

The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences (EPESS), 2021

Volume 20, Pages 64-69

**ICRESS 2021: International Conference on Research in Education and Social Sciences**

## **Perceptions of Social Studies Teacher Candidates on Historical Literacy Skills: The Case of Inonu University**

**Danyal TEKDAL**  
Inonu University

**Abstract:** Historical literacy has generally been expressed as a historical thinking skill. In this framework, it is seen that he has some sub-skills. As sub-skills of historical literacy, knowing or understanding historical events, researching historical events, dealing with events within the framework of cause-effect relationship, considering events in order of occurrence, relating events in the context of past and present, detecting contradictions between what is told, establishing historical empathy, knowledge of the historical language of the period in which the event occurred and the society, the ability to make moral judgment while conveying the events, the ability to narrate the events, to use the information and communication technologies required by the period and to evaluate the events multi-dimensionally. The development of historical thinking skill as a society undoubtedly depends on the development of historical literacy level. In this context, it was aimed to determine the perceptions of prospective teachers on history literacy skills. In line with this purpose and in the study "supported by the Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit of Inonu University with the number SBA-2019-1860", the questionnaire prepared by the random sampling method, taking into account the pandemic conditions, was applied to 50 teacher candidates. Within the framework of the application, a questionnaire consisting of 3 items developed by the researcher was used. The data obtained in the study carried out with the descriptive survey model were evaluated with content and descriptive analysis techniques, and the findings were presented in tables. Looking at the findings of the study, it was revealed that social studies teacher candidates have remarkable perceptions about historical literacy skills.

**Keywords:** Historical literacy, Perception, Social studies teacher candidate, Skill

### **Introduction**

History is the transmission of events that took place in the past with their sources in a cause-effect relationship by showing the place and time. (Özçelik, 2001; Küttükoğlu, 2007). The teaching of history is conveying the heritage collected in the memory of a nation past to present to new generations with certain method and techniques. With history teaching, it has been aimed to arouse curiosity to the past for the students, to know the other states and their history, to interpret today from the past's events of perspectives, and to develop the feeling of national identity etc (Köstüklü, 2014). On the other hand, John Dewey has also added other aims. According to him, with history teaching, it has been aimed to transfer the value of social life to the children, to provide unity of power by teaching motivating values to the people and that the citizens fulfill their duties in the society (Baymur, 1964).

According to the projection by National Ministry Of Education, history subjects have been taught within Life Of Science in the primary schools, and Revolution History and Kemalism in the middle schools. In the high schools, each lesson has been discussed with different themes (Köksal, 2019).

---

- This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

- Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the Conference

© 2021 Published by ISRES Publishing: [www.isres.org](http://www.isres.org)

The results of this study, which was carried out at every grade level at the undergraduate level, are important in order to show the extent to which the historical literacy skills given in the curriculum from primary school to the end of high school are met. It is also important to determine Social Studies Education undergraduate students' perceptions of historical literacy, since many literacy skills as well as many skills of historical literacy are in parallel with the contents of the courses given at the undergraduate level. To better analyze the findings of current study, before providing the findings, it is important to discuss the construct of historical literacy, the contents of its skills and sub-skills.

Literacy can be defined as a rather broad concept which enables the individuals to reach information and to develop skills such as comprehension, understanding and reproduction by increasing their interaction with the environment. The concept also states that the person receives education in different fields and that the person reaches large information by specializing in those fields. Discipline of history has also developed itself in the process that emerged with the application of the concept of literacy to many disciplines. In this context, the historical literacy skill, which emerged with the development of the concept of historical thinking skill and the inclusion of its sub-skills, can be expressed as the ability to analyze firstly the essence of historical events, which are dealt with in order of occurrence, and then evaluate these results. In terms of these skills, the effort to make inferences by analysing the past within the framework of the data obtained as a result of critically handling all the findings of the past and testing its reliability is defined as the historical literacy.

Deniz et. al. (2015) have defined the process of making connections between them by personally analyzing the findings obtained by using different sources such as magazines, encyclopaedias, documentaries and films related to historical events and questioning this process as a whole as historical literacy.

Taylor et. al. (2003) have provided more in-depth definition of these concepts. According to them, historical literacy skills are shortly systematic processes which include determining the contradictory statements between various sources by examining historical events with a critical attitude by the researcher, taking advantage of information and communication technologies in learning historical events, considering cause-effect relationship. The aforementioned skills pointed out by Tylor and Young are given in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Historical literacy sub-skills

### **The aim of the research**

The aim of this is revealing the historical literacy perception of student in first, second, third and fourth class of the department Social Studies Teaching, Education Faculty, İnönü University. In line with purpose, it has been conducted semi-structured interview to collect answers.

### **Method**

In this study, qualitative research method and case study, as a research design, has been used. Case study is a research strategy which aims to understand social facts of a single and small group in their natural environment.

(Patton, 2018). The most distinctive feature of qualitative research case study is to investigate deeply one or a few cases. In other words, external factors about a case are searched holistically and it focused on how it affects the current situation and how it is affected by the current situation. (Silverman, 2005; Yildirim et al., 2005).

### **Study Group**

The study group consists of 50 Social Studies Teacher candidate who study in all classes of Social Studies Teaching, Education Faculty of Malatya Inonu University. As a sampling method, Criterion Sampling Method which is one of the purposive sampling methods, is used.

Table 1. Distribution of study group members in terms of variables

Gender	The level of the grade				Graduated high school type			Location		
	1	2	3	4	Anatolia	Job	Social Science	City	County	Village
Women (% 70)	12	8	6	9	30	4	1	19	10	6
Men (% 30)	6	2	4	3	5	9	1	7	3	5
Total (% 100)	18	10	10	12	35	13	2	26	13	11

In the table, it draws the attention that the portion of woman teacher candidates (%70) is much higher than the men teacher candidates (%30). This men-women distribution in the study's sample shows similarity with the overall men-women distribution in the faculty. The remarkable situation is the proportion of study group members of who live in city and county town (% 78) and those who live in the villages (% 22). When you compare this distribution with TÜİK 2019 Population Statistic Data (TÜİK, 2019) (% 92 of population live in the city/county town and % 7 of the population live in the villages) those who live in the villages have three times of rate preference and attendance to the department. In addition, Anatolian High School (% 70) comes first at the high school level. Social Sciences High School is in the last place contrary to the general opinion (% 2).

### **Data Collection Tool and Data Collection**

As a data collection tool, semi-structured interview form which consists of three questions is prepared by the researcher. To determine the reliability level of the data collection tool, it has been put into final form in accordance with the field experts who gave their final opinions. Based on collected answers, in analyzing qualitative data, content analysis and descriptive analysis methods has been used.

### **Results**

This part has been evaluated to meet the sub-skills which were determined within the framework of historical literacy skills. In accordance with collected data, it has been studied on the determination the perception level towards the skills.

### **The Case for the Benefits of Historical Literacy**

“Do you think that historical literacy contributes to students in the learning and teaching process, why?” was asked to the study group members through a semi-structured interview form in order to obtain the research findings. The answers given to the question in the form of a content analysis were subjected to content analysis, and the findings were given in Table 2 in the form of sub-themes.

Table 2. Perceptions of the study group members regarding the contributions of historical literacy

1.Theme: Contributions of Historical Literacy			
Sub Themes			f
Yes	G.1.	Easy and permanent learning	25
	G.2.	Identifying historical models	10
	G.3	Increasing the motivation	8
No	G.4.	Contradiction to the objective transfer of history	5
	G.5.	Ideologic-centered transfer	2
Total			50

It can be seen at Table 1, social studies teacher candidates which form the study group members have remarkable and different perceptions about the topic. This situation has shown evidence that teacher candidates have different levels of historical literacy perceptions. Particularly, the findings emphasizes that teacher candidates rely on the sub-theme of “easy and permanent learning” (f-25) as a contribution the students in the process of historical literacy learning and teaching can be put forward as the most explicit indicator of what the students develop meaningful and concrete learning through this literacy.

### **The Situation Regarding the Featured Materials Regarding Historical Literacy**

In order to obtain the research findings, “What are the materials you use to improve your historical literacy level?” The answers given to the question in the form of a content analysis were subjected to content analysis, and the findings were given in Table 3 in the form of sub-themes.

Table 3. Perceptions of study group members about materials that contribute to the development of historical literacy.

2.Theme: Materials contributing to the development of historical literacy		f
Sub Themes		
G.1.	Textbooks and encyclopaedias	15
G.2.	Historical novels, epics and stories	5
G.3	Digital materials (TV series, film, documentary etc.)	25
G.4.	Academic meeting minutes	2
G.5.	Academic works and museum tours	3
Total		50

Looking at Table 3, which includes the findings in the form of sub-themes in line with the opinion received from the pre-service teachers through the semi-structured interview form, it can be said that the pre-service teachers who make up the study group have unique perceptions at the synthesis level. The fact that pre-service teachers highlight the sub-theme involving digital materials in order to improve their historical literacy (f-25) can be shown as the most striking proof that many types of programs based on historical literacy take place in the virtual environment.

### **The Contribution of the Increase in the Type of History Lessons in the Educational Process to Historical Literacy**

“Do you think that increasing the variety of history lessons in the education process contributes to historical literacy, why?” was asked to the members of the study group through a semi-structured interview form in order to obtain the research findings. The answers they gave to the question were subjected to content analysis, and the findings were given in Table 4 in the form of sub-themes.

Table 4. Perceptions of the study group members regarding the effect of history course type on historical literacy

3.Theme: The Effect of Increasing the Type of History Courses on Historical Literacy		f
Sub-themes		
Yes	G.1.Increasing historical interest	18
	G.2.Developing historical awareness	15
	G.3.Gaining a holistic view to history	7
No	G.4.Adequacy of the current course type	10
Total		50

Looking at Table 4, which includes the findings in the form of sub-themes in line with the opinions received from the pre-service teachers through the semi-structured interview form, it can be said that the pre-service teachers who make up the study group have unique perceptions. Table 4 shows that the pre-service teachers explained and expressed the effect of the increase in the variety of history courses on historical literacy with the sub-theme of increasing the interest in the history course (f-18). The prominence of this sub-theme as a frequency can be shown as evidence that the sub-disciplines of history are effective in improving the level of literacy.

## Conclusion

According to the results of the current study, the following findings were reached:

- It has been concluded that social studies teacher candidates generally have a high level of perceptions about historical literacy skills.
- Among the achievements of historical literacy, having an easy and permanent effect on history learning has come to the forefront. When it has been considered from this point of view, it can be concluded that historical literacy has a functional aspect for teacher candidates and that practical expectations are perceived as a priority.
- It has been stated that increasing the variety of history courses given at the undergraduate level will directly contribute to the development of some sub-skills of historical literacy and will provide the development of holistic history teaching.
- The emphasis on digital materials among the materials that contribute to the development of historical literacy is in line with the spirit of the current age and the achievements of the information and communication age in which teacher candidates are in. From this point of view, pre-service teachers stated that processing the content of the history lesson through digital platforms will contribute to the development of historical literacy skills.

## Recommendations

In line with the results obtained in the present study, the following recommendations can be made.

- Producing more intense content on digital platforms for historical literacy,
- Frequent use of digital materials in history lessons,
- Meeting the expectations of teacher candidates about the development of historical literacy skills,
- In addition to the history courses given in the department, adding other history courses with a holistic history perspective,
- Frequent use of museums where historical artefacts are exhibited and other places where historical events take place in history teaching,
- Paying attention to the objective transfer of the contents in historical series, films and documentaries in accordance with the spirit of the period,
- It is recommended that the contents of the history textbooks and the lecturers -in accordance with the impartiality principle of science- should approach the subjects in an objective way, avoiding subjective approaches as much as possible.

## Scientific Ethics Declaration

The author declares that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the author.

## References

- Baymur, F. (1964). *Tarih öğretimi*. İnkılap Kitapevi.
- Deniz, K. & Küpeli, E. (2015). Albert Einstein'ın İsmet İnönü'ye yazdığı mektubun tarih okuryazarlığı çerçevesinde Türkçe eğitiminde kullanılması. *Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken Journal of World of Turk*, 7(1).
- Köstüklü, N. (2014). *Sosyal bilimler ve tarih öğretimi*. Çizgi Kitabevi.
- Kütükoğlu, M. (2007). *Tarih araştırmalarında usul*. Elif Kitabevi.
- Köksal, H. (2019). İlköğretim sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretim programı. In *Sosyal Bilgilerin Temelleri* (Ed. Turan, R.; Yıldırım, T.). Anı Yayıncılık.
- Özçelik, İ (2001). *Tarih araştırmalarında yöntem ve teknikler*. Ankara: Gündüz Eğitim ve Yayıncılık.
- Patton, M.Q. (2018). *Qualitative Resarch And Evaluation Method*. (Çeviri edit. Mesut Bütün, Selçuk Beşir Demir). Pegem Akademi Yayınları.
- Silverman, D. (2018). Qualitative data interpretation. (Çeviri edit. Erkan Dinç) *Nitel Veri Yorumlama*. Pegem Akademi Yayınları.
- Taylor, T. & Young, C. (2003). *Making history: a guide for the teaching and learning of history in Australian school*. Curriculum Corporation.

TÜİK (2019). *Adrese dayalı nüfus kayıt sistemi sonuçları*. Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu.  
<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Adrese-Dayali-Nufus-Kayit-Sistemi-Sonuclari-2020-37210>  
Yıldırım, A. & Şimşek, H. (2005). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Seçkin Yayıncılık.

---

### **Author Information**

---

**Danyal TEKDAL**

Inonu University, Faculty of Education  
Malatya/Turkey  
Contact e-mail: [tekdaldanyal@gmail.com](mailto:tekdaldanyal@gmail.com)

---

**To cite this article:**

Tekdal, D. (2021). Perceptions of social studies teacher candidates on historical literacy skills: The case of Inonu university. *The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational and Social Sciences*, 20, 64-69.