Studies is adequate?
- Do you think that the education you are receive regarding the principles constituting Social Studies is adequate? Why?
- Do you consider yourself adequate in terms of practice regarding special needs students (hyperactive individuals, child prodigies) and physically handicapped students?
- Do you consider yourself adequate in terms of using and implementing assessment and evaluation tools and methods? Why?
- How do you assure your self-improvement in terms of specialty in Social Studies teaching?
- How do you assess the courses you took during your tertial level education with regard to Public Personnel Selection Examination?
- What competencies do you think a Social Studies teacher should have?

For the purpose of obtaining reliable data and to assure the trust of the teacher candidates in the study, preliminary information was given to the participants and the necessary care was given in terms of the environment and the timing of the interviews. The researcher asked various assumption questions during the interviews to get more information from the participants (Glesne, 2013). One of the researchers personally conducted the interviews.

Data Analysis

The authors applied content analysis method to analyze the data. The main purpose of the content analysis is to reach concepts and relationship, which can explain collected data. Thus, the data must be conceptualized, and then it must be organized by considering developed concepts, and the themes to explain the data must be determined.

An external audit also assisted to the research during the coding of the data. The authors discussed the coding with external audit and evaluated the results. Then the data was coded again; and Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula (Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement) + (Disagreement)) was used to calculate reliability of this research. According to the formula minimum rate agreement must be %70 between different experts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this research, reliability was found as %86. As one of the characteristics of the nature of qualitative research, coding differences may emerge among the

coders. Moreover, some codes do not work or remain weak, in such cases the code needs to be withdrawn (Miles & Huberman, 2015). In this study, the subject of choosing which codes regarding the differences which emerged from the coders and the subject was settled by reaching to an understanding. As it can be seen in Table 1, the authors coded male participants as M1, M2, M3...., and female participants as F1 and F2.

Findings

Table 1 shows Social Studies teacher candidates' opinions about learning and teaching process.

Table 2.
Opinions About Learning and Teaching Process

Codes	Adequate f	Inadequate f
Planning Teaching Process	6	2
Organizing Places for Teaching Purposes	6	2
Designing Materials	7	1
Using Related Sources	2	6
Teaching Skills	3	5

Social Studies teacher candidates' opinions about learning and teaching process have given in Table 2. According to the table, six participants believed that they have adequate skills to plan teaching process; while, 2 of them believed that they don't have adequate skills. For designing materials, 7 participants evaluated themselves as adequate; on the other hand, only 1 participant evaluated himself as inadequate. For using related sources and teaching skills themes, most of the participants classified themselves in the category of inadequate. Indeed, 6 participants believed that they don't have adequate skills for teaching skills; and 5 participants indicated that they couldn't use related sources sufficiently.

F1 mentioned her opinions about learning and teaching process as follows "*I think I took several courses related to planning teaching process; because now we are in teacher intern program. We went to school as intern teacher, too. I think I can manage all of the planning teaching process. I am teaching well, I can organize several activities and plan the teaching process*". Another participant, F2, expressed her ideas about organizing places for teaching purposes as follows "*I believe that my professors taught us how to decide student levels, selecting topics, activities that help learning process, how to make activities appropriate to students' level. I believe that I don't have any problem about these*". M5 stated his opinions about designing materials as follows "*I think I can design any materials related to any geography topic such as topic related to settlement or any topic in history*". For the theme of using related sources M3 mentioned his ideas "*We didn't work for using related sources at the university. We should keep us updated in field, social studies; because it consisted of social sciences. I don't have any idea about what kind of data base do I need to use.*" About teaching skills M6 expressed his opinions as "*I think I can use resources, but our instructor use only one source and I think it is inadequate. Students cannot improve themselves only using one source. This is why I am so unhappy.*" All the participants responded "No" the question of "*Do you think your undergraduate education is adequate?*"

All of the participants acknowledged that their competencies related to their field are inadequate. The reasons of this situation are problems related to instructors, intensive theoretical training and lack of practice, insufficient training and personal reasons.

Table 3.
Reasons of Inadequate Competencies in the Content Knowledge of the Field

Codes	f
Problems Related to Instructors	5
Insufficient Training	4
Intensive Theoretical Training	3
Personal Reasons	2

Table 3 shows social studies teacher candidates' opinions about the reasons of inadequate competencies in the content knowledge of the field. According to the findings, 5 participants mentioned problems related to instructors, 4 participants mentioned reasons related to insufficient trainings, 3 of the

participants expressed reasons related to intensive theoretical trainings, and 2 participants stated personal reasons. For instance, M5 indicated, "*I think our instructors are not the expert of the courses such as entrepreneurship, special teaching methods, special education, and archeology. There is no doubt that I don't have adequate skills. I feel inadequate in the content knowledge of the fields.*"

Social studies teacher candidates' opinions about social studies courses that they feel more confident are showed in Table 4.

Table 4.
Courses That Evaluated Successful

Name of course	*f*
History	5
Geography	4
Philosophy	3
Law	2
Sociology	2
Political Science	2
Economy	1

Table 4 shows the courses that social studies teacher candidates feel more comfortable than other courses. According to the table, participants classified themselves as successful overall then 7 courses. Indeed, 5 participants expressed themselves as successful in history, 4 participants stated themselves as successful in geography, 3 participants indicated themselves as successful in philosophy, 2 participants mentioned themselves as successful in law, sociology, and political science, and 1 participant stated himself as successful in economy courses. The reasons why they saw themselves as successful in these courses are personal reasons (M1, M2, F2, M6), main courses (F1, M3), and instructors (M2, F2, M5). For instance, F1 stated her ideas "*I feel more comfortable in history and geography courses; however, I don't feel myself comfortable in other courses; because I took several history and geography courses during my undergraduate years. On the other hand, I took other courses only one semester*".

Participants' evaluation about themselves for special education competence area is showed in Table 5.

Table 5.
Evaluation About Special Education Competence Area

Codes	*f*
Adequate	1
Inadequate	7

Table 5 shows social studies teacher candidates' evaluation about themselves for special education competence area. According to the Table 5, 1 participant evaluated himself as adequate and 7 participants evaluated themselves as inadequate. Participants, who classified themselves as inadequate (M1, F1, M2, M3, M4, M6, F2), mentioned that they don't have enough experience related to special education, and expressed that their special education course was very theoretical and insufficient. For instance, M2 indicated his opinions as follows "*We did not attend special education center and rehabilitation center. This is why I feel myself inadequate in special education. I think this course needs to be considered more comprehensive*". On the other hand, M5 expressed himself as adequate in special education and stated "*I feel more comfortable in special education; even though its physiological and health part are not our business. Also, I visited several times to special education center and gained some experiences*".

Social studies teacher candidates' views about their monitoring and evaluation styles were showed in Table 6.

Table 6.
Views about Monitoring and Evaluation Style

Codes	Adequate *f*	Inadequate *f*
Classic Methods	4	4

Alternative Methods	1	7

Table 6 shows social studies teacher candidates' views about their monitoring and evaluation styles. According to the table, 4 participants viewed themselves as adequate in classic measurement styles; while 4 participants viewed themselves as inadequate. On the other hand, only 1 participant viewed himself as adequate while 7 participants viewed themselves as inadequate in alternative measurement style. M5 mentioned his opinions about classic methods as follows "*We made several studies about classic measurement methods. I remember that we used classic measurement methods during the special teaching methods course, and School Experience course during our internship. I think I have adequate skills for classic measurement, but I believe that I will face with some problem for alternative measurement such as portfolio and structured grid. I believe that I don't have enough knowledge about alternative measurement methods*". Participants who classified themselves as inadequate in alternative measurement methods mentioned several reasons such as insufficient practice, insufficient training, problems related to instructors, and poor-quality lessons (M1, F1, M3, M5, M6).

All participants negatively responded the question "*How do you ensure your professional and personal development?*" and mentioned that they didn't have any attempt to increase their professional and personal development. The reasons why they did not have any attempts about their professional and personal development are showed in Table 7.

Table 7.
Obstacles on Professional Development

Codes	f
KPSS	4
Interest	2
Guidance	1
Money	1
Unnecessary	1

Obstacles in professional and personal development of social studies teacher candidates were showed in Table 7. According to the Table, 6 participants viewed KPSS as an obstacle in front of their professional and personal development. On the other hand, 2 participants viewed their apathy as an obstacle in front of their professional and personal development. Only 1 participant mentioned inadequate guidance, money, and negative views (unnecessary) as an obstacle. M2 stated his opinion as follows "*I feel guilty about this. I did not do anything for my personal and professional development. I did not follow the newest ideas. I didn't read any article and book related to professional and personal development*".

Participants responded the question of "*How to be a good social studies teacher?*" by expressing several characteristics which they don't have. The characteristics that good social studies teachers must have were showed in Table 8.

Table 8.
The Characteristics That Good Social Studies Teachers Must Have

Codes	f
Innovator	8
Up to date	6
Informed	5
Open to Change	4
Researcher	3
Social	3
Respectful	3
Enterprising	3
Ethic	3
Coherent	3

Table 8 showed social studies teacher candidates' responses to the question of "*How to be a good social studies teacher?*". According to the table, 6 participants responded that a good social studies teacher

should be innovator and have up to date information; 3 participants mentioned that a good social studies teacher should be informed and open to change, 2 participants responded that a good social studies teacher should be researcher. There are doubts between participant by themselves and their responses. For instance, M4 mentioned his ideas as follows "*A good social studies teachers should be open to changes. The content of education is changing all the time because people and technology are changing. New generations, too. I think a good teacher should keep update himself/herself about researches in education and changes. A good teacher should also apply these changes to his-her classes. I think it must be mandatory. However, I don't follow the changes. My priority is being passing the KPSS and being a teacher. After this I can follow the changes. Therefore, many teacher candidates don't care about this*".

The authors also wanted from the participants to evaluate their undergraduate education by considering KPSS. Emerging themes were showed in Table 9.

Table 9.
Views about the Relationship between Undergraduate Education and KPSS

Codes	f
Insufficient Education	7
Not related	5
Superficiality	3
Instructors	2
Standardization	1
Number of Courses	1

According to the Table 9, 7 participants mentioned that their undergraduate education was insufficient. In addition, 2 participants stated that their undergraduate education was not related to KPSS. Also, 1 participant expressed that there was no standardization in undergraduate education and 1 participant indicated that the number of courses that they have to take were too many. M1 expressed his ideas as follows "*I don't see myself adequate for KPSS because I don't know how and when KPSS will happen. OSYM may ask different types of question in KPSS. Thus, we need to follow several things. However, we can't. We have problems for KPSS Teaching Area Knowledge Exam because there is no standard system*". Similarly, M3 mentioned, "*I think there is a big difference between the education that I got here and KPSS Teaching Area Knowledge Exam. We learned different things at College of Education because our college is not aimed to prepare us for KPSS. Thus, our education does not help us for KPSS. I believe that I cannot pass KPSS Teaching Area Knowledge Exam by using my undergraduate education*".

Generally, social studies teacher candidates believed that undergraduate education is insufficient to prepare them for KPSS, their courses are not related to the Teaching Area Knowledge Exam, and their courses are very superficial. In addition, they maintained that there is no standardization in KPSS and the system is changing all the time. Lastly, participants stated that they took too many courses during their undergraduate education and there are some problems related to the instructors, which affect the quality of courses.

Discussion and Results

The results of the study showed that social studies teacher candidates classified themselves as inadequate for having SSTSFC. As future teachers, social studies teacher candidates should have all required knowledge and skills. Teacher candidates must be equipped with these knowledge and skills before they graduate from faculty of Education. Otherwise, the missions and the operational values of the faculties will be questionable.

National Ministry of Education (2006) mentioned that teachers must always evaluate themselves and improve their personal and professional skills in Teacher Competencies Guide. This statement should no longer be valid for only teachers and it should also include teacher candidates (Alanay & Aydin, 2016). The teacher candidates of today will be teachers of the future. In this manner, teacher candidates also need to evaluate themselves by teaching competencies and improve their personal and professional skills. In this context, it is of importance that social studies degree program is enhanced (Toraman, Aydin, & Ulubey, 2016). It should be recalled that, we should nurture qualified teachers to nurture qualified students and reach intended educational goals (Karacaoglu, 2008; Tarman & Kuran 2015).

According to the today's educational approach, the role of teachers is to guide students. However, research results showed that teacher candidates don't have adequate skills to guide students. The realization of the objectives of education depends on the quality of learning-teaching process; the quality of learning-teaching process depends on the quality of teachers (Aydemir, 2012; Tarman & Gürel, 2017; Tarman, 2012). In order to equip teachers with required skills, teacher education program must offer high quality education and provide teacher candidates knowledge about how learning occurs (Taskesenligil et al., 2008). Teacher candidates need to receive a practice-centered, collaborative education which is beyond memorization during their undergraduate education (Halpern, 2017; Slavin, 2017).

According to this research, social studies teacher candidates feel inadequate in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching competencies. Akbaşli (2010) stated in his research about teachers that teachers feel adequate in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching competencies; however, they mentioned that they faced some problems in practicing. National Ministry of Education offers in-service training to eliminate this inconvenience. In the same vein, Özen (2006) conducted a research to examine teachers' opinions about in-service trainings and concluded that a considerable number of teachers believed that the importance of in-service training is significant. It was also mentioned that more attention should be given to in-service training. There are several studies about improving teachers content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching competencies; but, there is no research about teacher candidates.

Social studies teacher candidates should be nurtured as teachers who have modern educational philosophy, equipped with required knowledge and skills, and follow new technological and scientific development. In this research, the authors concluded that social studies teacher candidates felt inadequate in using related sources, attending scientific events, and following new development related to the field. Participants also classified themselves as inadequate in Personal and Professional Development competencies, which were mentioned in SSTSFC published by National Ministry of Education (MEB, 2008b). Even though participant felt inadequate in these competencies, they mentioned how these competencies are important. Similarly, Mentis Tas (2004) indicated that teacher candidates consider the competencies of following scientific development related the field and life-long learning. The participation of the individuals in the knowledge society, them taking the place they earn, gaining knowledge, and enhance their skills are the factors improving the quality of lifelong learning (Arslan & Yigit, 2016; Balay, 2004; Yigit & Tatch, 2017). Teacher candidates who do not read, research or self-improve are considered as an obstacle in educating new generations.

Social studies teacher candidates expressed that they feel adequate themselves in classic monitoring and evaluation techniques. On the other hand, they mentioned that their education was not sufficient. Participants classified themselves as inadequate in alternative evaluation techniques, which were emphasized in constructivist approach. Most of the participants stated that they don't have any ideas about what alternative evaluation methods are. Some of them expresses that they have just heard their names, but they never used any of these techniques. The result of the study showed similarities between previous researches (Gelbal & Kelecioglu, 2007; Tarman, Ergür, & Eryildiz, 2012). According to Mamur (2011), teacher candidates don't have required knowledge about measurement and evaluation. The lack of sufficient courses about measurement and evaluation causes that teachers face several problems about measurement and evaluation methods.

Teacher candidates' academic achievements (GPA) are considered as a good predictor of their KPSS results (Bahar, 2006; Kösterelioglu, Kösterelioglu, & Kilmen 2008; Özcinar, 2006; Şahin, 2007; Yesil, Korkmaz, & Kaya, 2009). The academic achievement rates of the participants of this study are given in Table 1, the rate is 3,34 out of 4. in this context. It is worrisome that these high-achieving candidates have the belief that they will be unsuccessful. In this respect, the importance of the correspondence between the KPSS exam and the undergraduate curricula. However, this research showed that teacher candidates believed that undergraduate education is insufficient to prepare them for KPSS, and their courses are not related to the Teaching Area Knowledge Exam. Similarly, Eraslan (2004) and Dogan and Sahin (2009) reached the same results. Also, teacher candidates didn't believe that they cannot pass KPSS Teaching Area Knowledge Exam by using their undergraduate education. Social studies teacher education program should be revised and the last semester of the program should contain courses about content knowledge.

The results of the study showed that social studies teacher candidates evaluated themselves as inadequate in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching competencies, which composed SSTSFC. Teacher candidates also stated that they feel inadequate in monitoring and evaluating skills for both theoretically and practically. In addition, participants classified themselves as inadequate in managing

and organizing teaching process. This statement indicates that the activities to be conducted in special teaching area should be towards practices and getting to know the students.

Social studies teacher candidates indicated that they conduct the lecture in most of the courses instead of their mentor teachers. They criticized this practice and asserted that the mentors should teach the courses instead of student teachers. Teacher candidates stated that the mentors have misunderstood constructivist approach. The teacher candidates view student base presentations as improving in terms of their communication skills; however, it is emphasized that in knowledge level, it does not let the students improve in their competence regarding lowering the subject to student level.

Social studies teacher candidates expressed that they cannot pass KPSS Teaching Area Knowledge Exam by using their undergraduate education. Especially in Teaching Area Knowledge Exam, they feel uncomfortable; thus, they attended special training courses to improve their knowledge. Lastly, social studies teacher candidates believed that undergraduate education is insufficient to prepare them for KPSS; and their courses are not related to the Teaching Area Knowledge Exam.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study aimed to put forward how teacher candidates view themselves in terms of the competences they need to have. The results obtained through this study give information about the current situation and suggestions on the path to follow in the future. Moreover, this study also has some limitations. Essentially, the results of this study are credible for the study group which consists of a limited number of individuals. This number may be increased by including samples of several other universities and the results may reach a greater extent. Moreover, this study was prepared and implemented in qualitative research method. Future studies may be implemented through quantitative or mixed research methods by making use of various data collection tools, leading to similar or different results
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