

Communication Skills of Secondary School Students and Their Attitudes Towards Social Studies Course

Research Article

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ABSTRACT

Attitude is a whole of tendencies of the individual towards a situation, a circumstance or an object. Communication, which means the imparting or exchanging of information and also making sense of information, is one of the skills within the scope of Social Studies course. In this study, it is aimed to investigate the relationship between the communication skills of secondary school students and their attitudes towards Social Studies course. 450 secondary school students participated in the quantitative part of the study, while 45 secondary school students participated in the qualitative part. It was found that the difference between the communication skills of students and their gender was in favor of female students. It was seen that the school with lower socio-economic status had higher level of communication skill, among the schools selected according to socio-economic status. When the communication skills of students were analyzed as based on the grade level variable, a difference between the low and high grades was determined in favor of the low grade. No significant difference between the attitudes of students towards Social Studies course and their gender was found. However, it was seen that their attitudes towards Social Studies course varied by the school. No effect of grade levels on the attitudes towards Social Studies course that were displayed by the students could be determined. In the qualitative part of the study, students stated that they had positive attitude towards Social Studies course and Social Studies was a course which could enable them to acquire communication skills.

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Keywords:

Secondary School, Social Studies, attitude, communication, student.

Introduction

Communication has emerged with the mankind and become the most prominent feature of human life throughout history. Therefore, it is seen that human beings are in constant communication with their

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environment. In fact, before they are even born, individuals communicate inside the mother's womb. This is the quite natural consequence of human's being a social entity.

The word of communication has entered our language as the equivalent of the French word 'communiquer'. Literally, it means 'to communicate and to inform' (Zıllıoğlu, 2003). Moreover, some other explanations are given to the word of communication: by Lunenburg (2010) as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another; by Aytakin (2018) as a process of mutual interaction; by Karatekin, Sönmez and Kuş (2012) as the basic skills which individuals need to have in order that they can continue their existence in social life; by Özerbaş, Bulut and Usta (2007) as a process that includes speaking and listening act; by Voltan Acar (2010) as the exchange of messages between at least two people; by Çetinkaya and Alparslan (2011) and Maden (2010) as the ability of expressing oneself well and clearly, the skill of listening carefully to others and being able to fully and accurately understand what others say; by Turhan (2018) and Maden (2010) as conveying information and making sense of the information which individuals have obtained; by Deniz (2003) as the ability by which the individual adapt to the environment; and by Mora (2011) as the negotiation of individuals with different cultures.

Communication is an important competence for us to lead our social lives. Individuals can realize themselves and understand their environments only by communication (Şahin and Aral, 2012). Communication skill is important to succeed in family, school and business life. Good communication will bring productivity and satisfaction (Özerbaş et al. 2007). People who are successful at human relations are also successful and happy in social life (Kaya, 2017). Communication provides a basis for the modeling of society and enables individuals to make a regular contact with the others (Şahin and Aral, 2012). The role of communication in understanding the others, sympathizing with them and sharing the same views, and enabling positive behavioral changes is an undeniable fact (Çetinkaya and Alparslan, 2011). In addition, communication skill is regarded as a prerequisite for empathizing in human relations approach (Turhan, 2018). By meeting some of their psychological and social needs through communication (Kaya, 2017), individuals are able to maintain their lives as people who can believe in themselves and overcome difficulties.

In the 21st century, communication is a process that requires interpersonal interaction and therefore, brings people in various experiences and/or gains as a natural outcome of this interaction. Furthermore, it is a sort of power that directs the society and also countries. To use communication as a force underlies exceeding the borders for many developed countries. It is only possible through the effective use of communication to be able to gain a place in the global world market, and to compete in the political, social, economic, educational and cultural domains. In today's world, the influence of the concept of communication has managed to go beyond the power of technological weapons. Benefiting from communication effectively may be seen as a significant source for undeveloped and developing countries to grow and prosper (Karadeniz and Gürbüz, 2019).

Adapting to social life is an issue that constitutes a necessity in the world of education for all individuals. It is essential to convey love and knowledge, which spread to the whole humanity and advance all around the world, to the individual by means of education. The aim here is to raise affectionate, respectful, trustworthy and knowledgeable individuals to be able to lead a successful, efficient and satisfactory life (Porgalı, 2003). Although an individual tries to communicate with personal effort, to resolve and make sense of sophisticated human relations is not a matter that the individual will be able to overcome single-handedly (Karakuş, 2006). Individuals can learn to communicate only by interacting with their inner circles, even if they are born with an innate predisposition to communicate. For this reason, individuals need to learn how to communicate in appropriate and healthy environments (Deniz, 2003). It is seen that this skill is tried to be acquired whether by potential and indirect ways or through the curricula of various courses in educational institutions. One of these courses is Social studies course(SSC) .

SSC focuses on the study of human. It enables people to find themselves and understand the others around better by addressing the human life (Erden, 1998; Kılıçoğlu, 2009). It also aims to enable people to become aware of their rights and responsibilities and to find a solution to the problems (Akpınar and Kaymakçı, 2012). It tries to raise the awareness towards the rules and norms that regulate social life (Ambarlı, 2010).

In this regard, it is understood that SSC has such a function to socialize children (Doğanay, 2008). Considering that the primary objective of SSC is to raise individuals as good citizens, it can be said that one of the essential qualities of being a good and effective citizen is to have effective communication skills. Adopting the norms of the social group in which people live, feeling that they belong in this social group and adopting themselves to this group are all closely related to having communication skill. According to Doğan (2007), the continuance of societies depends on the harmony which individuals need to have in their relationships with each other. This harmony, of course, can be realized on condition that individuals have accurate and effective communication with each other.

Within the scope of the main objectives of SSC Curriculum for the year 1998, certain conditions, which require communication skills and are supposed to be acquired by the students, such as being in need of other individuals, participating in group activities, studying together, taking over responsibility, helping each other, obeying to the rules for a democratic life, and comprehending the necessity of living as a community were all stated clearly (MEB, 1998). It is also seen that the Unit with the title of Communication and Human Relations included in the learning domain of Individual and Society at the 7th grade level of SSC Curriculum for the year 2005 is related to communication skill. In line with this unit, it is aimed for students to realize the attitude and behaviors that affect communication both positively and negatively, and to be aware of the right to demand and receive exact information, freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the importance of communication in human relations. In this unit, communication skill is considered to be the skill that students will directly be provided with (MEB, 2005). In SSC Curriculum 2018, one of the roles that individuals are expected to have in line with the changing needs of individual and society is to have the communication skills. Accordingly, communication skill is regarded as one of the skills aimed to be acquired in SSC. Gains in the learning domain for Individual and Society at the 7th grade level are also associated to communication skill (MEB, 2018). This case is important as it reveals the relationship between SSC and communication skill within the context of curriculum.

In literature review, the studies addressing communication skill together with SSC (Çelikkaya, 2011; Çelikkaya, Yıldırım and Kürümlüoğlu, 2019; Gömleksiz and Kan, 2007; Karadağ and Çengelci, 2011; Mutluer, 2013) are seen. The only study which directly associates communication to SSC is the study carried out by Gömleksiz and Kan (2007). Moreover, in these studies, it is seen that communication is not dealt with a course subject, but a skill in Social Studies. Although these studies introduce the relationship between SSC and communication, they also reveal out that the subject is not handled enough in the field. With this study, it is aimed to contribute to the field as based on this gap in the literature and it is expected to determine the relationship between SSC and communication skill.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to reveal the relationship between the attitudes of participants towards SSC and their communication skills. In the research, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What are the communication skills of participants?

1.1. Is there a significant difference in the communication skills of participants by gender, school and grade level?

2. What are the attitudes of participants towards SSC?
- 2.1. Is there a significant difference in the attitudes of participants by gender, school and grade level?
3. How does SSC help participants in acquiring communication skill?
4. What are the positive and negative attitudes that participants have towards SSC?

Method

Research Model

In this research, triangulation, which is of mixed methods, was used. The purpose of triangulation is to test similar or consistent findings by applying both qualitative and quantitative research methods independently to the same hypothesis. In other words, it is required for the results obtained from different research methods and designs to be similar to each other or to overlap each other as being complementary. Triangulation increases the chance to control, or at least assess, multiple causes that influence the research results (Giannakaki, 2005; Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989).

In the quantitative part of the study, the comparative survey model was used in the qualitative part, and phenomenology was used. With comparative survey methods, to determine the existence and degree of the change between two and more variables is aimed (Karasar, 2005). Phenomenology is a pattern that is based on personal experiences of a phenomenon and aims to reach social facts through these experiences (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

Study Group

450 secondary school students at the 5th, 6th and 7th grade levels participated in the quantitative part of the research. A total of 45 students participated in the qualitative part. While determining the study groups, stratified sampling was used. Stratified sampling is a type of sampling method in which the entire population is divided into homogeneous groups called strata and each entity in the population is covered. Division into the sub-groups is carried out in a way that within-strata variance is as homogeneous as possible and inter-strata variance remains as heterogeneous as possible. After division, sample is drawn from each stratum separately and independently. The school with low socio-economic status is called LL (School 1), the one with middle socio-economic status is called IL (School 2) and the other school with high socio-economic status is called HL (School 3). These schools are called in the findings part of this study as L.L. for the one with low status; I.L. for the one with middle status, and H.L. for the one with high status.

It is seen that 223 female and 227 male students participated, 98 students at Grade 5, 201 students at Grade 6 and 151 students at Grade 7 participated, 182 students from LL, 145 students from ML and 123 students from HL participated in the quantitative part of the study. 20 female and 25 male students participated in the qualitative part of the study. It is seen that male students participated in this part of the study more. 6 female and 9 male students at Grade 5, 5 female and 10 male students at Grade 6, and 9 female and 6 male students at Grade 7 participated.

Data Collection Tool

In this study, "Communication Skills Inventory(CSI)" developed by Ersanlı and Balcı (1998) and "Attitude Scale for Social Studies Course(ASSSC)" developed by Demir and Akengin (2010) were used in order to collect quantitative data.

"CSI" finalized by Ersanlı and Balcı (1998) consists of 45 likert-type questions. The inventory assess communication skills cognitively (15items), emotionally (15items) and behaviorally (15items). It was prepared by the rating scale involving A for Just like me, B for Somewhat like Me, C for Unsure, D for Not like me and

E for Not at all like me. Positive items were ranged 2, 1, 0, -1, -2 and negative items were re-coded (5,8,11,16,28,29,31,32,34,35,37).

Table 1. The reliability of the CSI

Subscales	Ersanlı and Balcı (1998)	In this study
Cognitive	0.830	0.724
Emotional	0.730	0.813
Behavioral	0,820	0.775

The scale developed by Demir and Akengin (2010) consists of 4 subscales and 26 items in total, as willingness to learn (7items), enjoying SSC (8items), teacher-related attitudes of students (6items) and love of Social Studies (5 items). Rating in the scale for attitude towards SSC is: 1 for Strongly disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Undecided, 4 for Agree and 5 for Strongly agree. This research was carried out accordingly. Some negative items in the scale(2,3,4,6,7,16,17,18,21,22,23,24,25 and 26) were re-coded. By Demir and Akengin (2010), coefficient of internal consistency for the whole of the scale was found 0.932. In this research, coefficient of internal consistency was found 0.870 for the whole of the scale.

In the qualitative part, two questions were asked, which determined the attitudes of the students. The questions were prepared after the expert opinion.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the quantitative part of the research was analyzed by SPSS21. According to Tabachnick, Fidell and Ullman (2001), in large samplings, it is more appropriate to consider the pattern of distribution instead of tests of significance for normality. Since the standard error will be less in large samples, it will lead to the rejection of null hypotheses for the tests of significance easily. As based on this, in the researches, considering Kolmogorov-Smirnov results significant should not be interpreted as excessive deviation from normal distribution. As the sample size increases, the probability of finding small differences significant is expected to increase (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu and Büyüköztürk, 2012). Thus, skewness and kurtosis values for the relevant variable were in the range of -1 +1, and the tests of significance for skewness and kurtosis values were not found significant. The skewness value of the CSI was -353 and the kurtosis value was -271. The skewness value of the scale for attitude towards SSC was found -,534 and the kurtosis value was found -,596. This finding can be considered as an evidence for that the variable does not excessively deviate from normality. Following the tests for normality, descriptive statistics, correlation, independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA and Scheffe test were carried out.

In the qualitative part of the research, data was analyzed by content analysis. Data obtained in this research was coded at first (5FS-1..., 6MS-1..., 7MS-1...). The answers given by the participants to each question were assessed individually and conceptualized. Following that, the encodings were organized within a certain logical framework, according to their similarities and differences. The data obtained was converted to table and interpreted in frequency and percentages. In order to ensure reliability in the research, investigator triangulation was used. Investigator triangulation is defined as independent analysis of data by two or more researchers and comparison of their individual findings with each other (Patton, 2014). In this research, researchers analyzed the qualitative data individually and compared the findings that they obtained. A common decision was reached upon the discussion on the issues which the researchers did not have similar views about. Furthermore, the categories formed by the researchers were compared and the percentage of agreement was calculated. The percentage of agreement indicates the reliability level in qualitative researches. It is recommended that the percentage of agreement ($\text{The percentage of Agreement} = \frac{\text{Agreement}}{\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}} \times 100$) formulated by Miles and Huberman (1994) is close to 80%. Accordingly, the percentage of agreement was calculated as 85%.

Findings

In this part of the study, quantitative and qualitative data are evaluated separately. The interpretations of the data are given in tables under the sub-problems.

1. Findings for Quantitative Part:

In this section, findings for the relationship between the communication skills and attitudes of participants towards SSC are included. The answers given by the students for the scales were examined and evaluated by gender, school and grade level variables. The findings obtained are presented in the tables below.

Abbreviations are used in all Tables. These abbreviations are: C for Cognitive, E for Emotional, B for Behavioral, CSI for Communication Skills Inventory. ASSSC for Attitude Scale for Social Studies Course Scale. WL for Willingness to Learn, ESSC for Enjoying Social Studies Course, TRAS for Teacher related Attitudes of Students, and LSS for Love of Social Studies.

1.1. Findings for difference by gender of participants' in the subscales

As based on the first sub-problem of the research, difference by gender in the total scores of participants and in their scores for cognitive, emotional and behavioral subscales were examined.

Table 2. Independent t-test results of CSI scale subscales of participants' according to gender

Subscales	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	P
Cognitive	Female	223	55,0871	6,69602	2,861	0,004
	Male	227	53,1157	7,86420		
Emotional	Female	223	50,8938	5,86621	1,366	0,172
	Male	227	50,1705	5,35516		
Behavioral	Female	223	51,9215	5,62031	2,001	0,046
	Male	227	50,7844	6,39983		
Total	Female	223	158,3944	14,44428	2,737	0,006
	Male	227	154,4842	15,81559		

*p<,05

It is seen that the mean of total scores and the scores for cognitive dimension vary by gender ($p=,006$ $p<0,05$, $p=0,004$ $p<0,05$). Considering the mean score of CSI and the mean scores for cognitive and behavioral subscales, there is a significant difference in favor of female students. However, in the mean scores for emotional dimension, no difference is seen. According to this, it can be stated that females have developed better communication skills in cognitive and behavioral subscales than males have.

1.2. Findings for difference by school of participants' in the subscales: As based on the second sub-problem of the research, difference by school in the total scores of participants and in their scores for cognitive, emotional and behavioral subscales were examined.

Table 3. The results of one-way ANOVA of CSI scale subscales of participants' according to school

D	School	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Var.	Sum of Squares	sd	M.S.	f	p
C	LL	182	54,1	7,2	B.Groups	120,601	2	60,301	1,112	,330
	ML	145	53,47	7,6	W.Groups	24247,430	447	54,245		
	HL	123	54,82	7,33	Total	24368,031	449			
	Total	450	54,09	7,37						
E	LL	182	49,79	5,55	B.Groups	338,488	2	169,244	5,466	,005
	ML	145	50,29	5,67	W.Groups	13841,083	447	30,964		
	HL	123	51,90	5,46	Total	14179,571	449			
	Total	450	50,53	5,62						

B	LL	182	51,09	5,72	B.Groups	267,764	2	133,882	3,706	,025
	ML	145	50,64	6,46	W.Groups	16146,645	447	36,122		ML/H
	HL	123	52,57	5,88	Total	16414,409	449			L
	Total	450	51,35	6,05						
T	LL	182	155,37	14,68	B.Groups	1819,697	2	909,848	3,958	,020
	ML	145	154,96	15,95	W.Groups	102747,658	447	229,861		ML/H
	HL	123	159,69	14,91	Total	104567,355	449			L
	Total	450	156,42	15,26						

*p<,05

There is a significant difference by school in the total scores of participants and in their scores for emotional and behavioral subscales of the inventory is seen. Moreover, one-way ANOVA was carried out for the scores of secondary school students. According to the result of one-way ANOVA, it is found out that there is a significant difference between their total scores and the scores for emotional and behavioral subscales. Scheffe test was made to compare the participants' total score and scores for emotional and behavioral subscales by school. There is a significant difference between LL and HL in emotional dimension is seen in favor of LL. Also, a significant difference between ML and HL in behavioral dimension is seen in favor of ML. Considering the Scheffe test result for CSI, it is realized that there is a significant difference between ML and HL, in favor of ML. In other words, students at ML have developed the communication skills more than the students at the other two secondary schools.

1.3. Findings for difference by grade level of participants' in the subscales: As based on the third sub-problem of the research, difference by grade level in the total scores of participants and in their scores for cognitive, emotional and behavioral subscales were examined.

Table 4. The results of one-way ANOVA of CSI scale subscales of participants' according to grade level

D	Grade Level	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Var.	Sum of Squares	sd	M.S.	f	p
C	5	98	56,78	6,9	B.Groups	931,197	2	465,599	8,880	,000
	6	201	53,58	6,96	W.Groups	23436,834	447	52,431		5/6
	7	151	53,04	7,80	Total	24368,031	449			5/7
	Total	450	54,09	7,37						
E	5	98	51,73	5,82	B.Groups	257,405	2	128,702	4,132	,017
	6	201	50,6	5,23	W.Groups	13922,167	447	31,146		5/7
	7	151	49,66	5,87	Total	14179,571	449			
	Total	450	50,53	5,62						
B	5	98	51,52	6,87	B.Groups	4,316	2	2,158	,059	,943
	6	201	51,27	5,90	W.Groups	16410,093	447	36,712		
	7	151	51,34	5,69	Total	16414,409	449			
	Total	450	51,35	6,05						
T		98	160,67	15,39	B.Groups	2439,328	2	1219,664	5,338	,005
	6	201	155,86	14,43	W.Groups	102128,027	447	228,474		5/6
	7	151	154,42	15,82	Total	104567,355	449			5/7
	Total	450	156,42	15,26						

*p<,05

It is seen that there is a difference by school in the total scores of participants and in their scores for emotional and behavioral subscales. Moreover, one-way ANOVA was carried out for the scores of secondary school students. According to the result of one-way ANOVA, it is found out that there is a significant difference in their total scores and the scores for cognitive and emotional subscales. Scheffe test was made to compare the participants' total score and scores for emotional and behavioral subscales by grade level. There is a significant difference in the scores of 5th graders, 6th graders and 7th graders for cognitive dimension is

seen in favor of 5th graders. When their scores for emotional dimension are examined, a significant difference between 5th and 7th graders is determined in favor of 5th graders. Considering the total scores for CSI of 5th graders, 6th graders and 7th graders, there is a significant difference in favor of 5th graders. It means that 5th graders have a higher level of communication skills.

1.4. Findings for difference by gender of participants' in the subscales: As based on the fourth sub-problem of the research, difference by gender in the total scores of participants and in their scores for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC teacher-related attitudes and love of Social Studies were examined.

Table 5. Independent t-test results of ASSSC subscales of participants' according to gender

Subscales	Gender	n	X	Ss	t	P
Willingness to Learn	Female	223	25,7377	7,50525	-,068	0,946
	Male	227	25,7845	7,16305		
Enjoying Social Studies Course	Female	223	27,9846	8,59780	-,145	0,885
	Male	227	28,0958	7,69543		
Teacher-related attitudes of students	Female	223	23,7334	6,11037	,499	,618
	Male	227	23,4545	5,74297		
Love of Social Studies	Female	223	19,2495	5,21909	-0,194	,846
	Male	227	19,3421	4,91532		
Total	Female	223	96,7052	23,54482	,013	,990
	Male	227	96,6769	22,11909		

*p<,05

There is no significant difference by gender in the mean of the scores for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC teacher-related attitudes of students and love of Social Studies is seen. As based on this, it can be stated that gender does not have an effect on the attitude of students towards Social Studies.

1.5. Findings for difference by school of participants' in the subscales: As based on the fifth sub-problem of the research, difference by school in the scores of participants for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC teacher-related attitudes and love of Social Studies were examined.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA results of participants' ASSSC subscales according to school

D	School	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Var.	Sum of Squares	sd	M.S.	F	p
WL	LL		27,10	,77	B.Groups	608,093	2	304,047	5,785	,003
	ML		25,27	,6	W.Groups	23493,061	447	52,557		LL/
	HL		24,35	,51	Total	24101,154	449			HL
	Total		25,76	,33						
ESSC	LL		29,37	,85	B.Groups	609,686	2	304,843	4,669	,010
	ML		27,61	8,6	W.Groups	29186,043	447	65,293		LL/
	HL		26,58	7,79	Total	29795,729	449			HL
	Total		28,04	8,15						
TAS	LL		24,25	5,49	B.Groups	299,347	2	149,673	4,330	,014
	ML	45	23,87	5,8	W.Groups	15452,014	447	34,568		LL/
	HL	23	22,29	6,49	Total	15751,360	449			HL
	Total	50	23,59	5,92						
LSS	LL	82	19,67	4,88	B.Groups	124,570	2	62,285	2,446	,088
	LL	145	19,56	5,0	W.Groups	11383,674	447	25,467		
	HL	23	18,44	5,34	Total	11508,244	449			
	Total	50	19,3	,06						
T	LL	82	100,4	21,78	B.Groups	5620,379	2	2810,189	5,509	,004
	ML	45	96,30	22,86	W.Groups	228018,725	447	510,109		

HL	23	91,67	23,42	Total	233639,104	449	LL/ HL
Total	50	96,69	22,81				

*p<,05

It is seen that there is a significant difference by school in the total scores of participants and in their scores for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC and teacher-related attitudes. Also, one-way ANOVA was carried out for the scores of secondary school students. According to the result of one-way ANOVA, a significant difference between their total scores and scores for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC and teacher-related attitudes is also seen. Scheffe test was made to compare the participants' total score and scores for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC and teacher-related attitudes by grade level. There is a significant difference between LL and HL in the scores for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC and teacher-related attitudes of students is seen in favor of LL. In other words, students at LL have developed more positive attitudes to SSC.

1.6. Findings for difference by grade level of participants' in the subscales: As based on the sixth sub-problem of the research, difference by grade level in the scores of participants for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC and teacher-related attitudes were examined.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA Results of Participants' ASSSC subscales According to Grade Level

D	Grade Level	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Var.	Sum of Squares	sd	M.S.	F	p
WL	5	98	25,65	7,38	B.Groups	224,943	2	112,472	2,106	,123
	6	201	25,10	7,47	W.Groups	23876,211	447	53,414		
	7	151	26,71	7,04	Total	24101,154	449			
	Total	450	25,76	7,33						
ESSC	5	98	27,92	8,68	B.Groups	128,077	2	64,039	,965	,382
	6	201	27,56	7,96	W.Groups	29667,652	447	66,371		
	7	151	28,77	8,04	Total	29795,729	449			
	Total	450	28,04	8,15						
TAS	5	98	23,31	6,12	B.Groups	135,681	2	67,841	1,942	,145
	6	201	23,15	6,06	W.Groups	15615,679	447	34,934		
	7	151	24,36	5,56	Total	15751,360	449			
	Total	450	23,59	5,92						
LSS	5	98	19,31	5,21	B.Groups	140,641	2	70,321	2,765	,064
	6	201	18,75	5,31	W.Groups	11367,603	447	25,431		
	7	151	20,02	4,54	Total	11508,244	449			
	Total	450	19,3	5,06	B.Groups					
T	5	98	96,18	23,25	W.Groups	2457,454	2	1228,727	2,376	,094
	6	201	94,56	23,39	Total	231181,650	447	517,185		
	7	151	99,86	21,50	B.Groups	233639,104	449			
	Total	450	96,69	22,82						

*p<,05

It is seen that the scores of participants for willingness to learn, enjoying SSC teacher-related attitudes and love of Social Studies are very close to each other, in terms of the grade level variable. Also, one-way ANOVA was carried out for the scores of secondary school students. According to the result of one-way ANOVA, no significant difference was found.

2. Findings for Qualitative Part:

In this section of the study, findings for the qualitative part are given in titles below.

2.1. Findings for the Opinions of Participants' on the Content of SSC: Findings for the opinions of participants on the sub-problem of "What is your attitude to SSC?". The attitudes of participants towards SSC

are seen. As based on this, while students ($f=36$) state that they have positive attitudes towards SSC students ($f=9$) have negative attitudes to the course. When student attitudes are examined in terms of the grade level, it is seen that ($f=12$, 33,3%) 5th graders have positive attitudes towards SSC but ($f=3$, 33,3%) have negative attitudes. While the 6th graders ($f=10$, 27,7%) have positive attitudes towards S.S.C. ($f=5$, 55,5%) have negative attitudes. For 7th graders, ($f=14$, 38,8%) have positive and ($f=1$, 11,1%) have negative attitudes towards the course. It is seen that 7th graders have developed more positive attitudes towards SSC; however, 6th graders have less positive attitudes in comparison with the other grade levels. The opinions of some students who state positive and negative attitudes as related to this question of the research are directly given below:

5MS-11 "I think this is a pleasant lesson. I like the course subjects."

6MS-3 "Learning new things in SSC makes me happy. It is a very nice lesson."

7FS-13 "I love Social Studies much. It teaches new things to me. I get good marks in the exams."

Students with positive attitudes towards SSC find it entertaining and like it. They are interested in the subjects which they learn in SSC. Furthermore, they state that they get high marks in the exams for this lesson. As based on these, it can be said that the attitudes of students are influenced by their interest in the course, finding the course entertaining and receiving high marks for this lesson. This can be related to the scale subscales of enjoying SSC and love of Social Studies, which are included in the quantitative part.

5MS-10 "I do not like Social Studies much. In this lesson, some topics like the Ionians are better not to be dealt with. I would like no exam and to write less."

6MS-11 "I think SSC should be dropped. Other lessons should be added, instead of it."

Students with negative attitudes towards SSC express that they do not like some topics to be taught in the lessons, this lesson should not be included in the curriculum and the subjects more interesting for them can be taught in this course.

2.2. Findings for the opinions of participants' on how the communication skill to be acquired through SSC: Findings for the opinions of participants that are related to the question of "How does SSC help you acquire communication skills?" are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Statistical data of participants' opinions about gaining communication skills of SSC

Opinions	f	%
To teach technology	12	18,7
To teach communication tools	10	15,6
Teaching how to behave	7	10,9
Teaching life	5	7,8
Information transfer	4	6,2
Need technology when doing homework	4	6,2
Teach us how to exercise our rights	3	4,6
Making people understand each other	3	4,6
Lack of help	3	4,6
Let us know ourselves	2	3,1
Providing us to transfer the information we learned to life	2	3,1
Unanswered	2	3,1
To handle communication issues	2	3,1
Teaching empathy	2	3,1
History teaching	1	1,5
Gaining self-confidence	1	1,5
Teaching charity	1	1,5
Total	64	100

Students expressed their opinions about the role of SSC in their gaining communication skills as “teaching technology” (f=12, 18,7%), “teaching mass media” (f=10, 15,6%), “teaching how to behave” (f=7, 10,9%) and “teaching life” (f=5, 7,8%). As based on this, it can be stated that most of the students have positive opinions for SSC to help them develop communication skills. However, it is also seen that some of the students expressed their opinions in a negative way, as “it cannot help” (f=3, 4,6%). The opinions of some students as related to this question of the research are directly given below:

5FS-1 “We learn about the pros and cons of technology.”

6FS-15 “It helps us understand each other well.”

6MS-3 “It helps us know ourselves more and exercise our rights better.”

In general, students have expressed that they learn about technology, their rights and how to develop empathy within the scope of SSC. Therefore, students are of the opinion that it is quite possible to acquire communication skills through SSC. When it is considered that communication skill is the key feature to have many other gains, the significant role of SSC in enabling this skill to be acquired can be understood.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

When the findings obtained from the research are analyzed, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the communication skills of students and their gender. This difference is in favor of female students. In literature, there are several studies sampling different age groups and pointing out that female students have a higher level of communication skills than male students (Berglund, Eriksson and Westerlund, 2005; Can-Bilgin, 2015; Fenson, 1994; Görür, 2001; Karatekin et al., 2012; Kocaman, 2006; Korkut, 1996; Prather and Bostrom, 1991; Yıldırım, 2015). It is observed that the mentioned studies promote the findings obtained from this research. The case that female students have a higher level of communication skills than male students can be explained by females’ being more effective in using communication skills. However, studies in which no difference between female and male students was found are also seen in literature review (Çoban, 2018; Dalkılıç, 2011; Türkel, 2010)

As based on the findings, it is concluded that the communication skill levels of students vary by the school. It is seen that, among the schools selected according to socio-economic level, the schools with lower socio-economic status have a higher level of communication skills. In literature, there are studies which promote the result obtained from this research (Fenson, 1994; Görür, 2001). On the other hand, there are also studies indicating that the level of communication skills increases as the socio-economic status becomes higher (Can Bilgin, 2015) and that the schools with medium socio-economic status have a higher level of communication skills (Türkel, 2010). In addition to this, Dalkılıç (2011) and Yıldırım (2015) stated in their studies that no statistically significant difference was found between the socio-economic status and communication skills. This can be explained by the effect of many variables such as the teachers instructing at schools where students receive education, the school structure, the surrounding in which they live, and so on.

From the findings in the research, it is also realized that there is a difference between the low and high grade levels in favor of the low grade, when the communication skills of students are analyzed by grade level. Similar to this result of the research, Karatekin et al. (2012) concluded that the communication skill levels of students increases as the grade level decreases. The results of this study, which considers participants as its sample, are consistent with this research. As the grade level increases, students can assess their communication skills in a more rational manner and behave more objectively. This can cause to the gradual decrease in the total scores of students for communication skills as the grade level increases. Unlike this research result, Erözkan (2005) stated that the grade level was not the predictor of the level of communication skill and Türkel

(2010) pointed out that there was no significant difference between the grade level and communication skills. Besides this, Görür (2001) concluded that the levels of communication skill also increased as the grade level became higher. The fact that the sample group is at different levels may also have an effect in terms of obtaining different results.

In the research, a significant difference between the attitudes of students towards SSC and their gender was not found. In literature review, it was seen that no significant difference was determined by gender in some studies (Demir, 2010; Ergin, 2006; Oğur, 2009; Öztürk and Baysal, 1999; Sidekli, 2010; Yilmazer and Demir, 2014). However, in some studies (Altıntaş, 2005; Tay and Akyürek Tay, 2006), it was put forward that female students had more positive attitudes to SSC than male students. On the other hand, in the study carried out by Çelen (2014), a significant difference was found in favor of male students. It can be said that these results are by the effect of variables different from each other.

In the research, it was concluded that the attitude towards SSC varied by the school at which students were studying. It is seen that there is a significant difference between the scores of LI and HL for the subscales of enjoying SSC and teacher-related attitudes, in favor of LL. The attitudes of students at LL with low socio-economic status are more positive than the attitudes of students at HL with high socio-economic status. The results consistent with this research result were also found in the studies by Altıntaş (2005) and Demir (2010). It was found out that students from low-income families had a higher level of positive attitude to SSC and students from high-income families had a lower level of positive attitude towards the course. This may result from the student attitude related to the teacher and the fact that parents direct their children to some other courses more. However, the study by Oğur (2009) does not share similarity in terms of this research result. As based on its findings, it was determined that the attitudes of students towards SSC improved as the income level of family increased. On the other hand, no significant difference was determined in the study carried out by Yilmazer and Demir (2014).

In this research, any effect of grade levels of students on their attitudes to SSC was not determined. Yilmazer and Demir (2014) could not find a difference by grade level in their study. Demir (2010) stated that 6th graders had more positive attitudes to S.S.C compared to 7th graders. Ergin (2006) and Öztürk (1999) indicated that the scores of 4th graders for the attitude towards SSC were higher than the scores obtained by 5th graders. These results are consistent with the result obtained from this research. Yet, in the study by Oğur (2009), it was concluded that 7th graders had a higher level of positive attitudes to SSC than 6th graders. Accordingly, it is seen that the result of mentioned study does not promote the results of this research and of the other studies in literature.

In the qualitative part of the research, students expressed that they had positive attitudes towards SSC. Demir and Yilmazer (2014) determined that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of students to SSC and their favorite class. This relation is in favor of the students who like SSC. In the study by Sidekli (2010), it is seen that 5th graders have developed positive attitudes towards SSC. Also, in the study carried out by Aktepe, Tahiroğlu and Sargın (2014), it is seen that primary school 4th-grade students have developed positive attitude towards SSC. Altıntaş (2005) found the 7th graders' levels of attitude to SSC at neutral level. Results for this finding obtained through the qualitative part of the research are also promoted by the quantitative findings in literature. These are partially consistent with the result of this research.

Although communication is not included as a course subject or heading within the scope of SSC it constitutes one of the skills of this course. Gains in the learning domain for "Individual and Society" at the 7th grade level are also associated to communication skill (MEB, 2018). In the research, students have mentioned that it is necessary for communication to be included as a subject in the content of SSC. In the Curriculum for SSC revised within the scope of our education system in 2018, it is seen that this course is handled in a way integrated with the course subjects of social sciences such as history, geography, economics, sociology,

psychology, philosophy, politics and law and with the topics of human rights, citizenship and democracy (MEB, 2018). Furthermore, in literature, the views similar to the results attained in this research are also available in a large number of studies for the content of SSC (Keçe and Merey, 2011; Kılıçoğlu, 2009; Öztürk, 2009). In the study by Mutluer (2013), in which teacher opinions on the skills included in Social Studies Curricula are dealt with, some of the teachers stated that communication skill would be gained by SSC. In the study by Memişoğlu (2012), teachers were of the opinion that communication was put into practice with its all constituents in SSC.

Considering the second question in the qualitative part of this research, students have expressed that SSC teaches about technology, mass media, how to behave and the life in general, as relevant to its feature of enabling communication skill to be gained. According to this, most of the students can be said to have positive views about the fact that SSC promotes the communication skill. In the study carried out by Gömleksiz and Kan (2007), students participating in the research stated that the Curriculum for SSC was effective in terms of acquiring communication skills. In the study by Karadağ and Çengelci (2011), teachers participating in the research put forward that SSC was directly related to reading, speaking and writing skills. In the study by Çelikkaya (2011), teachers indicated that communication skills could be gained to a certain extent in SSC. Also, in one of their studies, Çelikkaya, Yıldırım and Kürümlüoğlu (2019) stated that students and Social Studies teachers regarded communication skill as one of the most essential skills in the curriculum. Findings obtained from these studies also promote the results obtained from this research.

Both the quantitative and qualitative part of this research are consistent with each other. Students have expressed that it is possible to acquire communication skills through SSC. Also, in the quantitative part, a low-level positive relation between the attitudes of participants towards SSC and their levels of communication skill is found. Across the subscales of CSI, a mid-level positive relation between cognitive dimension and emotional and behavioral subscales was found. Also, a mid-level positive relation between emotional and behavioral dimension was determined. Considering the subscales of the Scale for Attitude towards SSC a high-level positive relation between willingness to learn and subscales for enjoying SSC teacher-related attitudes and love of Social Studies was found. A mid-level positive relation between enjoying SSC and subscales for teacher-related attitudes and love of Social Studies was also determined. A high-level positive relation between teacher-related attitudes and love of Social Studies was found. Therefore, findings obtained from the quantitative part of the research can be said to be promoted by the findings from the qualitative part. Additionally, the case that communication is presented as a skill rather than a course subject in the Curriculum for SSC is consistent with the results obtained from this research.

In line with the results obtained from this research, the followings can be suggested:

- The communication skill may be included in various learning domains as of 4th grade level.
- Teachers may establish environments in which students can express themselves well, by paying attention to their individual differences displayed during the lessons. Teachers may include in-class activities to improve the communication skills of their students more in their instructions.
- Since the attitudes of students towards SSC have an effect on their academic achievements, teaching methods and techniques to enable students be more active in the process of teaching may be preferred.

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