

Social Studies Teachers' Views On Decision-Making Skill

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to examine the views of social studies teachers on decision-making skills, the development of decision-making skills of learners, the development of decision-making skills in the classroom environment, and the inclusion of decision-making skills in the social studies curriculum. The study was conducted in seven different secondary schools in Turkey in the autumn and spring semesters of the 2020/2021 academic year. The study group of the research consists of eight social studies teachers. The study was designed according to the qualitative research design. The data of the study were collected with the "Decision Making Skills Teacher Interview Form" for social studies teachers. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. MAXQDA software was used to analyse the data of the study. According to the views of social studies teachers on decision-making skills, they emphasised that decision-making has a vital importance in human life; according to the views of teachers on the development of decision-making skills of their students, students do not apply the decision-making process in their own decisions; according to the views of teachers on the development of decision-making skills in the classroom environment, students are involved in the decision-making process in limited subjects in the classroom; according to the

views of teachers on the inclusion of decision-making skills in the social studies curriculum, the social studies course is a course for life, the social studies course has a role and effect on the development of decision-making skills as it provides children with the opportunity to transfer this skill to their daily lives. In terms of the intensity of the curriculum, it was concluded that there were problems in the development of decision-making skills due to the insufficient duration of the course and the pressure to complete the curriculum. Based on these results, it can be suggested to carry out in-class and in-family observation-based researches on decision-making skills, to conduct experimental researches to determine the applicability in the classroom, to make school, teacher, family cooperation for the development of decision-making skills, and to include more activities in the classroom.

Keywords: Decision-making skill, social studies, middle school students.

Introduction

In our daily lives we make countless decisions without realising it. These are decisions about what time to wake up, what to wear, which route to take to school, whether to meet friends after work, what to prepare for dinner. It can be saliently stated that these decisions fulfil the routines of daily life and are of great importance in determining the quality of our lives. Decisions are choices consisting of a series of alternatives and often opposing ideas (Mettas, 2011, p. 68). Decision making requires different levels of cognition depending on the complexity of the problem defined and our experiences in similar situations (Blackley, Retmond & Peel, 2022). Decisions are usually easy to make when the number of groups affected by the decision is small, the criteria are clear, the alternatives are good, and there is little uncertainty. However, when stakeholders with potentially different objectives are numerous, alternatives are complex, uncertainties are beyond to handle, and the consequences of the decision are serious, decision-making is very difficult (Parnell, Bregnick, Tani, & Johnson, 2013, p. 2).

Decision-making skills are also of great importance when considered from a social perspective. This is because individuals assume active roles in decision-making processes for the establishment of social welfare. According to Naylor and Diem (1987), for example, individuals have to make a decision about

the acceptance or rejection of public policy proposals, which party to vote for in government elections (p. 261), and this situation often requires the effective use of decision-making processes. In a globalised world, educated individuals with multiple perspectives and foresight on difficult and critical issues are demanded, who can participate in wise decision-making for the common good (Ochoa Becker, 2012, p. 122). In this respect, it has become imperative for individuals to develop effective decision-making skills in order to acquire the necessary competences in individual, social and global dimensions. In this case, many studies have been carried out from past to present in order to include decision-making skills, which are of vital importance, in the curricula in order to develop them. As a reflection of these studies, decision-making skill has been included among the common skills to be developed in all primary education courses in Turkey. One of these courses is social studies.

The aim of the social studies course is to develop citizenship competences such as knowledge, intellectual processes and democratic tendencies that are necessary for students to become active and engaged individuals in public life (NCSS, 2010). In this respect, the social studies course aims to enable individuals to understand and discuss issues that cause conflicts in society, make decisions, and develop values and character (Russel, Waters, & Turner, 2014 p. 212). From this point of view, it can be stated that decision-making skill is considered as an important life skill for the social studies course. In the definition of social studies course, it is highlighted that "... The main purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and rational decisions for the public good as citizens of a democratic society with cultural diversity in an interdependent world." National Council Social Studies, (NCSS, 2010) and "The inclusion of decision-making skills in the Ministry of National Education (MEB) 2005, 2017 and 2018 social studies curricula (MEB, 2005, MEB, 2017, MEB, 2018) indicates that this skill has a special importance in the social studies course" (Yesilbursa, Yalin, 2021). Engle (2003) also defined decision-making skill as the heart of social studies and stated that "the most basic function of social studies is to raise good citizens and the main indicator of being a good citizen is to make sound decisions on social issues" (p. 7). Students need to be able to recognise when and how they need to make decisions and different types of situations that require decision-making. In this case, social studies teachers should help students better understand their

place in the world and realise how their decisions can affect their lives and the lives of others (Russel, Waters, & Turner, 2014, p. 212).

Teachers have significant decision autonomy in their choice positions regarding students' progress in educational processes (Vanlommel, Gasse, Vanhoff, & Petegem, 2017). Moreover, in classroom settings, teachers' decisions have significant cognitive load and influence. Teachers' feelings and thoughts about decision-making are effective in changing possible outcomes by influencing future decisions (Blackley, Reymond, & Peel, 2022).

How social studies teachers perceive decision-making skills, how they evaluate the importance of developing decision-making skills by students, and how they perceive the place and importance of this skill in the social studies curriculum according to the views of teachers are very important in terms of developing decision-making skills by students and re-evaluating the effectiveness of this skill in the social studies curriculum.

Since decision-making skill is one of the important skills that students should acquire in the field of education and social studies education, various studies on decision-making skills have been found in the literature on teachers, prospective teachers, primary, secondary, high school and university students (Sever, 2020; Altay 2020; Osam & Balbay, 2019; Shipart & Levy, 2019; Baysal & Cimsir, 2019; Levin & Nolan, 2017; Barger, 2016; Kurhorska, 2011; Tetik, 2013;) However, when the relevant literature was examined, it revealed that there was no research dealing with elaborating and explaining decision-making skills by obtaining in-depth data from social studies teachers at the time this research was conducted. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the literature in this sense and is considered important. This study aims to understand and explain social studies teachers' views on decision-making skills. In line with this purpose, this study seek answers to the following questions:

1. What are the opinions of social studies teachers about decision-making skills?
2. What are the opinions of social studies teachers about the development of students' decision-making skills?

3. What are the opinions of social studies teachers about the development of decision-making skills in the classroom environment?
4. What are the opinions of social studies teachers about the inclusion of decision-making skills in the social studies curriculum?
5. What are the opinions of social studies teachers about the problems they face in developing decision-making skills in social studies course?

Method

This study, which aims to elaborate and explain social studies teachers' perceptions of decision-making skills, was designed with phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods. In the phenomenological research design, researchers try to explain how the phenomenon subject to the research is constructed and interpreted by individuals (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study, the phenomenological design was found to be appropriate for the nature of this research as it aims to explain how the participants perceived, understood and experienced the decision-making skill.

Participants

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with social studies teachers depending on the purpose of the study. Typical case sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. In typical case sampling, units reflecting an ordinary situation or phenomenon are selected as a sample. Typical case sampling is the situations that have enough data to explain the phenomenon to be examined among similar situations in the universe (Yildirim, 2019). The study group of the research consists of eight social studies teachers. The teachers work in different secondary schools in the central district of Adiyaman province in Turkey. Information about the age and seniority of the social studies teachers who participated in the interview is detailed in the Table 1. The real names of the teachers were not included in the table and pseudonyms were used.

Table 1. Information on the Interviewed Teachers

Social Studies Teachers	Age	Seniority
Zeynep	43	19 years
Harun	40	18 years
Ali	37	15 years
Elif	43	4 years
Ebru	41	18 years
Ayse	29	2 years
Murat	41	21 years
Umut	43	4 years

Data Collection

The Decision-Making Skill Teacher Interview Form was used to examine teachers' views on decision-making skills. The Decision-Making Skill Teacher Interview Form was developed to examine teachers' views on decision-making skills and the importance of this skill, their views on the development of students' decision-making skills, their views on the teaching of this skill in the classroom, and their views on its inclusion in the social studies curriculum and its adequacy. After the interview form was presented to 2 social studies experts and necessary arrangements were made, a pre-application was made and 2 social studies teachers teaching the seventh grade were interviewed. Following the pre-application, the interview form was finalised.

In the study, the "Decision-Making Skills Teacher Interview Form" was used to collect qualitative data obtained from teacher opinions. Due to Covid-19 Pandemic measures, teacher and parent interviews could not be conducted face-to-face. Before the interviews, the participant teachers were informed about the process. Interviews were conducted electronically with video and only audio recordings were taken. The dates and duration of the interviews with teachers are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Date and Duration of Interviews with Teachers

Social Studies Teachers	Date	Duration min/sec
Zeynep	14 December 2020	44.07
Harun	14 December 2020	34.58
Ali	18 December 2020	40.32
Elif	04 January 2021	28.56
Ebru	10 January 2021	30.04
Ayşe	10 January 2021	36.09
Murat	18 December 2020	28.44
Umut	12 January 2021	26.05

Data Analyses

Content analysis was used to analyse the data obtained from teacher interviews in this study. Content analysis is defined as a systematic and repeatable technique in which some words of a text are summarised with smaller content categories by coding based on certain rules" (Buyukozturk et al., 2012, p. 240).

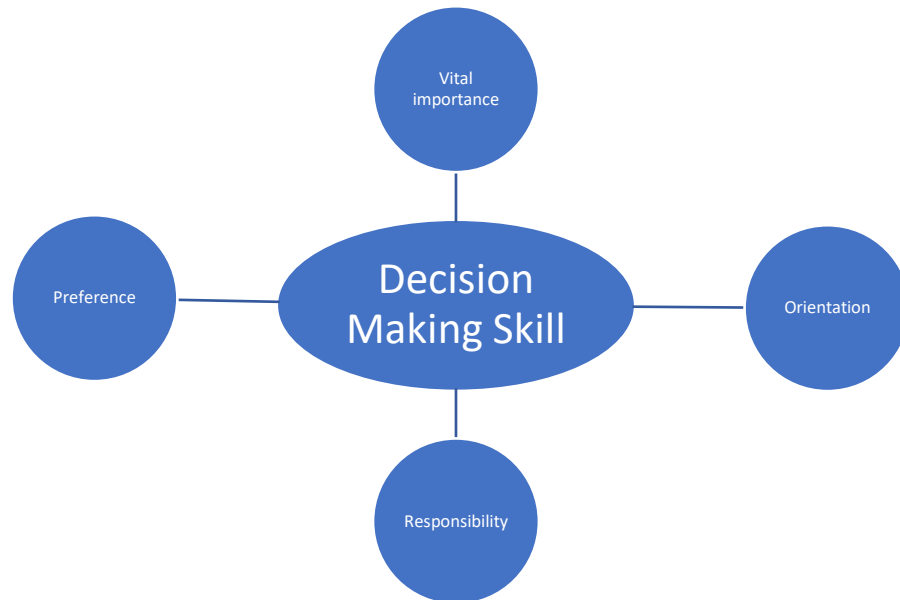
In this study, MAXQDA, a professional software used for the analysis of qualitative data, was used to analyse the data obtained from the teacher interviews. Firstly, the data obtained from the teacher interviews were transcribed and defined as a MAXQDA project.

All interview statements transcribed and uploaded to the MAXQDA programme were tried to be understood as clearly as possible by the researcher. Then, coding and categorisation were carried out. "Codes are labels with symbolic meanings that describe, explain or interpret the data collected during a research". Coding is based on a process that requires gradual work as a team to determine consistency and harmony. This provides a good reliability with a clear determination of the codes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, pp. 77-89). In this study, after the coding and determination of categories were completed in stages, similar and different codes were revealed by three different researchers, some codes were merged, some were revised and finally the codes and categories were finalised. It was ensured that the categories were clear enough to enable other researchers to reach the same results when they examined the same data (Buyukozturk et al., 2012, 242). As a result of the analyses, the data were visualised and the expressions used directly related to the findings were included.

Findings and Interpretation

1. What are social studies teachers' views on decision-making skills?

In this question of the research, social studies teachers' views on decision-making skills were analysed.



When Figure 1 is analysed, it can be concluded that the codes of "vital importance", "orientation", "preference" and "responsibility" are clustered in the "decision making" category of teachers' views on decision making. This finding can be interpreted as that teachers emphasised the concepts of vital importance, orientation, preference and responsibility related to decision-making. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Zeynep:

"It is one of the most important factors that direct people's lives and enable them to take important steps in their lives."

Teacher Ali:

"Making a decision is a kind of making a choice."

Harun Teacher:

"Decision making is a kind of making a choice, we make simple or very important decisions in our lives with or without realising it... In solving some problems in our lives, we need to have some skills, one of these skills is decision making. It is innate."

Teacher Elif

"Decision-making skill is a skill that is important in our lives outside of school. I think it is a skill that is related to responsibility skills."

Teacher Murat:

"Taking responsibility comes to the fore in decision making. People are afraid of taking responsibility. We usually see this in the classroom, if there are 30 people in the class, the number of students who want to take responsibility is very few, and in parallel with responsibility, so is the decision-making skill. Students avoid taking responsibility and this affects the development of decision-making skills."

Ebru Teacher

"Decision-making is one of the steps of putting a job or a behaviour into practice, one of the most important stages of putting it into practice. I think it is the most important part of implementation. Because we want to put some of our behaviours into action, but when we cannot make a decision, unfortunately, we do not put them into practice."

Teacher Ayse

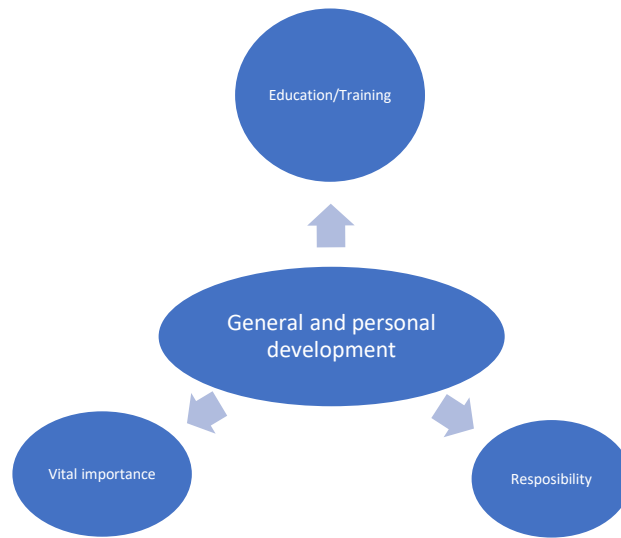
"People make important decisions as they get older and we realise this after a certain age. It is not an easy thing, it requires responsibility, it requires a certain consciousness. Whether we are aware of something behind every decision we make affects us and can have important effects on our lives."

When the teachers' views on decision-making are evaluated, it can be concluded that they emphasise that decision-making is a preference, a mental activity and an important skill that is a part of daily life. It is stated that decision-making skill imposes responsibility on the person, directs the person's life and has important effects. In this context, it can be interpreted from the statements about decision making that teachers emphasise that decision making is a vital skill.

2. What are the views of social studies teachers on the development of seventh grade students' decision-making skills?

In this question of the study, the views of social studies teachers on the development of students' decision-making skills were analysed.

Developing Students' Decision-Making Skills



It can be concluded that the codes of "education/training", "vital importance", "responsibility" are clustered in the categories of "general development" and "personal development" of teachers' opinions on the development of students' decision-making skills. This finding can be interpreted as that the participants emphasised the concepts of education/training, vital importance and responsibility regarding the development of decision-making skills in students.

Teacher Ebru

"Decision-making skills need to be taught because of the fact that it is related to the ability to act independently and take responsibility. I do not think that the decision-making process is sufficiently developed in students which I believe this stems from their families. Since decision-making skills are not developed, they do not take responsibility. They don't do homework. This is about being responsible. Decision-making also requires this responsibility. For example, when he does not complete his activity, this is a result of the fact that he does not take responsibility. Someone has to make a decision for him."

Teacher Ali

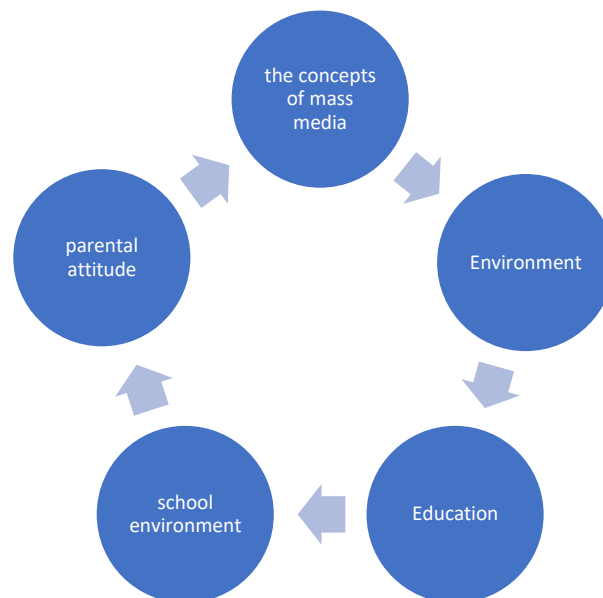
"Even at secondary school age, our children are faced with decision-making situations in their lives. ...For example, even choosing a friend is a choice. We can draw the conclusion that deciding on with whom to be friends should not be a random

decision, that it depends on a decision, and that it can deeply affect their lives."

Teacher Elif

"It is important to develop students' decision-making skills, not limited with school, decision-making is a life skill, a skill that affects our lives. In this respect, it is not limited to school, it is important in our human relations, when we choose the person to marry in the future, in choosing a profession, in every subject."

What is Effective in Developing Students' Decision Making Skills?



It can be interpreted that the teachers emphasised the concepts of mass media, school environment, parental attitude, environment and education in relation to what is effective in the development of decision-making skills in students. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Ayse:

"We are now in the age of technology and they use it very well. Visuals, films, videos affect them, and we can actually use this for teaching decision-making skills. Because it is a fact that they are children of technology. When children are in front of the screen for 8 hours in the pandemic, they can open and show it immediately."

Teacher Ali:

"We know that the internet and social media have a serious place in children's decision-making. Television internet social media can be given as an example."

Teacher Harun

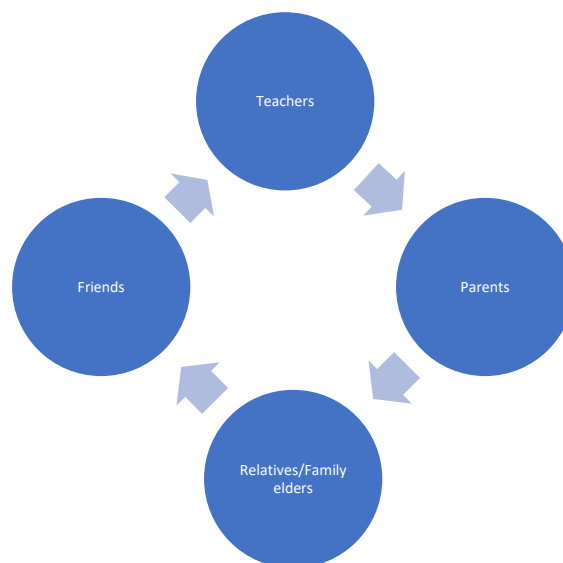
"Our main course material was the textbook, and there used to be supporting workbooks. They allowed us to do more activities..."

Teacher Umut

"The environment is effective and the events encountered in daily life also effect relationships. When a child with toothache goes to the dentist, he might be effected and decide to become a dentist. This is what happened with Atatürk; his friend was wearing a uniform to and from school and he was so impressed that he decided to become a soldier. They might be influenced by a character on television. We are in the digital age and the things they encounter on the internet can also be effective."

Based on these findings, it can be interpreted that mass media and the platforms such as TV, social media applications, etc. provided by these tools, as well as educational teaching materials, teacher attitudes and practices are effective in the development of students' decision-making skills because we are in the digital age. Based on the statements of the participants, it can also be concluded that students primarily use mass media when they have to make a decision.

Who is Effective in Developing Students' Decision Making Skills?



It can be highlighted that teachers' opinions about who has an effect on the development of students' decision-making skills are clustered under the codes of "teachers", "parents", "family elders/relatives". This finding can be interpreted as that the participants emphasised the concepts of teachers, parents, family elders/relatives about who are effective in developing decision-making skills in students. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Ali:

"First of all, the family is the basis of everything, I think the family is effective, sometimes the teacher's influence can be as much as the parents, sometimes even more. The teacher is a role model, the word that comes out of the teacher's mouth, or a posture style, or an event that the teacher gives an example, can sometimes be the beginning of permanent changes in the student's life."

Harun Teacher

"We can give the teacher as an example during student periods, of course and this may vary from student to student and from teacher to teacher. The closeness bond between the teacher and the student also determines the level of influence. We try to see our students as a stakeholder."

Teacher Elif

"Family, parents are very effective, I am at an Imam Hatip school and I see that parents are more effective here. Teachers are also effective. Since we are in an Imam Hatip school, it is also due to the family culture, students are more effected by us than other school students and take us into consideration. Since such schools are founded on values, responsibility and some values are more developed, so we can say that parents and teachers are effective."

Teacher Umut

"I think the mother is the most effective person. I think the mother is effective compared to the father, and the mother is more effective than the teacher. What I am observing that right now is that the mother's wishes come to the forefront, the child's abilities remain in the background. The teacher is in the second plan."

These findings can be interpreted that the most effective people in the development of students' decision-making skills, making

their own decisions and being involved in decision-making processes are teachers, parents, relatives/family elders and friends. However, based on the statements of the participants such as "the wishes of the mother come to the forefront, the child's abilities remain in the background", "mothers negatively affect the development of this skill of children, for example, they say that you must be a doctor.", it can also be interpreted that students are under the influence of their immediate environment to a large extent and this can be interpreted as that the student cannot be independent in making their own decisions.

The Effect of Decision Making Skills on Student's Life



It can be interpreted that "responsibility", "awareness", "self-confidence" codes are clustered in the "general effect" and "personal effect" codes of teachers' opinions about how the development of decision-making skills affects students' lives. This finding reveal that the participants emphasised the concepts of responsibility, awareness and self-confidence in relation to how the development of decision-making skills in students effects their lives. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Ebru

"Firstly, a student whose decision-making skills develop knows his/her responsibility. He knows what to do and how to do it. But sometimes he/she falters and falls into a handicap, but then he/she knows from whom he/she can get help. This can be his/her parents or a professional expert educator. As I stated

before, they know their responsibilities and have their feet firmly on the ground..."

Teacher Umut

"Standing upright in life, being independent gives self-confidence, the student who develops decision-making skills becomes self-confident. He can stand up straight. This skill is very important. ... Decision-making skill is not something that can happen at once, it comes with experience. They make wrong decisions at first, but they take responsibility."

Murat Teacher:

"Conscious decision making will bring success and happiness. ... It will bring success and happiness in life. If we evaluate the big picture, it will bring self-confidence. It brings success in all areas of life."

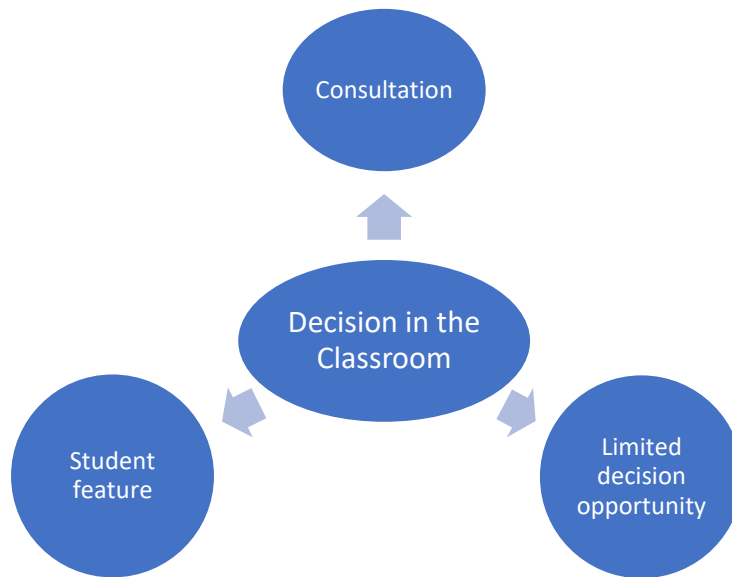
Teacher Zeynep

"The student whose decision-making skills are developed at the student point respects himself/herself, his/her self-esteem is developed, he/she accepts himself/herself as an individual and accepts his/her environment. He/she determines what he/she should do and how he/she should work for his/her future life."

These findings indicate that if students' decision-making skills are developed, they will be self-confident, self-respecting, self-reliant, responsible, conscious individuals who can stand on their own feet in life and this will bring success and happiness to the individual. From this point of view, it can be interpreted that if students gain decision-making skills, they can gain different skills and values.

3. What are the views of social studies teachers on decision-making skills in the classroom?

In this question of the research, social studies teachers' views on the development of decision-making skills in the classroom were analysed.



It reveals that the codes "consultation", "limited decision opportunity", "student characteristics" are clustered in the "decision in the classroom" category of the participants' opinions about how they make decisions in the classroom. This finding can be interpreted as that the participants emphasised the expressions of consultation, limited decision opportunity and student characteristics regarding how they make decisions in the classroom. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Murat:

"I would like students to participate in the decision-making process, but we do not give them this opportunity. Because we have a problem in social studies. We think of completing the curriculum as soon as possible. We cannot assign enough time for students to prepare them for the exam, so we can give students limited opportunities to make decisions in the classroom."

Teacher Zeynep

"Sometimes I see that the atmosphere in the classroom is not suitable for doing that lesson that day. When I lecture, it is as if I lecture to myself, when that happens, we chat. I consult with them and we can decide together, "Should I explain the subject, have them solve questions, or should we do it in another way?". In this way, they take ownership of this decision."

Teacher Ayse

"I follow a way according to the situation of the class regarding the suitability of the children's development. They participate

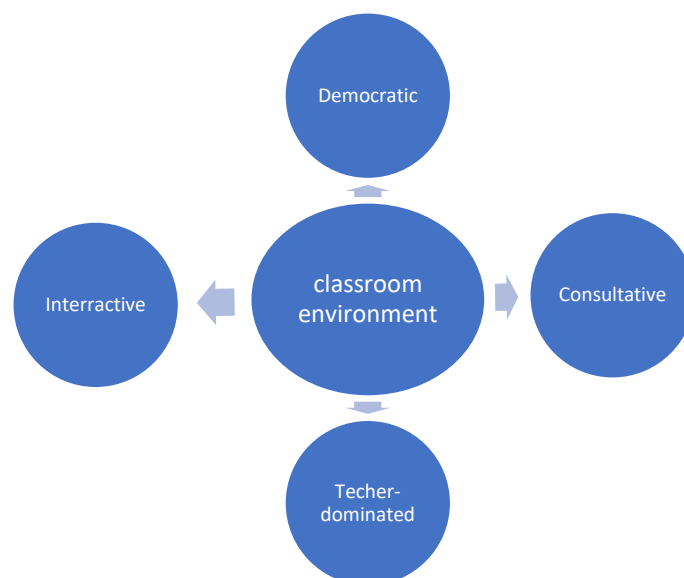
in the decision-making process according to their interests, development and needs, but not every class are suitable for this."

Teacher Ali,

"First, students get to know the teacher and the teacher gets to know the students. The relationship between students and teachers happens after this recognition process. At the point of decision-making, I try to include the decisions of the children because my ties in the classroom are strong. Since our students know us, they feel that it is not possible when we cannot include their decisions and thoughts. Whenever possible, we get ideas from our children about how we should spend the lesson or how we should spend the remaining time.

It can be interpreted that teachers ask students for their opinions in decision-making situations in the classroom and make a decision in consultation with them. It can be evaluated that the decisions made by the participants who expressed an opinion in this direction are related to whether or not to teach the lesson and the way of teaching the lesson. In addition, from the statements of some participants, it can be interpreted that in decision-making situations in the classroom, they include the students in the process according to the characteristics of the student or they cannot include the student in the decision process sufficiently due to the limitations in time and curriculum.

Classroom Environment for the Development of Decision Making Skills



It revealed that the codes "democratic", "based on consultation", interactive and teacher-dominated" are clustered in the "classroom environment" category of the teachers' opinions about the classroom environment they created for the development of decision-making skills. This finding can be interpreted as that the participants emphasised the concepts of democratic, consultative, comfortable in relation to the classroom environment they created for the development of decision-making skills. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Harun:

"Firstly, a democratic classroom environment needs to be created, I think I implement it as much as I can. The approaches of my students towards me and my lesson already give me the answer to this. But the classes are too crowded, sometimes I may not be able to achieve my goal."

Teacher Ayse:

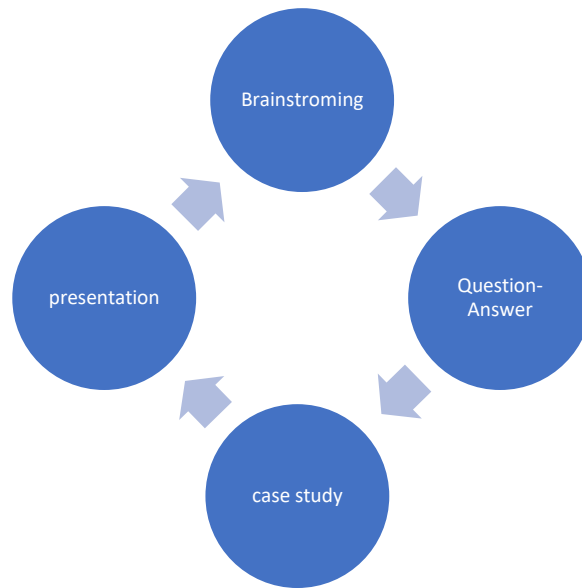
"We should give our students the right to speak at the points where we make decisions in our school. We should make them realise that they are individuals, that they are affected by the decisions taken in the environments they live in, that they also have a say in the decisions taken, not verbally, but in practice, and we should create environments and situations where children can make decisions. They should gain experiences about decision-making."

Teacher Ebru:

"I don't think that a very disciplined and quiet classroom is right. Social studies is a lesson where there is a lot of noise, and it is a lesson that is misunderstood by other administrators and teachers. Because in the social studies class, students talk and express themselves, voices get louder and there can be movements. Children are active in the lesson. But friends can be disturbed. We set the rules together so as not to disturb anyone."

Based on these findings, it can be stated that teachers did not provide a particularly created environment for the development of decision-making skills, but teachers emphasised the necessity of creating a democratic, consultative and comfortable environment in the classroom.

Methods and Techniques Used for the Development of Decision Making Skills



It reveals that the codes "question and answer" and "brainstroming" are clustered in the "method/technique" category of teachers' opinions about the methods they use for the development of decision-making skills. This finding can be interpreted as that the participants emphasised question and answer and brainstroming methods in relation to the methods they used for the development of decision-making skills. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Zeynep:

"I was using the activities in EBA, it was very useful. I do not use a specific application related to decision-making skills. But I focus a lot on decision-making in entrepreneurship. I explain it through question and answer and case studies."

Teacher Umut

"I use brainstorming, I throw a problem, I teach the lesson with questions and enquiries, I divide them into groups, there are discussions between groups. Or when talking about technological developments or historical events, I conduct the lesson with the question "What would you do if you were the one to do so?"

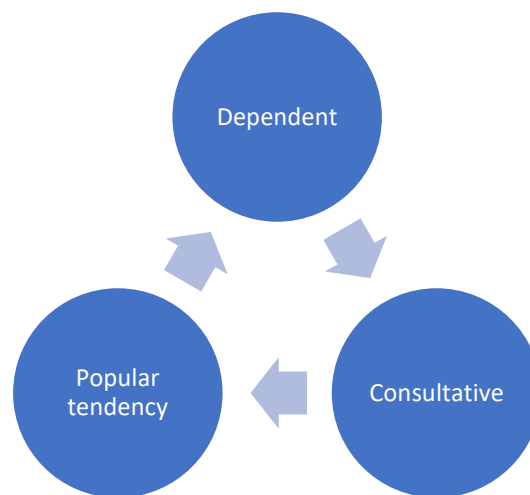
Teacher Ali

"Then here is my answer. Yes, after all, there must be a common problem, problem solving method, sometimes I form groups if

the physical conditions of the class are suitable. We form clusters, as they are called in the old days, and we go through methods that they can actively participate. I use the method of teaching by invention. Brainstorming works well in this regard."

Based on these findings, it can be stated that the methods used by the participants to develop decision-making skills are question and answer and brainstorming. However, according to the statements of the participants, these methods are used in certain subjects and within the possibilities. This situation may cause limitations in the effective development of decision-making skills.

Students' Personal Decision Processes



It reveals that the codes of "dependent" and "consultative" are clustered in the "decision process" category of teachers' views on students' decision-making processes. This finding can be interpreted as that the participants emphasised the concepts of dependency and consultation in relation to decision-making processes. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Zeynep:

"Students delay the decision-making process as much as possible, until the last moment. They expect parents and teachers to make decisions for them."

Umut Teacher:

"When students make decisions, they are usually influenced by the opinions of their families and people around them, that is, they do not act independently. They try to make a useful

decision for themselves by acting on the information they have obtained from external factors."

Teacher Elif

"Most of our students expect their families or someone else to make decisions on their behalf when they need to make a decision."

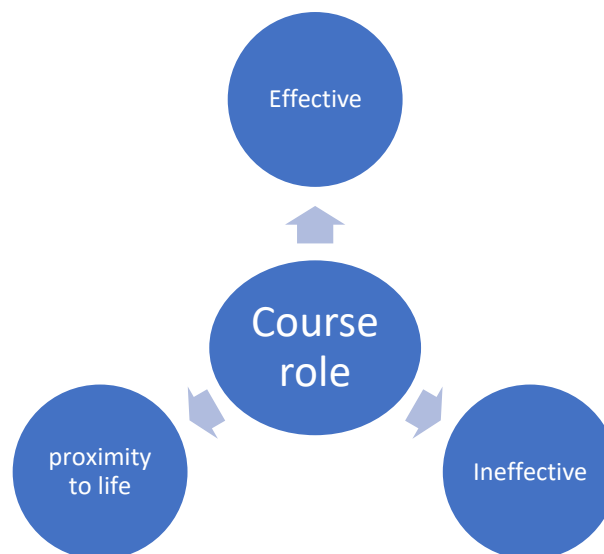
Teacher Harun:

"I don't think our students are equipped to use this process, their decision-making behaviours are determined by families and teachers. They exhibit a dependent decision-making behaviour. They avoid taking responsibility and making decisions. Their family members make decisions for them. Students mostly make decisions with populist tendencies in the digital world of today's age."

Based on these findings, it can be interpreted that when students are in decision-making situations, they do not apply decision-making processes and make their decisions dependent on their parents, teachers and friends and based on consultation.

4. What are the Views of Social Studies Teachers on the Inclusion of Decision-Making Skill in the Social Studies Curriculum?

The role and effectiveness of decision-making skill in social studies curriculum



It reveals that the codes "effective", "ineffective", "proximity to life" are clustered in the "course role" category of the teachers' views on the role and effect of decision-making skills in the Social

Studies Curriculum. This finding can be interpreted as that the participants highlighted the expressions of effective, ineffective and closeness to life regarding the role and effect of decision-making skill in the 2018 Social Studies Curriculum. Examples of direct answers of the participants related to these codes are as follows:

Teacher Harun:

"There are many skills in the Social Studies Curriculum, not only decision-making, but I think it is not distributed evenly at the class level. I think it is not associated with many outcomes. If there is a more balanced distribution, different results may emerge regarding the development of decision-making skills."

"...In the updated 2018 new Social Studies Curriculum, new skills have been added, when you look at these skills, the number of skills that teachers need to impart is already high, and I do not think that decision-making skill is at the forefront among them. In other words, I do not think that the curriculum and course content or textbooks are compatible, I do not think that the curriculum contributes to teacher effectiveness..."

Teacher Ayse:

"Children's life lessons, like life science in primary school, the real social studies are very effective for developing life lessons and decision-making skills. For example, we show the good and bad aspects of a place and they are given the opportunity to make a decision and their answers would be not to study in Agri because it is cold..."

Murat Teacher:

"I see the social studies course as effective but insufficient. The curriculum is very broad and there are many outcomes and behaviours to be gained, but we have problems due to the weight of the curriculum. Therefore, it is very difficult to implement the programme. Also, we think academically in measurement and evaluation, we do not take into account the behaviours that need to be developed. This is a systemic problem."

From these findings, when the role and effect of decision-making in the social studies curriculum of some participants are evaluated, it can be interpreted that the social studies curriculum has a role in the development of decision-making skills, but it is not effective due to time constraints, the intensity of the curriculum, and the teacher's lack of initiative. When the statements of some participants about the role and effect of

decision-making in the social studies curriculum are evaluated, it can be interpreted that the social studies course has a role and effect on the development of decision-making skills because the social studies course is a course in life and provides the opportunity to transfer this skill to children's daily lives.

Conclusion and Discussions

Based on the findings of the study, social studies teachers could not give an inclusive and in-depth explanation of decision-making skill, but some teachers stated that decision-making skill "has a vital importance in human life, it has an importance that directs, influences and shapes life, and at the same time, decision-making skill gives responsibility to the person, It is useful in solving the problems encountered in life, it is effective in bringing happiness to the person and it gives self-confidence" are compatible with the statements about decision-making skills in NCSS (2010), MoNE (2005) and social studies curriculum (2005, 2018), and in this respect, it was concluded that teachers have awareness of decision-making skills.

According to teachers' opinions, the development of students' decision-making skills is of vital importance. According to the teachers, it was concluded that the social studies course will make an important contribution to the development of this skill because it is a course for life, and at the same time, it was emphasised that the development of decision-making will help students gain characteristics such as responsibility and independence. It indicates that this result of the study establish an association between the study of Sever (2018) in which teachers' opinions on the development of decision-making skills were taken.

With regard to whom and what is effective in the development of students' decision-making skills, social studies teachers stated that "teachers, parents, relatives/family elders and friends of students are effective, and due to digitalisation, mass media and platforms such as TV, social media applications, etc. provided by these tools, as well as educational teaching materials, teacher attitudes and practices are effective. Similarly, Mettas and Norman (2011) revealed in their study that teachers, curriculum and peers affect students' decision-making skills. Regarding the question "How do you think the development of decision-making skills affects the student's life?", it was found that teachers stated that if students' decision-making skills are developed, they will be self-confident, self-respecting, able to stand on their own feet, responsible, and conscious in life. This result of the study is

similar to the study of Lundberg, Romich and Ping Tsang (2009) in their study titled *Decision Making in Children*, which revealed that children make their own decisions about clothes, spending their own pocket money, friends and television. In Martensen and Grønholdt's (2008) study on the influence of children on family decisions, Martensen and Grønholdt (2008) found that although the influence of children is related to age and gender, children have a direct influence on decisions about their own consumption and buying things related to them.

Some of the teachers stated that they asked students for their opinions when making decisions in the classroom and made a decision in consultation with them. It was concluded that the decisions made by the teachers who expressed their opinions in this direction were related to whether or not to teach the lesson and the way of teaching the lesson. Some teachers stated that they included students in the decision-making process according to the characteristics of the students or that they could not include students in the decision-making process sufficiently due to the shortage of time and curriculum. It was concluded that students were included in the decision-making process in limited subjects in the classroom and that they were not given the opportunity to participate in the process due to the concern of raising the curriculum. It can be stated that the concern of raising the curriculum in the social studies programme negatively affects teachers' own decision-making processes and also negatively affects the development of student decision-making skills. Blackley, Retmond, and Peel (2022) concluded in their study on teachers' decision-making processes that it is vital for teacher development programmes to focus on identifying constraints and opportunities that affect teachers' decision-making processes.

It can be saliently concluded that they did not provide an environment created specifically for the development of decision-making skills, but teachers stated that they created a democratic, consultative and comfortable environment in the classroom as a general attitude. Based on these results, it can be stated that these attitudes of teachers reflected in general cannot effectively develop decision-making skills in students. Gelen (2002) stated in his study that according to the results of his observations in the social studies course, competence in gaining decision-making skills was at the lowest score compared to other skills. It can be highlighted that these results of the study coincide with the results of Gelen (2002). Shelton et al. (2023), in a study in which they developed a curriculum

targeting the development of decision-making skills and active participation, indicated that the use of the decision-making curriculum in school environments yielded positive results. Students using this curriculum showed evidence of improved decision-making skills, including considering a greater number of factors relevant to their decisions, greater consideration of the resources needed to make a particular decision, and greater consideration of both the short- and long-term consequences of decisions. Considering the teachers' views in this study, it was concluded that the development of decision-making skills was hampered by the intensity of the curriculum and the short duration of the lessons.

It was concluded that social studies teachers are aware of the importance of decision-making as a skill and the importance of teaching it to students. These results of the study are similar to the results of Baysal, Arkan, and Bağcı's (2011) study with pre-service social studies teachers and Sever's (2018) study with classroom teachers.

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