

Social Studies Lessons at Pazarören Village Institute in Turkey: An Oral History Study

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the historical perspective of social studies lessons taught at Pazarören Village Institute. The research is based on oral history interviews with a graduated teacher from the institute. The study seeks to understand the content of the social studies lessons, teaching methods used, extracurricular activities, and the impact of the lessons on students. During the interview, information was gathered about how the lessons were conducted, what materials were used, how teaching techniques were shaped, and how the social studies course contributed to the development of the village community. Additionally, the teacher's thoughts on the educational philosophy of the village institutes and the role of social studies in modern education are also explored. This study aims to understand better the educational philosophy and practices of social studies lessons at Pazarören Village Institute. Based on the findings of this study, contemporary

education systems, especially in rural areas, can be inspired by the village institute model. In addition, conducting more oral history research with other teachers or graduates of Pazarören Village Institute can better understand the education system's impact and ideas for improving contemporary education methods.

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: Village Institutes; Social Studies Education; Oral History Research; Applied Education; Turkey; XX Century.

Introduction

Village Institutes and schools had an essential place in the history of Turkish education. These schools were multidimensional institutions that aimed to raise competent individuals with the education they offered to pre-service teachers in different departments in their time. In line with this purpose, they adopted the motto of raising «teacher leaders» in society. Village institutes, among the most prominent institutions, reflecting the basic philosophy of the early Turkish Republic period, aim to educate teachers to guide people living in rural areas in connection with this basic philosophy that came to the fore in its establishment¹. As teachers trained in village institutes as guiding individuals started to work in rural areas, significant progress was made in ensuring social unity and solidarity and adopting democratic values for the people in the society². In other words, teachers trained in village institutes played an essential role in raising individuals who would protect the fundamental values of the Republic.

Pazarören Village Institute was also founded with this purpose in 1940 in the Pazarören district of Kayseri. Pazarören Village Institute is one of the important village institutes in Turkey's educational history. Established in the 1940s, the village institutes aimed to raise the academic level in rural areas and introduce villagers to modern education. Pazarören and other village institutes made significant contributions to the development of the rural regions and played an essential role in the modernization of education. Today, the village institutes are recognized as a key step in Turkey's educational development, offering a model for educational reform. In the 1950s, the village institutes began to be closed due to political reasons and the changing educational approach of the government. Pazarören Village Institute was closed in 1954.

¹ A. Turhal, *An Alternative Model in Turkish Education History: Village Institutes*, «Manisa Celal Bayar University Faculty of Education Journal», vol. 4, n. 2, 2016, pp. 18-21; E. Kanbolat, *Primary Education in Turkey from the Alphabet Revolution to Village Institutes (1928-1940)*. PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2015, Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 416083, pp. 1-10.

² A.Z. Tunç, *Art Education in Village Institutes and the Approaches of the Period's Administrators to Art*, «Dokuz Eylül University Buca Faculty of Education Journal», vol. 26, 2009, pp. 30-34.

In 1942, President İsmet İnönü visited Pazarören Village Institute.



Pic. 1. President İsmet İnönü's visit to the school (from the school archives).

This visit was made to demonstrate his commitment to the education system and to observe the educational philosophy of the village institutes firsthand. During the visit, İnönü observed the institutes' core principles and educational activities, conversed with teachers and students, and gathered information about the school's operations. He also emphasized the role of village institutes in Turkey's development and reiterated his support for educational reform movements.

At Pazarören Village Institute, students received practical education and theoretical knowledge. Most of their education occurred in villages where they could engage with real-life rural experiences. The institute also provided training in agriculture, livestock, and other fields. In addition, students participated in cultural activities such as theater and music to support their social and cultural development.

This school, established in Pazarören in Kayseri province, includes the post office, sickrooms, administrative building, cooperative building, classrooms, and dormitories.



Pic. 2. Pazarören Village Institute, <<https://tarihikeyseri.blogspot.com/2013/08/kayseri-pazaroren-koy-enstitusu.html>>³.

Considering the conditions of Turkey at that time, it was a school with relatively abundant resources. Physical facilities were provided to ensure the students' development in multiple dimensions. The school has a library, gymnasium, farm, cinema hall, and electricity generation facility. Additionally, alongside core subjects such as mathematics, science, social studies, and language, there were arts, agriculture, and sewing teachers at the school. The school also had a full-time doctor. Students learned basic health knowledge from the doctor in the infirmary.

³ In this photo, you can see the following buildings: 1 Post office, 2 Sickrooms, 3 Administrative building, 4 Cooperative building and 5 Classrooms and Dormitories.



Pic. 3. Teachers of Pazarören Village Institute, <<https://tarihikeyseri.blogspot.com/2013/08/pzaroren-koy-enstitusu-ogretmenleri.html?q=pazar%C3%B6ren>>⁴.

According to the Village Institutes Education Program, which took place in 1943, a total of five years (260 weeks) of theoretical and practical education was planned. Of this period, 114 weeks were dedicated to cultural subjects, 58 weeks to agricultural courses and practices, 58 weeks to technical classes and practices, and 30 weeks to holidays. While farming and technical courses were taught to help farmers engage in modern agricultural activities, the program also aimed to organize farmers in production sectors and instill a contemporary development approach through agricultural business economics and cooperatives⁵.

Teachers trained in village institutes are not only people who are limited to the school and instructional field but also educational heroes equipped with different life skills who can set an example to society with their contemporary personality in the places where they work⁶. Therefore, as a reflection of the

⁴ In Photo 3, they are 1 Mustafa Dayıoğlu (director), 2 Seyfi Söylemez (school doctor), 3 Kadir Göle (art teacher) and 4 Muazzez Hanım (sewing teacher).

⁵ S. Hovardaoğlu Çalışır, *A Rural History Research on the Socio-Spatial Impacts of Pazarören Village Institute (1938-1954)*, «Tarih Okulu Dergisi», vol. XIX, 2014, p. 586.

⁶ Y. Akyüz, *Turkish Educational History*, Ankara, Pegem A Publishing, 2011, pp. 392-396; E. Mildivanlı Akdoğan, *Educational Philosophy in Village Institutes and the Teaching of History and Citizenship Knowledge*, PhD diss., Atatürk University, 2016. Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 429630, pp. 3-20.

education they received, teachers trained in village institutes are individuals who know how to cultivate the soil, animal husbandry, and carpentry⁷. Starting their professions with a command of different life skills provided teachers who graduated from village institutes with the ease of adaptation to where they began to work and paved the way for them to be an example to society⁸.



Pic. 4. Students working in the fields (from the school archives).

At Pazarören Village Institute, social studies lessons were designed to contribute to the education of rural communities by focusing on both theoretical and practical aspects of social development. In these classes, students learned about rural life and social structures while developing a sense of social responsibility. In this context, social studies held a significant place in the curriculum of the village institutes because raising individuals equipped with multiple life

⁷ S. Çetin, A. Kahya, *Village Institutes as a Rural Modernization Project: A New Attempt at Meaning-Making Through the Aksu and Gönen Examples*, «METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture», vol. 34, n. 1, 2021, pp. 133-162; S. Kartal, *A Different Educational Institution in Community Development: Village Institutes*, «Mersin University Journal of the Faculty of Education», vol. 4, n. 1, 2008, pp. 23-36.

⁸ C. Mercanoğlu, G. Şimşek, *The Village Institutes Experience as a Planning Example*, «Planning Journal», vol. 28, n. 3, 2018, pp. 261-281.

skills who have adapted to the conditions of the age is among the main goals of social studies education⁹.



Pic. 5. Students learning woodworking (from the school archives).

Social studies is a course that covers multiple fields such as history, geography, sociology, psychology, and economics and aims to ensure the complete adaptation of the individual to society and acts by building a bridge between the past and the present to achieve this goal¹⁰. Although the roots of social studies in Turkish educational history date back to the Tanzimat period, the idea of teaching social studies as a separate discipline and course was first

⁹ L. Jay, *The Disciplinary and Critical Divide in Social Studies Teacher Education Research: A Review of the Literature from 2009–2019*, «Theory & Research in Social Education», vol. 50, n. 3, 2022, pp. 399-374; E. Çiydem, S. Kaymakçı, *An Evaluation on the Orientation of Social Studies Course in Turkey*, «İnsan ve İnsan», vol. 27, 2021, pp. 179-207.

¹⁰ D. Krutka, S. Metzger, Z. Seitz, *Technology Inevitably Involves Trade-Offs: The Framing of Technology in Social Studies Standards*, «Theory & Research in Social Education», vol. 50, n. 2, 2022, pp. 226-254; L.P. Jay, *What do social studies methods instructors know and do? Teacher educators' PCK for facilitating historical discussions*, «Theory & Research in Social Education», 2023, vol. 51, pp. 72-99.

discussed in the V. Education Council held in 1953¹¹. In this council, it was criticized that different subjects currently taught under the *knowledge of life* course in primary education were spread to other classes, such as history, geography, and citizenship in secondary school. It was suggested that these areas should be combined under the social studies course in secondary school. At this point, the social studies course was included for the first time in the 1953 Teachers' Schools and Village Institutes Program (Turkish Ministry of National Education [MEB], 1953). The social studies lessons at Pazarören Village Institute aimed to teach academic knowledge and develop students' sense of social responsibility and leadership skills. Education was seen as preparation for raising villagers' educational levels and contributing to rural communities' development. Students applied what they learned in their villages, acquiring the skills to confront social problems and generate solutions.

The primary aim of the village institutes was not only to teach students theoretical knowledge but also to prepare environments where students could apply what they learned at school and to realize a teaching based on real-life skills. In this respect, the type of education that stands out in village institutes is applied education¹². Applied education allows students to transfer what they learn in the school environment directly to daily life and evaluate themselves by drawing original conclusions from these transfers¹³. The importance of applied education comes to the fore in acquiring specialized skills to be gained in any profession. Specialization is a long process that includes theoretical, practical, and metacognitive elements. The structure of applied education, which combines theoretical values with practical applications, facilitates individuals in achieving expertise¹⁴.

During the 5-year education process in village institutes, in addition to culture courses, agricultural courses, and practical training, teaching method courses, technical professions, and practices were equally offered to individuals¹⁵. In the courses where practical methods were emphasized, students were given feedback during and at the end of the process. It was important for students to demonstrate thoroughly the skills required for the relevant courses¹⁶.

¹¹ Çıydem, Kaymakçı, *An Evaluation on the Orientation of Social Studies Course in Turkey*, cit., p. 180.

¹² Turhal, *An Alternative Model in Turkish Education History: Village Institutes*, cit., pp. 18-19.

¹³ M. Schwichow, C. Zimmerman, S. Croker, H. Härtig. *What Students Learn from Hands-On Activities*, «Journal of Research in Science Teaching», vol. 53, n. 7, 2016, pp. 980-982.

¹⁴ N. Katajavuori, S. Lindblom-Ylänne, J. Hirvonen. *The Significance of Practical Training in Linking Theoretical Studies with Practice*, «Higher Education», vol. 51, n. 3, 2006, pp. 439-443.

¹⁵ P. Bilir, *The New Physical Education Curriculum and Evaluation of Physical Education Lessons in Village Institutes in Terms of Constructivist Teaching Approach*, «SPORMETRE Journal of Physical Education and Sports Sciences», vol. 6, n. 3, 2008, pp. 145-150.

¹⁶ A. Çoban, *An Examination of the Village Institutes as a Teacher Training Policy Exam-*

Thanks to the education provided in the village institutes, individuals started to specialize in various occupations and careers, especially teaching, at a very early age.

In addition to being a prominent method in the Village Institutes, applied education is a teaching method that can significantly contribute to the social studies course in achieving educational goals. The primary reason for this is that social studies is a discipline that emphasizes reflective thinking skills¹⁷. The critical factor in reflective thinking is adapting the knowledge learned at school to daily life. The structure of social studies that is not disconnected from daily life will ensure that reflective thinking skills are emphasized¹⁸.

The research aims to evaluate the approach to social studies as a course during the period of village institutes and to reveal the adventure of social studies according to the conditions of the period from the teacher who graduated from the village institutes with the oral history method. This study, which examines the historical relationship between the Village Institute and social studies, addresses several key questions. These include the courses provided to teacher candidates, whether social studies was part of the curriculum and its related fields, the teaching methods and techniques used in social studies classes at the village institutes, and which teaching tools were more commonly used in the lessons. Additionally, out-of-classroom teaching methods, such as field trips and observations, are also examined. The study aims to understand the role of social studies in the Village Institute period, the teaching methods employed, and the impact of this period on teachers' professional lives.

When we examined the literature on the subject, we discovered that the studies conducted with village institutes and social studies were curriculum comparative studies¹⁹. In the oral history research method studies, we realized that the researchers discussed the village institutes in a general framework regarding education and training²⁰. In this study, we examined the period of village institutes in the social studies course using oral history research. This examination will bring an essential contribution to social studies education.

ple, «Kastamonu Education Journal», vol. 19, n. 2, 2011, pp. 449-458.

¹⁷ D. Bekiroğlu, N.Ü. Güllühan, *Trends of Thinking Skills in Social Studies and Life Studies Courses: A Meta-Synthesis Study*, «Thinking Skills and Creativity», vol. 45, n. 1, 2022, pp. 85-103.

¹⁸ S. Mathews, C. McGill, *Honestly, I Had a Very Strong Reaction to This Reading: Social Studies Pre-Service Teachers' Application of Literacy Frameworks While Engaging with a Graphic Textbook*, «Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy», vol. 65, n. 5, 2022, pp. 431-439.

¹⁹ See for example: C. Mısırlıoğlu, *Köy Enstitüleri Hakkında Değerlendirmeler (1940-1950)*, MS thesis. Necmettin Erbakan University (Turkey), 2018; Çiydem, Kaymakçı, *An Evaluation on the Orientation of Social Studies Course in Turkey*, cit.

²⁰ S. Uygun, *A Oral History Study on the Teaching Profession in Turkey*, PhD diss., Ankara University, 2003, Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 127835; M. Göksu Metin, *Out-of-Classroom Learning Environments: The Example of Village Institutes*, «Turkish History Education Journal», vol. 9, n. 1, 2020, pp. 1-16.

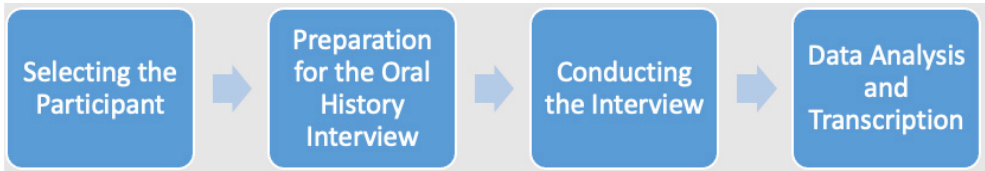
1. Method

1.1. Research Model

In this study, we conducted qualitative research using the oral history research method to examine how the social studies course was conducted during the period of village institutes. Oral history research is a method that aims to explore and evaluate a subject in detail through extensive interviews within a specific system²¹. The questions used in oral history research should be selected to ensure meaningful and effective use away from directing the participant²². Oral history research is a method that offers the researcher essential opportunities for a better understanding of history. The reason for this is that with the oral history method, the participant's experiences on any subject in the past are recorded, deciphered, and archived with their permission²³. In this sense, oral history is a contribution made by making sense of the past to understand the present better and guide the future in a better way²⁴.

1.2. Research Process

Oral history gathers data based on individuals' experiences to bring past traces to the present. Conducting an oral history study with a retired teacher who studied at Pazarören Village Institute would provide valuable insights into the educational understanding, social structure, and contributions of the village institutes to the education system. The following steps were followed for this study:



Pic. 6. Stages of oral history research.

²¹ Uygun, *A Oral History Study on the Teaching Profession in Turkey*, cit.

²² See for example: T. Tonbul, *A Oral History Study on the Problems of Teachers Working in the Third Service Region (1995-2005)*, Master's thesis, Fırat University, 2010. Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 285893; A. Yıldız, *An Oral History Study with Cyprus Veterans of the 50th Infantry Regiment in the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation*, Master's thesis, İstanbul Bilgi University, 2022. Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 760236.

²³ See: H. Demirci, *The Kazakh Family and Child Rearing in the Sociocultural Change Process (Oral History Study)*, PhD diss., Erciyes University, 2013. Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 340241; A.C. Altınok, *The Teaching Profession from the Perspective of Teachers Who Worked in the 1970s: An Oral History Study*, PhD diss., Erciyes University, 2013. Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 567042.

²⁴ See: S. Counce, *Oral History and the Local Historian*, İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2008.

Using the oral history research method outlined in the study, we conducted two independent interviews with a retired teacher (90 years old) who graduated from Pazarören Village Institute in Pınarbaşı district of Kayseri province. He is not alive now. Both interviews were conducted at the participant's home to ensure a more intimate environment and to obtain more reliable information, given the participant's advanced age. The interview focused on the teacher's narratives, and guiding questions were asked when necessary. The participants were allowed to share their memories, and the interview was recorded. Efforts were made to ensure that the participant felt comfortable throughout the interview. Additionally, clarifications were provided during the process to prevent any misunderstandings. The interviews were recorded with the participant's permission and digitized for analysis (Picture 6).

Some of the demographic characteristics expressed by the participant with his consent are as follows: «My name is Veli Yalçın. I am 90 years old. I was born in Kılıçkaya village in the Develi district of Kayseri. My father was a farmer. My mother was a housewife. At that time, my family was quite crowded compared to today. We were nine siblings from the same mother and father. I am married, and I have three children».

1.3. Data Collection Tool and Data Analysis

This study used a semi-structured interview with 16 questions in 4 parts to reveal the relationship between the Village Institutes and the social studies course. Open-ended questions were prepared for use in the interview. The questions included the teacher's memories and observations based on his experiences. We also consulted three education experts for the interview questions. We evaluated the data we obtained through the interviews we conducted by subjecting them to content analysis. As a result of this evaluation, we revealed the themes related to the Village Institutes period and the social studies course, and we examined these themes under four main headings. These headings are as follows: Admission of Students to Village Institutes, Education and Training in the Period of Village Institutes, Social Studies Teaching during the Village Institutes Period, Perspectives of Teachers Graduated from Village Institutes on Education-Teaching and Social Studies Course in their Professional Lives.

2. Findings

2.1. Admission of Students to Village Institutes

The participant made the following statements about himself:

As a child, I did not have a dream job or a professional goal. The fact that the generation before us did not have anyone who set goals for themselves was a situation that affected us at this point. My education life was tough during my childhood due to economic conditions. We couldn't even find a piece of paper to use while studying. In the past, our elders used to have documents that they rolled up to smoke tobacco. Most of the time, we used those tobacco papers to study.

Based on the participant's responses, they could not set a professional goal due to challenging living conditions and the absence of a role model. Additionally, the living conditions in rural areas during the participant's childhood were arduous, as evidenced by the lack of even basic study materials.

In response to the question, «What were your reasons for choosing the teaching profession?» the participant gave the following answers:

One day, news spread in our village. That students would be admitted to the village institutes through an exam. I wanted to take the exam, but my father was against the idea at first because I was helping him in farming. Nevertheless, four people from our village and I went to Develi to take the exam. The exam went well for all five of us. Seventy-five people from Develi took the exam, and five from our village succeeded. We were first asked questions about our father's and mother's origins in the exam. Then, we were asked if we wanted to study. We said that we wanted to study a lot and that most of the people in our village were farmers. We said that we wanted different professions than them and that at least if we studied, the next generation could take us as an example and turn to study.

The participant overcame familial obstacles to attend the interview exam, the first step towards their professional orientation. The reason for the emergence of this obstacle is economic, as it arises from the need for a labor force in farming. During the interview exam, participants were asked general questions and were allowed to discuss their reasons for wanting to pursue a career in teaching. This may have been done to evaluate their self-expression skills and interest in teaching.

Pazarören Village Institute was established by law in 1940 and accepted students from Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat, Kırşehir and Niğde. The institute began training teachers in the Pazarören Regional Boarding School, built in the 1930s and referred to as the Main Building by those who studied there. As a result of the increasing number of students and the institute's desire to train teachers comprehensively, it was soon expanded to cover a vast area within the town of Pazarören²⁵.

²⁵ Hovardaoğlu Çalışır, *A Rural History Research on the Socio-Spatial Impacts of Pazarören Village Institute (1938-1954)*, cit., p. 586; T. Kurşuncu, *The Village Institutes Project and an Example as Pazarören Village Institute*, Master's thesis, Aksaray University, 2018. Yök Thesis Center, Thesis n. 541746.

In addition to this structural information, the participant also shared the following views:

The village teacher's school I attended was located in the town of Pazarören in Pınarbaşı district. Situated in the city's center, the school had a vast area with a central building in the middle. Afterward, new buildings were added around this main building according to need. The health center, police station building, and dormitories for new students were among the buildings lined up around the main building. We also had a farm located a little further away from the town. On this farm, we would learn about agriculture and animal husbandry. However, the situation of my friends and I from the same village differed slightly from that of the other students. Because of our life in the town, we sometimes switched from being learners to being teachers. We often supported the staff working on the farm.

The participant provided objective information on the physical characteristics and functioning of Pazarören Village Institute, which was consistent with the literature. In addition, another finding was that the participant used the advantage of having grown up in the village in his education at the institute's farm.

2.2. Courses Taught in Village Institutes and Teaching Methods Used in the Courses

The type of people that the village institutes wanted to raise were not individuals who focused on only one field or one skill, but leaders equipped with different skills and knowledge. Therefore, the education given in village institutes covers multiple fields and provides individuals with the requirements of various professional skills in terms of practice. In this sense, the participant stated the following about the subject:

We took many theoretical and practical courses, including Turkish, History, Geography, Social Studies and Science. The training we received was not only related to the teaching profession. We were trained in different occupations, from agricultural practices to carpentry. Our teaching method differed from lesson to lesson. In theoretical courses, if we were teaching in the classroom, the oral lecture method came to the fore, while in vocational courses such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and carpentry, practical training was at the forefront. Sometimes, theoretical and vocational courses were combined. For example, while we were learning area calculations in math class, we would suddenly find ourselves planting saplings in the school garden.

It is evident from the participant's views that courses in various fields were taught during the village institute period and that social studies and its related fields, such as history and geography, were among these courses. Theoretical courses primarily employed the oral lecture method, while vocational training-oriented courses focused on practical training. At times, the combination

of theoretical courses and practical courses is a feature that can increase the permanence of learning by providing concretization.

2.3. Situation of Village Institutes Regarding Extracurricular Methods and Techniques

The education philosophy prevalent in village institutes shares similarities with the constructivist approach to education, which has influenced many contemporary teaching methods and techniques applied in the present day. In this regard, it was inevitable that the village institutes also employed methods and techniques that facilitated and concretized learning, such as travel and observation. Participant opinions on the matter are as follows:

Although we used observation and travel, the travel method had special importance in our village institutes. Sometimes, we would visit village schools in nearby villages and stay there for two or three months. During these trips, we would see how a village teacher lived in the towns and how they met their food and drink needs, and we would also learn how to light a stove. In the school environment, we received the answers to the question of how to explain lessons to a primary school student directly from both the teachers in the school and the educators working in the village institutes who led us.

The participant's views indicate that the travel-observation method was prominent in teaching during the village institute period. This was due to the principle of on-site teaching, where pre-service teachers were taken to village schools to observe village life and teaching practices.

2.4. The Courses Relevant to Social Studies in Village Institutes

In terms of general characteristics, social studies is a multifaceted discipline that includes a variety of knowledge. The versatility of social studies stems from the fact that it covers different disciplines and subjects. According to the Ministry of National Education [MNE], social studies learning areas include social sciences such as history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, political science, law, human rights, citizenship, and democracy. In this context, while examining the courses that the social studies course was related to during the period of the village institutes, we used the MNE's definition of social studies learning areas as a basis. Accordingly, the participant in the study stated the following about the courses that social studies was related to during the period of the village institutes: «The courses such as history, geography, sociology that we had in the village institutes were related to social studies». This opinion proves that some of the courses in the

curriculum of the village institutes were related to the learning areas of the social studies course.

2.5. The Teaching of Social Studies Courses in Village Institutes

The conduct of social studies in village institutes is similar to the conduct of other theoretical courses. The participant stated the following in this regard:

Oral lecturing and question-answer methods were used predominantly in this process. The teacher would present the lesson in general terms based on the oral expression method and ask whether we understood the subject. For example, in Geography, the teacher would first draw a map on the board and then ask us to draw the same map. The maps usually varied from near to far. We would draw a map of the town we were in or of distant countries worldwide.

According to the participant's explanations, the oral teaching technique and the question-answer technique are at the forefront of social studies classes. It is also understood that the principle of near-far is taken as a principle in geography teaching.

2.6. The use of out-of-class Teaching Methods in Social Studies Courses in Village Institutes

In educational terms, out-of-class teaching techniques facilitate teaching because they provide concretization in almost every field, regardless of the field and time they are used. Due to this concrete effect, it is a standard teaching method in village institutes. At this point, in some field courses where social studies are emphasized in the village institutes, the travel observation method, one of the extracurricular teaching methods, is used. The participant's opinion in connection with the subject is as follows:

In the sociology course, within the scope of the social studies course, we would attend weddings and national holiday celebrations to follow the culture of the region where the village institute was located more closely. We could follow the local and folk dances played in these places. While doing this, we were not a classical audience. We were asked to focus on festivals and weddings with the eyes of a social scientist. Sometimes, we were even involved in the folk dances. I learned about the region's local "halay" (Turkish Folk Dance) from the experiences I gained from my impressions here. Later, when I returned to the village where I was born, I applied what I had learned to the festivals there. I was the student who played the local halay of the Pazarören region, the best at the village institute. People in my village would admire the halays my friends and I played together.

The participant's answers revealed that he made purposeful observations by attending local weddings and festivals. Participating in weddings and festivals is not only an unforgettable memory in the eyes of the participant but also a value that contributes to learning and adapting to the region's culture. Since the teaching and transmission of culture is an essential aspect of sociology and social studies, it is possible to trace the teaching of sociology and, thus, social studies directly in the village institutes.

2.7. Situation of Teachers Graduated from Village Institute Mentioning Social Studies to Their Students

Many of the subjects and skills taught to prospective teachers during the Village Institute period are the subjects and skills that they will use effectively in their professional lives. This means they will use the social studies subjects they encounter in their student and professional lives. The participant's opinions on this subject are as follows:

I would talk to my students about various areas of social studies, such as history, geography, citizenship, etc. The life science course was positioned where the social studies course was at the forefront. The lessons we taught at a more general level in the lower grades were covered more comprehensively in the 4th and 5th grades. History, geography, and citizenship were prominent topics in this course.

Looking at the teachers' opinions, we can see that social studies are among the courses that the participants have taught and mentioned in their professional life, and that social studies, which are included in the life science course in the first three years of primary education, are designed as a separate course in the following years.

2.8. Teachers Graduated from Village Institutes Seeing Social Studies as Important in Instructional Meaning

Since it was a course I saw as related to life, I attached great importance to teaching the social studies course and its associated fields to my students correctly. Especially in history, I ensured that students learned the War of Independence and Kemalism subjects well. For me, as a teacher, a Turkish child learning about their founding father (Atatürk) was a value that came before everything else.

According to the participant's response, it is observed that he considers the social studies course necessary in terms of teaching. The participant's state-

ment that «a Turkish child learning about his/her founding father (Atatürk) was a value that came before everything else» proves that history topics about Atatürk are essential to the participant.

2.9. Methods Used by Teachers Graduated from Village Institutes in Social Studies Course

The oral expression method was at the forefront among the teaching methods I emphasized in the classroom. I often preferred the question-answer method to differentiate the teaching process. Sometimes, I expected the groups to draw a picture of the subject I was explaining; sometimes, I expected them to prepare a written text and present the subject orally through this text. I often preferred the debate method in group work. The fact that the students were active during the lessons was important for learning.

From the answers given by the participant, it is seen that the method she mainly uses in the social studies course is the oral expression method. The participant teacher uses the question-and-answer method to enrich the lecture and to activate the students in the teaching process through group work and debate methods.

2.10. Usage of Extracurricular Teaching Techniques in Social Studies Courses by Teachers Graduated from Village Institutes

I have often used techniques such as field trips and observations throughout my teaching life, regardless of the course. Social Studies course and its related fields were among the courses in which I used field trips and observations. Since I mainly worked in village schools during my professional life, we organized trips to lakes, rivers, and hills near the village to learn about the surface features around us. Concretizing the subjects we covered in the lesson in this way made it easier for children to learn.

It is observed that the participant uses extracurricular teaching methods such as travel and observation in his teaching. It is observed that the teacher who organizes trips to the rivers, lakes, and hills in the villages where he works with his students states that these trips facilitate learning by concretizing learning.

Conclusion

When considering the educational aspect of village institutes, the approach to education emphasized in these institutions is similar to the constructivist approach, which aims to make the student an active participant. These institutes aim to equip students with various skills in different fields, making student engagement necessary. In addition to the constructivist understanding of education, the prominent educational approach in village institutes is directly related to practical education. Teaching practice courses, which last for two to three months in village institutes, are essential for introducing students to the living conditions a village teacher must adapt to and ensuring adaptation to the teaching profession.

At Pazarören Village Institute, social studies was not just an academic subject but also aimed at helping students understand their social environment, societal structures, and surrounding issues. The course content allowed students to gain insights into rural life's geographical, economic, and social aspects. Students were encouraged to develop solutions for the problems they encountered in their villages. The social studies curriculum also included historical content. Students learned about the history of towns and the evolution of societies, and they tried to apply this knowledge in their villages. Furthermore, cultural awareness was promoted through the lessons. Students learned about their own culture and were introduced to the societal structures of different regions of Turkey.

During this period, the village institutes placed the most significant importance on social studies and related field courses. These courses included history, geography, citizenship, and sociology. While oral expression was the primary teaching method, it was often supplemented with question-answer sessions and debates. Additionally, students are expected to participate in festivals and weddings in the regions where the institute is located. This can contribute significantly to their understanding and appreciation of the local culture. The research revealed that the participant teacher accurately defined the social studies concept. This indicates the teacher's awareness of the idea and suggests he will apply it in his practices. Teachers who graduated from village institutes place significant importance on the social studies course in their professional lives and make efforts for students to adopt it correctly. The key finding is that history topics are crucial in providing individuals with a national identity. Furthermore, teachers' occasional use of group work and debate methods to support the teaching process is essential for promoting student activism. The fact that the teachers who participated in the research applied extracurricular teaching methods such as excursions and observations to teach social studies subjects better is a phenomenon that will increase the permanence of learning by providing a better understanding of the subjects seen in the lecture. In addition, the fact that the planned trips are organized to places

near the individual proves that the principle of teaching from near to far is put into practice in the lessons discussed.

The social studies lessons at Pazarören Village Institute contributed to students' academic development and helped foster a sense of social responsibility. The content of the social studies curriculum, which provided knowledge about the economic and social structures of villages, equipped students with skills that would help them contribute to the development of their villages. These lessons, as part of the educational philosophy of the village institutes, contributed to the development of villagers as more conscious members of society.

