

Attitudes and Beliefs of 4th Grade Primary School Students toward the Social Studies Course

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Abstract:


The social studies course can be described as an ongoing process that attempts to prepare individuals for life through the transfer of culture and ensures their socialization. It is thought that students' beliefs and attitudes toward this course are essential for achieving the course objectives. The objective of this research is to determine the attitudes and belief levels of fourth- grade students toward the social studies course with respect to various variables and to review the relationship between attitudes and belief levels toward the social studies course. During the research, descriptive survey and relational survey models, both quantitative research methods, were used in combination. The study population consists of primary school students throughout Turkey in their fourth grade during the 2022–2023 academic year. 1326 primary school students in the fourth grade constituted the sample group of the study. The research data were collected using the "Social Studies Course Attitude Scale" and the "Social Studies Course Belief Scale". Because of the study, it was determined that there was a positive and moderate relationship between the students' attitudes and beliefs toward the social studies course, and it was noted that students' attitudes and beliefs toward social studies course were significantly high. Teachers and educators, while conducting efforts to enhance students' attitudes toward the social studies course, can also contribute to students' success by focusing on their positive beliefs about this course.

Keywords: Primary school students, social studies course, attitude, belief


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INTRODUCTION

Education can be described as a process that facilitates behavioral change in individuals in an attempt to prepare them for life according to certain goals of the society and to support the socialization of individuals through the transfer of cultural values. The general objectives of education include, among others, raising good citizens who demonstrate appropriate behavioral characteristics as expected by society, embracing the core values of society, and developing attitudes and beliefs in line with these values. Everyone accepts that the continuity and level of development of a society are highly correlated with education. Therefore, each society has its own education system built to serve its needs. The basic building block of an education system is schools, and their function is to provide students with education. Learning activities are conducted at schools according to predefined programs to achieve the desired behavioral changes in students (Fidan, 1996; Şimşek and Demir, 2012).

Education and training periods are divided into various types and stages based on the age and developmental characteristics of the students. Primary schools in our education system are the foundation on which the entire education process is built and they are also where future generations are first shaped. The main purpose of education in primary schools is to prepare students for life and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they will need in their daily lives (Ergin, 2006). At the primary school level, social studies which is designed to prepare students for their social life, is essential in providing them with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to become good citizens. The social studies subject, which equips students with the necessary tools to become first a good person, then an effective citizen, and finally a world citizen in this global world (Tay, 2022), draws upon the content of social sciences and offers a subset of this content as required to raise effective citizens. In this context, the mission of raising active citizens for a democratic society both in Turkey and throughout the world has been largely delegated to the social studies curriculum. Thus, social studies education has become a key factor that determines whether a society is made of productive and participatory individuals with national and democratic attitudes and values, problem-solving and decision-making skills (Öztürk and Otluoğlu, 2002; Safran, 2008; Aktepe, Tahiroğlu and Sargin, 2014). In Turkey, social studies education at the primary school level is delivered in a course of 3 h per week in the fourth grade as per the 2023 Social Studies Course Teaching Program (MEB, 2023).

A review of the Social Studies Course Teaching Program shows that it is designed to ensure that students acquire the desired behaviors in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. During the acquisition of behaviors, it is essential that affective learning and cognitive learning are prioritized. Affective characteristics have a significant impact on cognitive achievement in the relevant field, and this effect is approximately as important as one-fourth of cognitive achievement (Bloom, 1995; National Research Council, 1996). In other words, as is the case with any other course, for students to achieve the

intended learning outcomes and succeed in the social studies course, they must show a keen interest in, develop a positive attitude, and have a positive belief in that subject. Therefore, one of the main factors that determine a student's success in a course is affective entry behaviors, which comprise a student's habits, values, beliefs, and attitudes. (Aktepe, Tahiroğlu and Sargin, 2014; Erden, 1997; Ergin, 2006; Kayalı, 2003; Özçelik, 1992).

Attitude, considered as one of the affective entry characteristics, refers to the positive or negative behaviors an individual develops toward any object, concept, or situation (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2004). According to Aydın (2010), attitudes influence and shape students' emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. Attitudes, which are believed to influence students' decision-making and behaviors, play a significant role in learning (Altınok and Açıkgöz, 2006). Students' attitudes can shape their levels of knowledge on the subject, their performance, their willingness to acquire knowledge, and their interests.

Research on attitudes indicates a significant relationship between students' school performance and their attitudes, demonstrating that as students' positive attitudes toward the subject increase, their achievements also improve (Tay and Akyürek Tay, 2006). Therefore, it can be said that a positive attitude adopted by students toward the subject will positively impact their academic success. Therefore, if students have a positive attitude toward a specific subject or course, this can enhance their cognitive achievements. Therefore, educators can positively influence students' learning experiences by understanding and supporting their emotional needs, thus helping them become more successful. Hence, knowing the extent of student attitudes can enable educators to determine their teaching methods, enhance students' learning experiences, and provide more effective education. This information can be considered a crucial factor in offering better instruction and guidance to students, increasing student motivation, and consequently improving learning outcomes.

Another affective characteristic that needs to be developed in students is belief. The beliefs that students have represent an important aspect of the education and training process (Çiftçi and Yıldız, 2020). According to the definition in the Turkish Language Association [TDK] dictionary, belief is "being bound to an idea, something which is believed in, opinion, doctrine". In addition, a review of the relevant literature shows that the term "belief" is defined in different ways. According to Goldin (2002), beliefs are mental structures that are accepted as true by an individual and acquired by that individual through coding and belong to that individual. However, Schoenfeld (1989) describes belief as a personal conceptualization, understanding, or feeling. Belief is also said to be a part of an individual's knowledge (Furinghetti and Pehkonen, 2002; Pajares and Miller, 1995). Beliefs affect an individual's motivation, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Uysal and Kösemen, 2013).

On the other hand, a review of the literature reveals that the concepts of belief and attitude are intertwined and that belief is even expressed as an attitude (Pehkonen and

Pietila, 2003). Attitudes and beliefs are closely interlinked in terms of the cause– effect relationship. Attitudes are hidden in certain value judgments and beliefs, and they continue to exist as long as the beliefs and value judgments on which they are based remain (Çöllü and Öztürk, 2006). If an individual has a negative attitude toward any object, they will also have negative beliefs about that object (Morgan, 2000). However, the beliefs that students hold affect how they behave and process information (Garner and Alexander, 1994). Considering the power of belief, understanding a student’s beliefs provides insight into their knowledge, learning, and motivation (Buehl and Alenxander, 2001). Students’ beliefs also affect their learning (Richardson, 1996). Based on the information mentioned above the students’ attitudes and beliefs about the social studies course both play an important role in achieving the desired level of characteristics that are expected to be imparted to students through the social studies course. In this context, knowing the level of students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding the social studies course is an important factor in improving the quality of social studies teaching (Öztürk, Akyürek Tay, Ergül, & Tay, 2023).

The literature in this field includes studies examining the attitudes of primary and secondary school (4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grade) students toward the social studies course (Akın, 2014; Aktepe, Tahiroğlu, & Sargın, 2014; Coşkun, 2011; Ergin, 2006; Kayalı, 2003; Meral, 2013, Oğur, 2009; Özkal, Güngör and Çetingöz, 2004; Öztürk and Baysal, 1999; Şahin, 2001; Şimşek and Demir, 2012; Tay and Akyürek Tay, 2006, Tosun and Nalçacı, 2023; Yılmaz and Şeker, 2011). Other studies have examined the effects of the methods used in delivering social studies lessons on students’ attitudes toward the social studies course (Ada, Baysal and Kadioğlu, 2009; Aladağ, 2007; Balkan, 2007; Deveci, 2002; Fidan, 2004; Karakuş, 2004; Karakuş, 2009; Yılmaz, 2006). Based on the results of these studies, it has been concluded that the use of methods and techniques aligned with the constructivist approach (project-based learning in social studies, problem-based learning, cooperative learning, maps and geographical information systems, etc.) has a positive influence on students’ attitudes toward social studies. However, it has been noted that there is a smaller number of studies on fourth- grade primary school students and the current social studies program. Additionally, the literature review did not return any research examining the students’ attitudes and beliefs about the social studies course together. This was the starting point of this research which is hoped to eliminate this deficiency in the field. In this context, the objective of this research is to examine the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course in terms of some variables and to identify the relationship between the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course. This research has been designed to identify the deficiencies in affective input behaviors by measuring the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade students toward the social studies course for making social studies teaching more effective, determining the actions that must be taken to make the attitudes and beliefs of the students more positive, and providing a reference resource for future studies in this field. It is thought that insight into whether students’ attitudes and beliefs change in terms of different

variables and whether there is a relationship between students' attitudes and beliefs will be useful in determining the methods to be followed in teaching social studies. For this purpose, answers have been sought to the following two main problems and their sub-problems:

Research Problem

1. Is there a significant relationship between the attitudes and belief levels of fourth-grade primary school students toward the social studies course?
2. Do the attitudes and belief levels of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course change significantly in terms of different variables?

Sub-problems

- 1) At what level are the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course?
- 2) Is there any significant difference between 4th grade primary school students' gender, how much time they spend reading a book on a day, the educational background of families, parents' professions, geographical region in which the students live, and their attitudes toward the social studies course?
- 3) At what level are the beliefs of the 4th grade primary school students about the social studies course?
- 4) Is there any significant difference between 4th grade primary school students' gender, how much time they spend reading a book on a day, the educational background of families, parents' professions, geographical region in which the students live, and their beliefs about the social studies course?
- 5) Is there any relationship between fourth- grade primary school students' attitudes and beliefs about the social studies course?

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, the survey model, i.e., a quantitative research method, was used to identify the attitudes and beliefs of 4th grade primary school students about the social studies course. Survey research, in the most general sense, describes and defines the characteristics of a sample selected from the population, reveals its nature, and generalizes it to the population. This type of research typically uses a large population and is conducted with a large group, and attempts to describe the tendencies, attitudes, concerns, opinions, and characteristics of the individuals in the sample. Descriptive survey research is conducted by describing existing variables, situations, or events as they are, without any intervention by the researcher (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and

Demirel, 2021; Creswell, 2017; Hoccoğlu and Baysal, 2019; Karakaya, 2014; Tuncer, 2020). For this purpose, considering the size of the population consisting of fourth- grade primary school students in Turkey, a descriptive survey method was used to describe the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students about the social studies course and generalize them to the population. At the same time, the relational survey model was used to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of the 4th grade primary school students about the social studies course in terms of different variables, to determine whether attitudes and beliefs change together or not, and to determine the degree of change, if any.

Population and sample

The population of the research consists of primary school students throughout Turkey in their fourth grade in the 2022–2023 academic year 2022–2023. A sample group representing the characteristics of the population was formed to generalize conclusions obtained from this sample group to the overall population with the "multistage sampling" method, i.e., a method that is typically used when it is not possible to reach or create a list of all individuals in a given population. First, using the "stratified sampling" method, seven geographical regions in Turkey were divided into strata, and geographical parts of each stratum were examined to determine the provinces in which the study would be conducted independently from each other. In the second stage, a list of schools in those provinces was created, and the schools were selected using the "simple random" sampling method. During the third stage, the "criterion sampling" method -a purposeful sampling strategy- was used by taking "being a 4th grade primary school student" as a criterion. Thus, a sample group of 1326 primary school students in the fourth grade in the 2022–2023 academic year across the schools selected according to the simple random method was created as the research sample. The demographic information of the sample group participating in the research is given in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographics of the Study Group

Variable	Group	f	%
Gender	Female	694	52
	Male	632	48
Time spent reading per day	0 min	75	5.7
	1-30 minutes	572	43.1
	31-60 minutes	383	28.9
	61-90 minutes	183	13.8
	More than 90 min	113	8.5
Mother's Educational Level	Primary school	326	24.6
	Illiterate	150	11.3
	Secondary school	259	19.5
	High school	332	25.0
	University	259	19.5
Father's Educational Level	Primary school	67	5.1
	Illiterate	241	18.2
	Secondary school	276	20.8
	High school	365	27.5
	University	377	28.4
Mother's Profession	Tradesperson/craftsperson	62	4.7
	Housewife	1004	75.7
	Public Officer	131	9.9
	Private Sector	75	5.7
	Self-employment	54	4.1
Father's Profession	Unemployed	31	2.3
	Tradesperson/craftsperson	391	29.5
	Public Officer	217	16.4
	Private Sector	377	28.4
	Self-employment	310	23.4
Geographic Region	Marmara Region	181	13.7
	Aegean Region	129	9.7
	Central Anatolia Region	341	25.7
	The Mediterranean Region	316	23.8
	The Black Sea Region	85	6.4
	Eastern Anatolia Region	111	8.4
	Southeastern Anatolia Region	163	12.3
Total		1326	100

Data Collection Tools

The "Social Studies Course Attitude Scale", "Social Studies Course Belief Scale" and a demographic information form were used during this research, which was conducted to describe the attitudes and beliefs of 4th grade primary school students about the social studies course and to determine whether there was a significant relationship between them.

To determine the construct validity of the "Social Studies Course Attitude Scale" developed by Ulu Kaln and Topkaya (2017), which consists of 12 three-point Likert items

designed to determine the attitudes of the fourth grade primary school students toward the social studies course, a factor analysis was conducted by the researchers who developed this scale. Because of the factor analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer– Olkin (KMO) value of the scale was found to be .87, and the value in the Bartlett Sphericity test was found to be significant ($p = .000$). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) value of the scale was $\alpha = .84$. These values indicate that it is a valid and reliable scale (Ulu Kalın and Topkaya, 2017). The Cronbach’s alpha value obtained at the end of this research was $\alpha = .84$.

The "Social Studies Course Belief Scale", which was developed by Öztürk, Akyürek Tay, Ergül, and Tay (2023) and is used to determine the beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students about the social studies course, consists of 19 three-point Likert items. Because of the factor analysis conducted by the developers of the scale, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value of the scale was found to be .91, and the value in the Bartlett Sphericity test was found to be significant ($p < 0.000$). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) value of the scale was $\alpha = .89$. These values show that the scale is valid and reliable scale (Öztürk, Akyürek Tay, Ergül and Tay, 2023). The Cronbach’s alpha value obtained at the end of this research was $\alpha = .87$.

The response options for the items in both scales are as follows: "Agree (2.34-3.00)", "Partly Agree (1.67-2.33)", "Disagree (1.00-1.66)". Since the scores on the scale range between 1.00 and 3.00, the closer the scores are to 3, the higher the students’ level of agreement with the proposition, and the closer the scores are to 1.00, the lower the students’ level of agreement with the proposition.

After parental consent forms were obtained from the sample group of the research, i.e., 1326 primary school students in their fourth grade in the 2022–2023 academic year, the Social Studies Course Attitude Scale and the Social Studies Course Belief Scale were completed by the students.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of the data obtained from the study were analyzed using the SPSS 25.00 package program. First, the data were tested to see whether they showed normal distribution. For this purpose, the histogram, variance coefficient, skewness/kurtosis, detrended plot, Kolmogorov–Smirnova, and Shapiro– Wilk tests were used to perform normality testing of each independent variable. The data obtained from the Social Studies Course Attitude Scale and the Social Studies Course Belief Scale did not show a normal distribution.

The Mann– Whitney U" test, a nonparametric statistical test, was used to determine whether the students’ attitudes and beliefs about the social studies course showed a significant difference according to gender. Since the data did not show a normal distribution, the Kruskal– Wallis H" test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in terms of the students’ attitudes and belief levels, amount of time

spent reading per day, parents' educational level, parents' professions, and the geographical region in which they lived. Additionally, the Spearman –Brown test was performed to determine the relationship between the students' attitudes and beliefs about the social studies course. The analysis results are provided as frequency distribution graphs and tables.

Ethical considerations

During the research process, data were collected meticulously and participants' privacy and anonymity were protected. Each student participating in the research and their parents were formally informed about the research objectives, methodologies, and potential outcomes. More importantly, they were assured of their right to withdraw from the study without being subject to any adverse consequences. All collected data, including interview tools and participants' consent documentation, were stored securely on the researcher's personal computer, which was protected with strict password protection measures.

In alignment with the overarching commitment to ethics, this study stringently adhered to all provisions delineated in the "Higher Educational Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive." It is imperative to note that there were zero instances of activities that might infringe upon the clauses stated under the "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics."

Ethical Review Board: [Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee]

Date of Ethics Review Decision: [10.05.2023]

Ethics Assessment Document Issue Number: [2023/04/22]

FINDINGS

It was determined that the answers given to the Social Studies Course Attitude Scale by the 4th grade primary school students participating in the research did not show a normal distribution, and the data were tested using the non-parametric Chi-square (χ^2) test to determine the attitude level of the students. Related data are provided in Table 2.

Table 2.

Chi-square (χ^2) Test Results for 4th Grade Primary School Students' Attitude Levels toward the Social Studies courses

	n	sd	χ^2	p
Social Studies Course Attitude Scale	1326	20	1697.968	.000

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course are significantly high ($\chi^2=1697.968$; $p<.05$).

The Mann–Whitney U test results for the social studies course attitude scale scores of male and female fourth- grade primary school students are given in Table 3.

Table 3.

Mann–Whitney U Test Results Show a Significant Difference Between the 4th Grade Primary School Students' Gender and Attitudes toward the Social Studies Course

Gender	n	Mean Rank	Sum of the Ranks	U	p
Female	694	692.22	480401.50	199371.50	.004
Male	632	631.96	399399.50		

It was found that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of female and male students toward the social studies course ($U=199371.50$, $p<.05$). Considering the mean ranks, it was noted that the female students' attitudes toward the social studies courses were higher than those of the male students.

The Kruskal–Wallis Test results for the scores of 4th grade primary school students on the social studies course attitude scale with respect to how much time they spent reading per day are given in Table 4.

Table 4.

Kruskal–Wallis Test Results for 4th Grade Primary School Students with Respect to the Amount of Time Spent Reading Books Per Day

	Time spent reading per day	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	0 min	75	586.66	22.308	4	.000	3 > 2
2	1-30 minutes	572	617.60				4 > 2
3	31-60 minutes	383	703.66				5 > 2
4	61–90 minutes	183	714.39				
5	More than 90 min	113	728.31				
	Total	1326					

Table 4 shows that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and the amount of time they spent reading books per day ($\chi^2=22.308$; $p<.05$). A significant difference was found between the attitudes of students who read books for 31–60 minutes, 61–90 minutes, and more than 90 min per day, and the attitudes of students who read books for 1-30 minutes. It is seen that the significant difference is in favor of those students who read books for 31–60 minutes, 61–90 minutes, and more than 90 min per day.

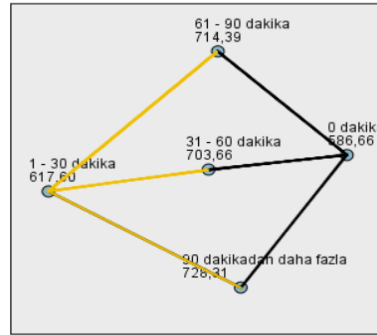


Figure 1. Relationship Between 4th Grade Primary School Students' amounts of Time spents Reading Books Per Day and Their Attitudes toward the Social Studies courses

The data were tested using the Kruskal– Wallis test to determine the relationship between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their mother's educational level. The results are presented in Table 5.

It was determined that the answers given to the Social Studies Course Attitude Scale by the 4th grade primary school students participating in the research did not show a normal distribution, and the data were tested using the non-parametric Chi-square (χ^2) test to determine the attitude level of the students. Related data are provided in Table 2.

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3	31-60 minutes	383	703.66				5 > 2
4	61–90 minutes	183	714.39				
5	More than 90 min	113	728.31				
	Total	1326					

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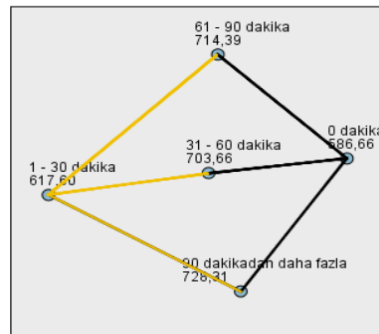


Figure 1. Relationship Between 4th Grade Primary School Students' amounts of Time spents Reading Books Per Day and Their Attitudes toward the Social Studies courses

The data were tested using the Kruskal– Wallis test to determine the relationship between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their mother's educational level. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Mother's Educational Level

	Mother's Educational Level	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Illiterate	150	521.48	43.346	4	.000	2 > 1
2	Primary school	326	630.50				3 > 1
3	Secondary school	259	634.76				4 > 1
4	High school	332	734.04				5 > 1
5	University	259	725.60				4 > 2
	Total	1326					5 > 2
							4 > 3

According to Table 5, there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and the educational level of their mothers ($\chi^2=43.346$; $p<.05$). A significant difference was found between the attitudes of those students whose mother's educational level was primary school, secondary school, high school, or university, and the attitudes of those students whose mother's educational level was illiterate. Regarding the students' attitudes toward the social studies course, a significant difference was also found between the students whose mothers' educational level was university or high school and the students whose mother's educational level was primary school. In this case, it is seen that the difference is in favor of those whose mother's educational level is primary school, secondary school, high school, or university.

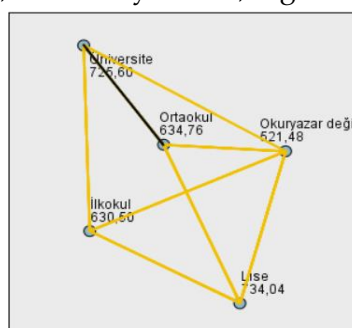


Figure 2. Relationship between the Attitudes of 4th- Grade Primary School Students toward the Social Studies Course and Their Mother's Educational Level

The data were tested using the Kruskal– Wallis test to determine the relationship between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their father's educational level. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Father's Educational Level

	Father's Educational Level	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Illiterate	67	573.89	23.925	4	.000	4 > 2
2	Primary school	241	600.18				5 > 2
3	Secondary school	276	621.66				5 > 3
4	High school	365	704.24				
5	University	377	711.09				
	Total	1326					

According to Table 6, there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course and the educational level of their fathers ($\chi^2=23.925$; $p<.05$). Regarding the students' attitudes toward the social studies course, a significant difference was found between the students whose father's educational level was high school or university and those whose father's educational level was primary school, and between the students whose father's educational level was university and those whose father's educational level was secondary school. In this case, the difference is in favor of the fathers' educational levels being high school or university.

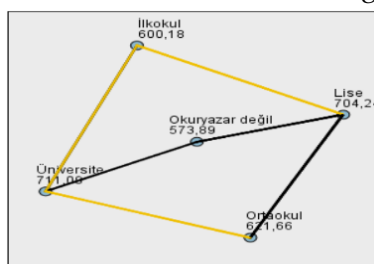


Figure 3. Relationship between the Attitudes of 4th Grade Primary School Students toward the Social Studies Course and Their Father's Educational Level

The data were analyzed using the Kruskal– Wallis test to determine the relationship between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their mother's profession. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Mother's Profession

	Mother's Profession	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Tradesperson/craftsperson	62	682.94	11.955	4	.018	3 > 2
2	Housewife	1004	647.90				
3	Public Officer	131	764.25				
4	Private Sector	75	648.23				
5	Self-employment	54	708.08				
	Total	1326					

Because of the data analysis, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their mother's profession, as shown in Table 7 ($\chi^2=11,955$; $p<.05$). Regarding attitudes toward the social studies course, a significant difference was found between students whose mothers were public officers and those students whose mothers were housewives. This difference favored the students whose mothers were public officers.



Figure 4. Relationship between the Attitudes of 4th Grade Primary School Students toward the Social Studies Course and Their Mother's Profession

The data were analyzed using the Kruskal– Wallis test to determine the relationship between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their father's profession. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Father's Profession

	Father's Profession	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Unemployed	31	509.50	15.366	4	.004	3 > 1
2	Tradesperson/craftsperson	391	656.06				
3	Public Officer	217	736.78				
4	Private Sector	377	666.75				
5	Self-employment	310	633.03				
	Total	1326					

According to Table 8, there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course and the profession of their fathers ($\chi^2=15.366$; $p<.05$). Regarding attitudes toward the social studies course, a significant difference was detected between students whose fathers worked as public officers and those whose fathers were unemployed or self-employed. This difference was in favor of students whose fathers worked as public officers.

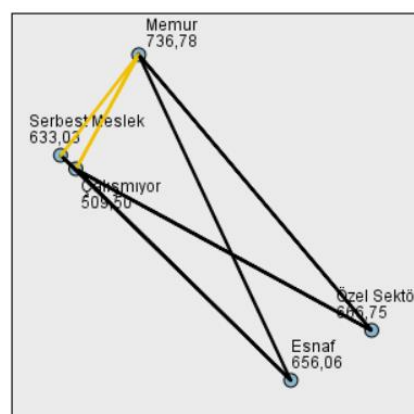


Figure 5. Relationship between the Attitudes of 4th Grade Primary School Students toward the Social Studies Course and Their Father's Profession

The Kruskal– Wallis test was used to determine the relationship between the data collected from 7 geographical regions of Turkey and the students' attitudes toward the social studies course. The results obtained are presented in Table 9.

Table 9.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Geographic Region

Geographic Region	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1 Marmara Region	181	690.74	84.772	6	.000	1 > 7, 2 > 7
2 Aegean Region	129	738.01				3 > 7, 4 > 7
3 Central Anatolia Region	341	703.22				5 > 7
4 The Mediterranean Region	316	699.44				1 > 6, 2 > 6
5 The Black Sea Region	85	777.15				3 > 6, 4 > 6
6 Eastern Anatolia Region	111	536.99				5 > 6
7 Southeastern Anatolia Region	163	448.39				
Total	1326					

There was a significant difference between the attitudes of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their geographic region ($\chi^2=84.772$; $p<.05$). Regarding attitudes toward the social studies course, there was a significant difference between students living in the Marmara Aegean Central Anatolia Mediterranean, and Black Sea regions and those living in the Southeastern Anatolia region. At the same time, there was a significant difference, regarding attitudes toward social studies, between students living in the Marmara Aegean Central Anatolia Mediterranean, and Black Sea regions and those living in the Eastern Anatolia region. This difference favored the students living in the Marmara Aegean Central Anatolia Mediterranean, and Black Sea regions.

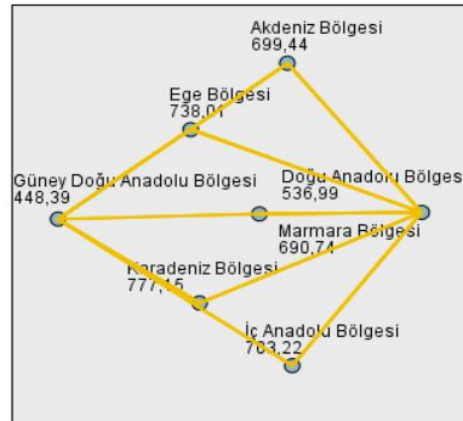


Figure 6. Relationship between the Attitudes of 4th Grade Primary School Students toward the Social Studies Course and Their Geographic Region

It was determined that the answers given to the Social Studies Course Attitude Scale by the 4th grade primary school students participating in the research did not show a normal distribution, and the data were tested using the non-parametric Chi-square (χ^2) test to determine the attitude level of the students. The related data are provided in Table 10.

Table 10.

Chi-square (χ^2) Test Results for 4th Grade Primary School Students' Belief Levels in the Social Studies courses

	n	sd	χ^2	p
Social Studies Course Belief Scale	1326	29	1089.520	.000

When Table 10 is examined, it is seen that the belief levels of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course are, based on the Social Studies Course Belief Scale, significantly high ($\chi^2=1089.520$; $p<.05$).

The Mann–Whitney U test results for the social studies course belief scale scores of male and female fourth grade primary school students are given in Table 11.

Table 11.

Mann–Whitney U Test Results Show a Significant Difference Between the 4th Grade Primary School Students' Gender and Beliefs About the Social Studies Course

Gender	n	Mean Rank	Sum of the Ranks	U	p
Female	694	694.85	482222.50	197550.500	.002
Male	632	629.08	397578.50		

It was found that there was a significant difference between the beliefs of female and male students toward the social studies course ($U=197550.500$, $p<.05$). Considering the mean ranks, the female students' beliefs toward the social studies course are higher than those of the male students.

Table 12.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for 4th Grade Primary School Students with Respect to the Amount of Time Spent Reading Books Per Day

	Time spent reading per day	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	0 min	75	521.81	25.980	4	.000	3 > 1
2	1-30 minutes	572	630.09				4 > 1
3	31-60 minutes	383	687.92				5 > 1
4	61–90 minutes	183	726.97				4 > 2
5	More than 90 min	113	741.10				5 > 2
	Total	1326					

Table 12 shows that there was a significant difference between the beliefs of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course and the amount of time they spent reading books per day ($\chi^2=25.980$; $p<.05$). Regarding the beliefs about the social sciences course, a significant difference was found between those students who read books for 31–60 minutes, 61–90 minutes, and more than 90 min per day and those students who read books for 0 min per day, and between those students who read books for 61–90 minutes and more than 90 min per day and those students who read books for 1-30 minutes per day. The significant difference was in favor of students who read books for 31-60 minutes, 61–90 minutes, and more than 90 min per day.

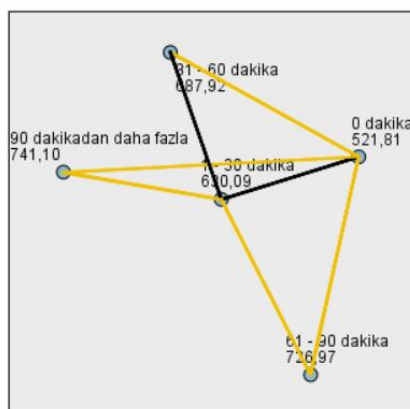


Figure 7. Relationship Between 4th Grade Primary School Students' amounts of Time Spent Reading Books Per Day and Their Beliefs About the Social Studies courses

The educational level of the students' parents was determined using the Social Studies courses Belief Scale and the demographic information form. The researcher tested data obtained by using the Kruskal – Wallis test. The relationship between students' beliefs about the social studies course and their mother's or father's educational level is presented in Table 13 and Table 14.

Table 13.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Mother's Educational Level

	Mother's Educational Level	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Illiterate	150	539.04	36.533	4	.000	3 > 1
2	Primary school	326	612.77				4 > 1
3	Secondary school	259	664.04				5 > 1
4	High school	332	712.14				4 > 2
5	University	259	736.54				5 > 2
	Total	1326					

Table 13 shows that there was a significant difference between the students' beliefs about the social studies course and their mother's educational level ($\chi^2=36.533$; $p<.05$). A significant difference was found between the beliefs of those students whose mother's educational level was secondary school, high school, or university, and the beliefs of those students whose mother's educational level was illiterate. Simultaneously, a significant difference was found between the beliefs of those students whose mother's educational level was university or high school, regarding social studies, and the beliefs of those students whose mother's educational level was primary school. In this case, the difference is in favor of those students whose mothers' educational level is secondary school, high school, or university.

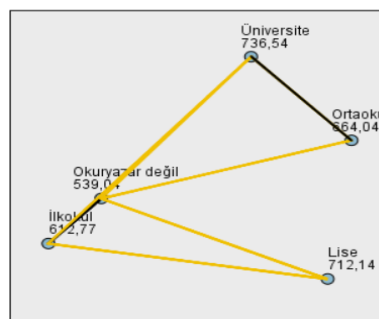


Figure 8. Relationship Between the Beliefs of 4th Grade Primary School Students About the Social Studies Course and Their Mother's Educational Level

Table 14.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Father's Educational Level

	Father's Educational Level	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Illiterate	67	555.22	25.849	4	.000	5 > 1
2	Primary school	241	584.36				4 > 2
3	Secondary school	276	646.34				5 > 2
4	High school	365	693.91				
5	University	377	716.46				
	Total	1326					

Table 14 shows that there was a significant difference between the students' beliefs about the social studies course and their father's educational level ($\chi^2=25.849$; $p<.05$). A significant difference was found between the beliefs of those students whose father's education level was high school or university, and the beliefs of those students whose father's educational level was illiterate or primary school. In this case, the difference is in favor of the fathers' educational levels being high school or university.

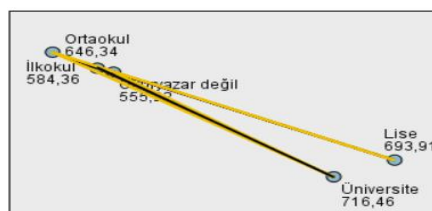


Figure 9. Relationship Between the Beliefs of 4th Grade Primary School Students About the Social Studies Course and Their Father's Educational Level

The Kruskal – Wallis test was applied to the profession of the students' parents as obtained through the Social Studies courses Belief Scale and the demographic information form. The relationship between students' beliefs about the social study course and their mother's or father's profession is presented in Table 15 and Table 16.

Table 15.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Mother's Profession

	Mother's Profession	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Tradesperson/craftsperson	62	740.91	7.155	4	.128	
2	Housewife	1004	651.97				
3	Public Officer	131	715.31				
4	Private Sector	75	631.07				
5	Self-employment	54	708.31				
	Total	1326					

According to Table 15, there was no significant difference between the beliefs of the 4th grade primary school students participating in the research toward the social studies course and their mother's profession ($\chi^2=7.155$; $p>.05$).

Table 16.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Father's Profession

	Father's Profession	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Unemployed	31	609.16	9.468	4	.050	
2	Tradesperson/craftsperson	391	654.90				
3	Public Officer	217	719.84				
4	Private Sector	377	677.45				
5	Self-employment	310	623.38				
	Total	1326					

According to Table 16, there was no significant difference between the beliefs of the 4th grade primary school students participating in the research toward the social studies course and their father's profession ($\chi^2=9.468$; $p=.05$).

The Kruskal– Wallis test was used to determine the relationship between the data collected from 7 geographical regions of Turkey and the students' attitudes toward the social studies course. The results obtained are presented in Table 17.

Table 17.

Kruskal– Wallis Test Results for Fourth- Grade Primary School Students with Respect to Their Geographic Region

	Geographic Region	n	Mean Rank	χ^2	sd	p	Significant Difference
1	Marmara Region	181	658.22	87.746	6	.000	1 > 7, 2 > 7
2	Aegean Region	129	770.79				3 > 7, 4 > 7
3	Central Anatolia Region	341	751.91				5 > 7
4	The Mediterranean Region	316	641.28				1 > 6
5	The Black Sea Region	85	754.41				3 > 6
6	Eastern Anatolia Region	111	569.58				5 > 6
7	Southeastern Anatolia Region	163	459.12				3 > 4
	Total	1326				2 > 4	

According to Table 17, there was a significant difference between the 4th grade primary school students' beliefs about the social studies course and the geographical region in which they lived in ($\chi^2=87.746$; $p<.05$). Regarding attitudes toward the social studies course, there was a significant difference between students living in the Marmara Aegean Central Anatolia Mediterranean, and Black Sea regions and those living in the Southeastern Anatolia region. At the same time, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the students living in the Marmara Central Anatolia, and Black Sea regions toward the social studies course and the attitudes of the students living in the Eastern Anatolia region, and between the beliefs of students living in the Aegean and Central Anatolia regions and the students living in the Mediterranean region toward the social studies course. This difference favored the students living in the Marmara , Aegean, Central Anatolia, and Black Sea regions.

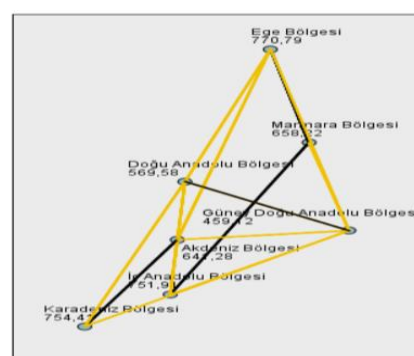


Figure 10. Relationship between the Beliefs of 4th Grade Primary School Students Toward the Social Studies Course and Their Geographic Region

The relationship between the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students was determined by performing the Spearman– Brown test with the data obtained from the social studies course attitude scale and social studies course belief scale.

Table 18.

Spearman Brown Test Results for the Relationship Between Attitudes and Beliefs of 4th Grade Primary School Students About the Social Studies Course

		Attitude	Belief
Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.443**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	1326	1326
Belief	Correlation Coefficient	.443**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	1326	1326

According to Table 18, there was a moderately positive and significant relationship between the attitudes and beliefs of the 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course ($r=.443$; $p<.01$). This means that as the attitude level of the fourth- grade primary school students increases, their belief levels also increase.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The social studies course plays a critical role in preparing students for social life. It is of great importance to provide students with basic knowledge and skills so that they can become good citizens. However, many factors need to be considered to ensure that this course can be delivered effectively and that the students can be raised as individuals who possess the intended characteristics. These factors also include students' attitudes and belief levels toward the social studies course. Students' attitudes and beliefs toward the social studies course may affect the content and teaching style of this course. A different teaching method may need to be considered for this course depending on whether the level of students' attitudes and beliefs about the course are high, medium, or low. Students' attitudes and belief levels toward social studies may also affect their learning process. Therefore, determining students' attitudes and belief levels toward social studies is essential in planning and conducting teaching activities. Understanding how students perceive and view the course can give teachers the opportunity to develop a better teaching strategy. This information can positively impact course content, preparatory work, teaching methods, material selection, and measurement-evaluation processes. As a result, students' attitudes and belief levels toward social studies are important factors that need to be considered to ensure effective delivery of the social studies course. For this purpose, the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course in terms of

some variables were examined, and the relationship between the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course was identified.

According to the results obtained from the Social Studies Course Attitude scales, the 4th grade primary school students' attitudes toward the social studies course were significantly high. A review of the literature shows that the results of this research are parallel to the results of previously published research in that the attitudes of 4th and 5th grade primary school students towards the social studies course are positively high (Tay and Akyürek Tay, 2006), students exhibit positive attitudes towards the social studies course (Ergin, 2006; Akın, 2014; Aktepe, Tahiroğlu, and Sargın, 2014; Özkal, Güngör and Çetingöz, 2004), and in secondary school, 6th and 7th grade students' attitudes toward the social studies course are at a medium level (Oğur, 2009; Şimşek and Demir, 2012), and overall they have a positive attitude toward the social studies course (Kayalı, 2003; Oğur, 2009; Şimşek and Demir, 2012).

Upon review of the relationship between the attitudes of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their gender, it was found that there was a significant difference between them and that the attitudes of female students toward the social studies course were higher than those of male students. While the results of the studies carried out by Altıntaş (2005), zkan, Güngör and Çetingöz (2004), and Tay and Akyürek Tay (2006) showing that there was a significant relationship between student attitudes towards the social studies course and their gender and that this relationship favored female students support the results of this research, other authors, including Akın (2014), Coşkun (2011), Demir (2010), Ergin (2006), Oğur (2009), Öztürk (1999), Sidekli (2010), Meral (2013), (Yılmaz and Demir, 2014), concluded that there were no significant differences between the genders of students regarding the student attitudes. In a study conducted on gifted or specially talented students, Uzun (2006) determined that male students had more positive attitudes than female students.

It was noted that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course and the amount of time they spent reading books per day. It was determined that the students who read books for 31–60 minutes, 61–90 minutes, and more than 90 min per day had higher attitudes compared with those students who read books for 1-30 minutes per day. No study could be found in the literature that examined students' attitudes toward the social studies course compared to how much time they spent reading books per day.

To determine the relationship between the educational levels of the students' families and their attitudes toward the social studies course, the mothers' and fathers' educational levels were evaluated on an individual basis. Upon review of the educational level of students' mothers, it was noted that there was a significant difference between the students' attitudes toward the social studies course and their mother's educational level. This difference was in favor of those students whose mother's educational level was primary

school, secondary school, high school, or university, and it was determined that as the mother's education level increased, the attitudes of the students also increased. A significant difference was also detected upon review of the relationship between the attitudes of fourth-grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their father's educational level. It was highly value that the attitudes of students whose fathers are high school or university graduates are higher than those of students whose fathers are primary or secondary school graduates.

While Demir (2010) found a significant relationship between the mother's educational level and the student's attitude toward the social studies course, the other study could not find a significant relationship between the father's educational level and attitude. Oğur (2009) stated that both mother and father's educational levels had a significant effect on students' attitudes toward the social studies course. Accordingly, the parents of the students who demonstrated the highest attitude on average toward the social studies course were university graduates. Similarly, according to Coşkun (2011), students whose mothers and fathers had higher education also had higher cognitive attitudes and social skills regarding the social studies course compared with those students whose mothers and fathers had lower education. Meral (2013), on the other hand, concluded that the increase in the educational level of the students' fathers had an impact on the students' opinions and that it positively affected the opinions of students, especially those students whose fathers were university graduates, about the social studies course. However, there was no relationship between the educational level of the mother and the student's attitudes. Although there are certain studies (Ergin, 2006; Yılmaz and Demir, 2014) that did not find, unlike the results of this research, a significant relationship between students' attitudes toward the social studies course and the educational level of their parents, those studies also concluded that a relative increase was observed in the students' attitudes as the education level of the students' parents increased.

To determine the relationship between the parents' professions and the students' attitudes toward the social studies course, the mothers' and fathers' professions were evaluated on an individual basis. Regarding attitudes toward the social studies course, a significant difference was found between students whose mothers were public officers and those students whose mothers were housewives. This difference favored the students whose mothers were public officers. When the relationship between the attitudes of the fourth-grade primary school students toward the social studies course and their father's profession was examined, a significant difference was detected, regarding attitudes toward the social studies course, between those students whose fathers worked as public officers and those students whose fathers were unemployed or self-employed. This difference favored the students whose fathers worked as public officers. Contrary to this research, Meral (2013) found that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of the students and the professions of their mothers and fathers. Similarly, Coşkun (2011) determined that the students' attitudes toward the social studies course did not differ depending on their

mother's profession, whereas the students' attitudes toward the social studies course differed depending on their father's profession. The conclusion that the attitudes of students whose fathers were public officers were higher than those of students whose fathers were in other professions is parallel to the results of this research in terms of the effect of father's profession on attitudes.

With the data collected across the 7 geographical regions of Turkey, it was examined whether the attitudes of the students changed depending on the geographical region in which they lived. A significant difference was found between geographic regions in terms of students' attitudes toward the social studies course. It was concluded that this difference was in favor of those students living in the Marmara, Aegean, Central Anatolia, Mediterranean, and Black Sea regions, and that the attitudes of students living in the Southeastern Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia regions were lower than those living in other regions. No research could be found in the literature that attempted to determine the relationship between geographic regions and students' attitudes toward the social studies course. However, Tay and Akyürek Tay (2006) found that, regarding the relationship between the place of residence of students and their attitudes, the attitudes of those students residing in city centers were higher than those residing in rural areas. When the results of the region or area of settlement where the students live are examined, it can be concluded that the students living in more developed regions/areas of settlement demonstrate a higher level of attitudes.

According to the results obtained from the Social Studies Lesson Belief Scale, the fourth- grade primary school students' belief levels toward the social studies course were significantly high. In the literature, no study could be found that measured students' belief levels about the social studies courses with respect to different variables.

It was found that there was a significant difference between the beliefs of fourth- grade female students and male students toward the social studies course. It was noted that the female students' beliefs toward the social studies courses were higher than those of the male students. Similar results were also noted with respect to the students' attitude levels toward the social studies course.

It was concluded that there was a significant difference between the 4th grade primary school students' beliefs about the social studies course and the amount of time they spent reading books per day, and that this difference favored the students who read books for 31-60 minutes, 61-90 minutes, and more than 90 min per day. Similar results were obtained in terms of the attitude levels of the students and the amount of time they spent reading books per day. Based on these results, it can be said that as the amount of time spent by students reading books per day increases, the students' attitudes and beliefs toward the social studies course also increase.

Upon review of the relationship between the education level of families and students' beliefs about the social studies course, it was concluded that there was a significant

difference between both the mother's educational level and the father's educational level and the students' beliefs about the social studies course, based on the data obtained from the students participating in the research. It was determined that this significant difference was in favor of those students whose mothers were secondary school, high school, and university graduates, and that the belief levels of these students were higher than those of the others.

When the relationship between parents' professions and students' beliefs about the social studies course was examined with respect to mother's and father's professions individually, no significant difference was found.

It has been determined that there is a significant difference between the geographical region in which the fourth- grade primary school students lived and their beliefs about the social studies course. This difference was in favor of those students living in the Marmara, Aegean, Central Anatolia, and Black Sea regions, and the attitudes of the students living in these regions were higher than those in other regions.

In this study, when the data obtained from the Social Studies Lesson Attitude Scale and the Social Studies Lesson Belief Scale applied to 4th grade primary school students were compared, a moderately positive and significant relationship was found between the attitudes and beliefs of 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course. Therefore, it can be thought that as the level of attitude of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course increases, their belief levels also increase. This situation indicates a notable relationship between the attitudes and beliefs of fourth- grade primary school students toward the social studies course. In particular, this moderately positive relationship shows that students perceive the course, how much they value it, and how much they believe in it influence each other. As students evaluate the course more positively, this indicates that their beliefs about the course also increase. This situation can positively affect students' motivation and achievements. Therefore, teachers and educators, while working on improving students' attitudes toward the social studies course, can also contribute to students' success by focusing on their positive beliefs about this course. Although there is no study to determine the relationship between attitudes and beliefs of primary school students toward the social studies course when examining the literature, studies that reveal a positive and significant relationship between students' attitudes and beliefs/epistemological beliefs/self-efficacy beliefs toward different courses (mathematics, English, science lesson, etc.) (Ocak & Erbasan, 2017; Sevimbay, 2016; Yilmaz, 2011) also support this result.

RECOMONDATIONS

Based on the conclusion that male students' attitudes and belief levels toward the social studies course are lower than those of female students, students' attitudes and belief levels about the course can be determined at the beginning of each year. Afterwards,

activities can be scheduled that will especially appeal to students who demonstrate low attitudes and beliefs and can increase their interest in the course.

Since those students who spend more time reading books per day have higher attitudes and beliefs about the social studies course, more time can be allocated to reading activities in the social studies courses. Books with social content can be read during classes.

The parents of students with a lower educational level can be given awareness training and engaged in the education process, depending on their professional status. This may help improve the attitudes and beliefs of the students' parents, which will in turn be reflected on the students' levels.

Based on the result that the students living in the South-Eastern Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia regions have lower attitudes and beliefs compared with the students in other regions, the curriculum can be revised according to the characteristics of the regions, students' environmental conditions, and interests. In particular, learning outcomes can be modified to better suit the characteristics of the regions.

The moderately significant and positive relationship found between the attitudes and beliefs of 4th grade primary school students toward the social studies course indicates that as students develop a positive attitude toward the course, their beliefs about the course also increase. This situation can positively impact students' motivation and achievements. Therefore, teachers and educators, while conducting efforts to enhance students' attitudes toward the social studies course, can also contribute to students' success by focusing on their positive beliefs about this course.

The Social Studies course content should be associated with current events to help students understand the current events occurring in society. This can increase students' interest in social studies and make them more informed citizens.

Organizing field trips for the social studies course can enable students to experience and see the subjects related to the course in a more tangible manner. Trips can be made to historical and cultural places or may also involve visits to local governments.

Relating lessons to daily life can help students understand the course content more easily. Students are presented with examples of how they can apply the new information in real life, and they are encouraged to make connections.

This study examined the relationship between attitudes and beliefs. In subsequent studies, the reasons and effects of this result can be investigated in more detail. It is important to understand how students' beliefs and attitudes are shaped to contemplate the reasons behind this result. In addition, it may be recommended to explore how this relationship contributes to students' improved performance or increased interest in their social study courses. Such research can assist educators in understanding students' attitudes and beliefs and teaching their classes more effectively. Furthermore, delving deeper into such relationships can be valuable in the development of educational policies and the design

of educational programs to make the educational process more effective and encourage students to approach their courses more positively. Metin girmek için burayı tıklayın.

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Data Availability Declaration

Data Availability Upon Formal Request:

While the primary datasets utilized in this study are not publicly accessible due to certain constraints, they are available to researchers upon a formal request. The authors have emphasized maintaining the integrity of the data and its analytical rigor. To access the datasets or seek further clarifications, kindly reach out to the corresponding author. Our aim is to foster collaborative academic efforts while upholding the highest standards of research integrity.

Author Contributions

Betül Akyürek Tay and Nazire Çiçek contributed equally to this work. They collaboratively handled the conceptualization, methodology design, data acquisition, and analysis. Each author played a significant role in drafting and revising the manuscript, ensuring its intellectual depth and coherence. All authors have thoroughly reviewed, provided critical feedback, and approved the final version of the manuscript. They jointly take responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the research.

Author(s)' statements on ethics and conflict of interest

Ethics statement: We hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. We take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

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