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## **THE VIEWS OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS ON DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SELF-CONTROL SKILLS**

*Research Article*

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## THE VIEWS OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS ON DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SELF-CONTROL SKILLS

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### Abstract

The study aimed at determining the views of the Social Studies teachers on developing their students' self-control skills. This study was conducted with the phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs. The participants of the study was composed of 25 Social Studies teachers in eight secondary schools in city center of Elazığ, Turkey during Spring Semester of 2019-2020 school year. The participants were determined via convenience sampling model, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The data of the study were obtained using the interview technique via semi-structured interview forms. In the analysis of the data content analysis method was utilized. As a result of the study, it was determined that Social Studies teachers defined self-control skills as the capacity to control and check themselves. Self-control skills were determined to have positive contributions on learning in Social Studies teaching such as skills development, awareness of responsibilities, and being independent and self-confident. Families and teachers can be ensured to be models for students in order to develop and develop self-control skills. In developing self-control skills, different methods and techniques can be included in the teaching process considering the individual differences and developmental levels of students.

*Keywords:* Social Studies, teachers, self-control skills, individual differences, teachers' views.

### 1. Introduction

Developments in today's world have affected many fields as well as education and have brought along new developments (Topkaya and Şimşek, 2015, p. 153). It is seen that with these experienced developments, today's educational understanding is established on an understanding that gives more importance to the individual and consider the personal development and individual differences of the person more (Narin and Aybek, 2010, p. 337). These changes in educational understanding increase the need for qualified individuals. A society with qualified individuals can only be achieved with a qualified education (Demirkaya, 2008, p. 390). Socio-economic, political, and technological developments experienced have led the concept of skill to develop importance in educational activities and to be included in education programs (Mutluer, 2013, p. 356). In today's modern educational understanding, educational institutions have important tasks in terms of skill training and developing skill (Çelikkaya, 2011, p. 970). The changes in science and technology, varying needs of the individuals and society with these changes, and developments in teaching and learning theories and approaches have affected and changed the roles expected by the individuals. This experienced change shows an individual having the qualifications of producing knowledge, using it functionally in life, thinking critically, solving problems, being decisive, being entrepreneur, having communication skills, being empathic, contributing to society and culture etc. (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2018). Here, qualified individuals who have many skills are mentioned.

Skill is defined as a concept in the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2020) by stating “the ability to accomplish a work, competence, and one’s ability to accomplish a work based on learning and tendency and to conclude an action appropriately”, The skill concept is also defined as the talent and ability that enables to do a work or activity well (Kaptan, Yetişir and Demir, 2007, p. 16). Due to the scientific, technological and social changes in this century, it is seen that the 21<sup>st</sup> century would not be an information age but an age based on skills. The reason is that along with accessing information, it is necessary to produce new information from the information reached and use this information and turn it into a product. For this purpose, it is necessary to reveal the skills that exist in human potential (Tonga, 2019, p. 443). Among the skills that exist in human potential, self-control skills has a special and very important place.

Self-control is defined as one’s ability to change oneself and adapt to the environment to have a more ideal adaptation with the world (Rothbaum, Weisz & Snyder, 1982, p. 8), the effort of the self to be controlled by the self (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000, p. 247), the ability to avoid undesirable behavioral tendencies and inhibit these behaviors (Tangney, Baumeister & Boone, 2004, p. 275), the capacity to change one’s own reaction to achieve his/her goals (Baumeister, Vohs & Tice, 2007, p. 351), a person’s control and limit on his/her reactions, behaviors or tendencies to pursue a certain goal (Karataş, 2013, p. 41), a mechanism developed by individuals to understand and cope with the world (Kaygusuz and Özpolat, 2016, p. 198), and behaviors exhibited by individuals for eliminating or deactivating their strong reactions (Dağ, 2018, p. 14). In short, self-control can be expressed as individuals’ ability to control and check his/her emotions, thoughts and behaviors to reach a certain goal, the mechanism to understand and cope with the world, ability to change him/herself and to adapt the environment, ability to prevent undesirable behavior, will to postpone desires and emotions and the effort of managing and directing emotions.

People with high self-control skills can be described as careful, successful, planned, responsible and reliable (Barrick & Mount, 1991, p. 4). Attitudes and behaviors of these individuals include more positive characteristics than individuals with low self-control skills and they can make an effective decision by objectively evaluating different possibilities (Dağ, 2018, p. 28). The most important area where the self-control skills contributes to the individual is the education field, which is an important process, in human life (Can and Öztürk, 2018, p. 2027). Self-control skills affects many values and skills and it is also affected by many values and skills. In this context, self-control skills is associated with many skills and values, in other words, it allows many values and skills to emerge and realize (Tonga, 2019, p. 443).

Throughout history, educational institutions have had great tasks in determining the future of nations and states (Akpınar and Kaymakçı, 2012, p. 606). The basis function of educational institutions is to enable students to develop information, skills and values that are necessary to be an effective and efficient citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. An important part of these information, skills and values are tried to be given in primary education institutions (Kılıçoğlu, 2014, p. 6). In primary education, the Social Studies lesson has a great importance for individuals to acquire all the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for social life and transform them into attitudes and behaviors (Er, 2010, p. 1). When considering that the most comprehensive goal of Social Studies lesson is to raise effective citizens (Öztürk, 2007, p. 48; Safran, 2008, p. 15; Tonga, 2019, p. 434), it is emphasized that developing necessary knowledge, skills, and values at first to raise students as an effective citizen is necessary in Social Studies teaching (Öztürk, 2007, p. 25). Developing knowledge, skill and values about personal, family, regional, national and global issues in Social Studies lesson helps students to make correct and logical decisions in their daily lives (MEB, 2015, p. 1).

Developing the skills of making rational decisions and exhibiting attitudes and behaviors as responsible citizens in students is one of the main goals of Social Studies teaching (Taş and Kiroğlu, 2018, p. 700). Helping students to develop necessary skills in Social Studies lesson contributes to the socialization of students (Çelikkaya and Kürümlüoğlu, 2017, p. 142-143). Considering that the knowledge, skills and behaviors developed in primary school period do not lose their effect in the following years, it is seen that teaching Social Studies lesson in this period has a strategic importance (Safran, 2008, p. 15). For this reason, it is aimed with Social Studies lesson in curriculum for students to develop skills of “research, environmental literacy, perception of change and continuity, digital literacy, critical thinking, empathy, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, observation, map literacy, legal literacy, communication, collaboration, stereotype and recognizing prejudice, using evidence, decision making, location analysis, media literacy, spatial perception, self-control, political literacy, problem solving, social participation, drawing and interpreting tables, graphs and diagrams, using Turkish correctly, beautifully and effectively, and perceiving time and chronology with innovative thinking” (MEB, 2018). When considering that Social Studies lesson aims to raise effective citizens, self-control skills appears as a skill that can reveal the goals of Social Studies lesson. The reason is that there are various behaviors and rules that children should and should not do in order to raise an individual as an effective citizen. Self-control skills expresses that the child should and should not act within certain criteria and rules (Tonga, 2019, p. 434). Self-control skills is one of the basic skills that help individuals to control themselves and to be happy and successful (Aydın and Ziatdinov, 2016, p. 392). When the Social Studies curricula are examined, it is seen that while self-control skills was not directly involved in previous curricula, self-control skills is included in the curriculum of 2018 Social Studies lesson. When the curriculum is evaluated in terms of learning fields and achievements in which the self-control skills is included, it is seen that the skill is not included in the curriculum sufficiently (Tonga, 2019, p. 434-436).

It is seen that self-control skills is of particular importance for teachers who are an important component of the educational process in school environment (Sünbül, 2004, p. 257). In the educational environment, teachers with high self-control skills are seen to be more effective and professional in training students. It has been also determined that the teaching method and techniques used by the teachers and their communication with the students are appropriate to the constructivist approach (Dağ, 2018, p. 28-29). It is seen that teachers have important roles in ensuring that students develop and perform self-control skills. Teachers can help students to develop self-control skills by giving them responsibility, preparing classroom rules in collaboration with students, helping them to develop free time habits, and directing them to explain the reasons and importance of an expected behavior (Aydın and Ziatdinov, 2016, p. 392). In fact, it is seen that teachers with high self-control skills use different methods and techniques in helping students to develop and perform this skill in the education process, have better communication with students and are more effective.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there is no study on self-control skills in the Social Studies lesson but there are studies on self-control in different fields (for example, Tangney, Baumeister & Boone, 2004; Duyan, Güliden and Gelbal, 2012; Peker, 2012; Kaygusuz and Özpolat, 2016; Bertrams, Baumeister & Englert, 2016; Metin, Harma, Gökçay and Bahçivan Saydam, 2017; Özgül, 2017; Can and Öztürk, 2018; Gülle, 2018; Odacı and Kınık, 2018; Şubaş, 2018; Tanrikulu, 2019; Yakut, 2019). Self-control skills is among the important and basic skills that should be acquired by students in the curriculum of Social Studies lesson. This study is extremely important in terms of revealing the views of Social Studies teachers, which are an important component of the education process, on self-control

skills. In addition, the subject is important and it is believed that studies should be conducted about the self-control skills and these are another reason that makes the research important. Therefore, the results of this study, investigating the views of Social Studies teacher on self-control skills, are believed to be important in terms of contributing to the literature and the related studies.

The main research question of the study is “*What are the viewpoints of the Social Studies teachers on developing their students’ self-control skills?*” Based on this main research question the sub-research questions of the study can be stated as follows:

1. How do Social Studies teachers define the self-control skills?
2. What are the self-assessments of Social Studies teachers about self-control skills competence?
3. What methods, techniques and activities do Social Studies teachers use when teaching Self-control skills?
4. What are the contributions of self-control skills on learning in Social Studies teaching?
5. What are the problems encountered by Social Studies teachers in teaching self-control skills?
6. What are the recommendations of Social Studies teachers on developing self-control skills more effectively?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Design of the Study

This study was conducted using the phenomenological design, which is one of the qualitative research designs, in order to determine the views of Social Studies teachers on self-control skills. The phenomenological design aims to investigate the phenomena that we are aware of in our daily life, we encounter in various ways but do not fully comprehend and do not have an in-dept and detailed understanding (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 69). Phenomenology is a study pattern defining the common meaning of experiences of several people about a phenomenon or concept (Creswell, 2013/2020, p. 85). In addition, phenomenology also focuses on understanding how people make sense of their experiences and transform experience into consciousness (Patton, 2000/2014, p. 104).

### 2.2. Participants

The participants of the study were composed of a total of number of 25 Social Studies teachers including 12 women and 13 men working in eight secondary schools located in the city center of Elazığ in spring semester of 2019-2020 school year. The participants was determined using convenience sampling which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. In the convenience sampling method, the researcher chooses a situation that is close to him/her and easy to reach in order to bring speed and practice to the study (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 123). For this study, ethical approval was obtained from Fırat University Rectorate, Social and Human Sciences Researches Ethics Committee (03/03/2020-382207). Volunteering was considered in including Social Studies teachers in the study.

### 2.3. Data Collection Tool and Process

The data of the study were obtained via the interview method using a semi-structured interview form. Qualitative interviews often involve a process containing open-ended questions to reveal the views and ideas of the participants (Creswell, 2013/2016, p. 190). Semi-structured interviews are the interviews that combine fixed alternative answering and studying in the relevant field in depth (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and

Demirel, 2013, p. 152). For this reason, semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used in the study. This interview form is prepared to obtain the same type of information from different people by addressing similar issues, try to reveal various dimensions of the subject, cover a list of questions and topics to be discovered during the interview, ensure to obtain more systematic information from different individuals, and provide time flexibility to the researcher (Avcı, 2008, p. 160).

A literature review was conducted to prepare the interview form of the study. The draft interview form prepared by the researchers was then made ready by taking the opinions of three academic members from Fırat University, Faculty of Education, Division of Turkish and Social Sciences Education, Department of Social Studies Education. In this study, an interview form consisting of 6 questions developed by the researchers for Social Studies teachers was used as the data collection tool. Since face-to-face interviews were not possible due to Covid-19 pandemic process experienced during the study period, the study was carried out with interviews held online and by phone. Before starting the interview, the participants was informed briefly about the subject of the study and the questions in the study and the interviews were conducted.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

The content analysis method was used to analyze the data obtained in the study. “Content analysis is a scientific approach investigating the social reality by classifying the message contained by the verbal, written and other materials objectively and systematically in terms of meaning and/or grammar, transforming them into numbers, and making inferences” (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001, p. 22).

A qualitative data analysis program was used for the evaluation of the study data. “Data analysis in phenomenological studies are aimed at revealing experiences and meanings. In the content analysis conducted for this purpose, there is an effort to conceptualize the data and reveal the themes that can define the phenomenon” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 72). The data obtained from the interviews were transferred to the computer environment as they were and made suitable for analysis. The data in the interview form were coded in short and meaningful symbols and draft themes were determined by providing correlation with the relevant literature. The codes were rearranged according to these draft themes and the draft themes were checked and finalized. The correlation between the themes was determined and the main theme and sub-themes were gathered under the study questions. In addition, a code and theme list was prepared and the data were organized by making this list consistent within itself. In this way, how many participants emphasized the same theme was revealed and the areas where the themes were more concentrated were determined. These themes and number of loadings were presented as models to provide a clearer and more comprehensive image. These models were interpreted by giving direct quotations from the participants’ views. The participants’ views on the themes and sub-themes were given in italics within quotation marks. Personal information regarding the participants was given with coding including abbreviations (T.1.F/M), (Teacher, 1. person, Female/Male) at the beginning of the participants’ views.

Reporting the data in detail as a result of the study and the detailed explanation of how the researchers reached the results are among the basic criteria that are considered important in terms of ensuring validity in a qualitative study (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 270). For this reason, how the study results were reached was explained in detail in order to ensure validity in the study and the data obtained as a result of the study were included in the results section.

In order to ensure the reliability of the study and to eliminate the individual effects that may be encountered during the coding process of the data, coding was performed by evaluating the study independently by the expert and researcher (coders) and then, the reliability of the study was calculated by determining the number of consensus and disagreement to find whether or not there is an agreement between the coders by comparing these coding and using Miles & Huberman's (1994/2016, p. 64) reliability formula "reliability=number of consensus/total consensus +number of disagreement". According to the reliability formula, the reliability value of the study was calculated as 92% and the agreement between coders was determined as 92%. According to Saban (2009, p. 288), a desired reliability level is achieved in qualitative studies in cases where the agreement is 90% and above as a result of the expert and researcher evaluations.

Credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability strategies specified by Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen (1993, p. 28-34) were benefited in the study in order to ensure the validity and reliability. Validity and reliability were ensured by conducting expert review and participant confirmation to evaluate credibility, detailed description and purposeful sampling to increase transferability, consistency review to ensure consistency and confirmability review to ensure confirmation. In the study, an expert review was performed by asking a person specialized in research-related subjects and qualified research methods to review the study in detail for evaluating the credibility. In addition, the data obtained as a result of the study and the results reached regarding the data were confirmed by the participants so that participant confirmation was made. In order to increase transferability, the raw data were arranged adevelop first according to the themes determined as a result of the analysis and detailed description was made by sticking to the nature of the data and without adding any comments. In addition, purposeful sampling method, which aims to reveal both events and facts as well as the characteristics of these events and facts, was used in the study. In order to ensure consistency, a consistency analysis was conducted by examining the study from an external perspective and revealing if the researchers were consistent during the research process. In order to ensure confirmability, an expert compared the results obtained by the researchers with the raw data and confirmation examination was performed if or not the researchers operated the confirmation mechanism during the research process.

### **3. Findings**

Six main themes were determined regarding the views of Social Studies teachers on self-control skills. These themes were determined as "self-control skills", "self-control skills competence", "methods and activities used while teaching self-control skills", "contributions of self-control skills on learning", "problems encountered in teaching self-control skills" and "recommendations on developing self-control skills effectively". These main themes were presented in models with the number of loadings.

#### **3.1. Results Regarding Self-control skills**

The views of the Social Studies teachers on self-control skills were obtained and when the data obtained from these views were evaluated, self-control skills theme was found to have seven sub-themes. Figure 1 shows model and number of loadings for this theme.

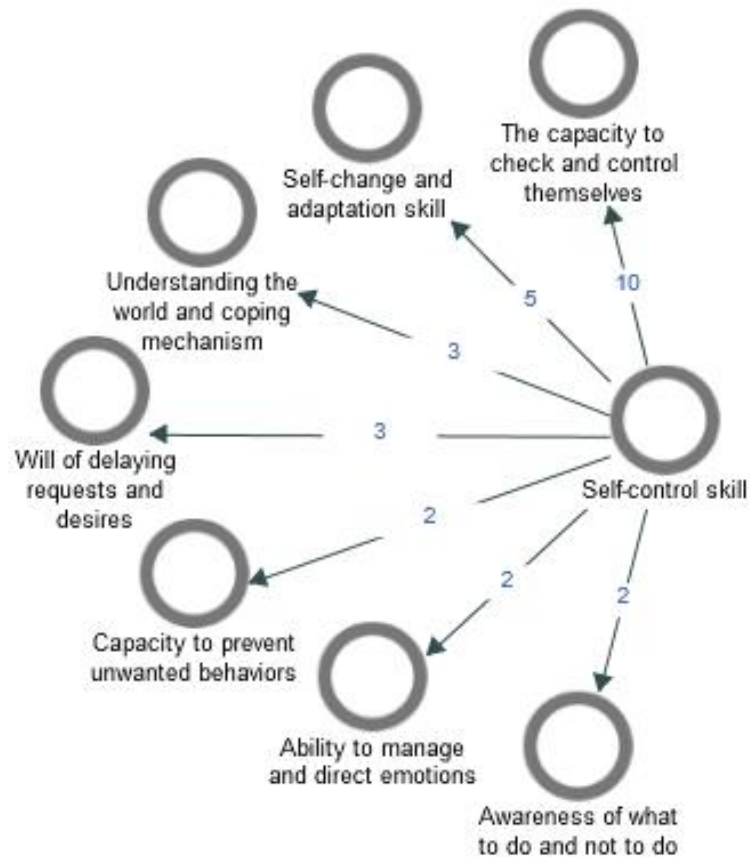


Figure 1. Model for self-control skills

When the views of the teachers on self-control skills were evaluated, the teachers were seen to define self-control skills mostly as “the capacity to check and control themselves”. Other sub-themes determined for self-control skills were determined as “self-change and adaptation skill”, “understanding the world and coping mechanism”, “will of delaying requests and desires”, “capacity to prevent unwanted behaviors”, “ability to manage and direct emotions”, and “awareness of what to do and not to do”. Some sub-themes and the participants’ views are given below.

While a participant (**T.5.F**) who associated self-control skills with “capacity to check and control themselves” sub-theme said that “*Self-control skills can be defined shortly as the ability of a person to control his/her own action and behaviors to reach a goal.*”, another participant (**T.25.M**) was seen to emphasize self-control as an important skill that enables the person to check and control his emotions, thoughts and behaviors to reach his/her goals by stating that “*Self-control skills is to control our behaviors at the point of reaching our goals or sometimes postpone what we want to do for a while. In the shortest meaning, self-control is our ability to check and control ourselves.*”.

While a participant (**T.1.F**), explaining self-control skills with “self-change and adaptation skill” sub-theme, stated her view as “*Self-control can be evaluated as the ability to change and adapt a person’s emotions, thoughts and behaviors. Self-control is a skill that starts to develop in the family during the first years of life. We should remember that there are individual differences in the self-control capacities of people.*”, the participant (**T.14.M**) who thinks the same way was expressed self-control skills as the self-change and adaptation capacity of the person by stating that “*Self-control skills can be expressed as a person’s capacity to change him/herself to have a better adaptation with the world and to adapt to the environment.*”.



Concerning the “will of delaying requests and desires” sub-theme, the participant (T.24.M) explained self-control as a skill type enabling a person to resist and postpone his/her requests and desires in order to achieve his/her goals by stating that “*Self-control skills is defined as the will of delaying requests and desires with a person’s ability to control his/her urges, desires and wills in order to reach a certain goal.*”.

Concerning the “Capacity to prevent unwanted behaviors” sub-theme, the participant (T.10.M) expresses self-control skills as an internal orientation signifying avoidance of exhibiting unwanted behavioral tendencies along with keeping the internal reactions under control by saying that “*Self-control can be defined as the ability to keep one’s behaviors under control as well as the capacity to prevent unwanted behaviors*”.

### 3.2. Results on Self-control skills Competence

The views of the Social Studies teachers on self-control skills competence were obtained and this theme was seen to concentrate around three sub-themes in line with the data obtained from these views. Figure 2 shows model and number of loadings for this theme.

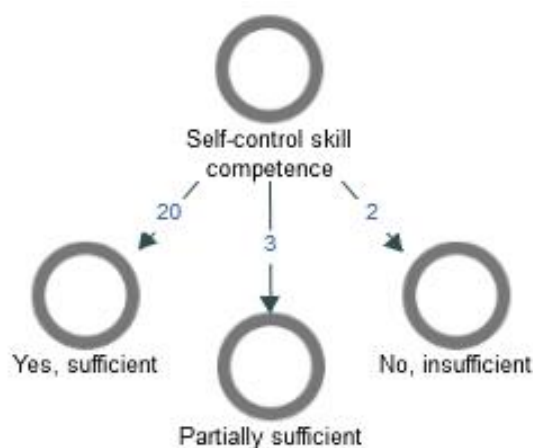


Figure 2. Model for self-control skills competence

When the views of Social Studies teachers about self-control skills competence were examined, they were seen to be divided into three sub-themes: “yes, sufficient”, “partially sufficient” and “no, insufficient”. Some sub-themes and the participants’ views are given below.

While a participant (T.2.M) who associated self-control skills competence with “yes, sufficient” sub-theme said that “*when I evaluate myself objectively about self-control skills competence, I believe that I have this skill as a Social Studies teacher and I am a model for my students in the classroom.*”, another participant (T.19.F) made an evaluation indicating that she was sufficient in self-control skills by saying that “*I believe that my self-control skills competence is good. I think that the feedback I received from my students and circle and my status of being a role model also confirm that.*”.

While a participant (T.6.M), explaining self-control skills competence as “partially sufficient” sub-theme, explained his view as “*... since I have inadequacies, I think I am partially sufficient.*”, another participant (T.13.F) emphasized that she was partially sufficient about self-control skills by saying that “*When I evaluate myself about self-control skills competence, I do not see myself fully sufficient. Since I know I have shortcomings in some subjects, I believe I am partially sufficient.*”.

While a participant (T.16.M) associating the self-control skills competence with “no, insufficient” sub-theme stated his view as “*Of course I'm not at the level I want, I'm trying to*

*develop myself in this regard.*”, another participant (T.22.M) stated that he did not see himself sufficient about self-control skills with the negative effect of internal and external factors by saying that *“I do not see myself sufficient about self-control skills competence. I believe internal and external factors cause us to be insufficient about self-control.”*.

### 3.3. Results Regarding The Methods and Activities Used While Teaching Self-control skills

The views of the Social Studies teachers on the methods and activities used while teaching self-control skills were obtained and when the data obtained from these views were examined, this theme was determined to have eight sub-themes. Figure 3 shows model and number of loadings for this theme.

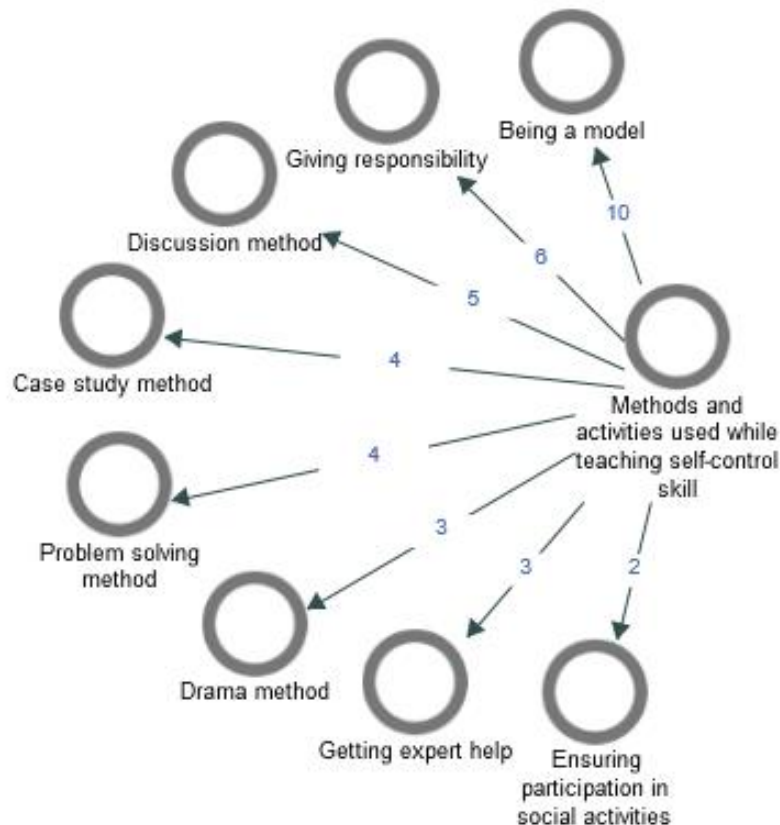


Figure 3. Model for the methods and activities used while teaching self-control skills

It was determined that the Social Studies teachers used different methods and activities in teaching self-control skills. When the teachers’ views were evaluated, it was seen that the highest loading was made on the “being a model” sub-theme. In addition, the other sub-themes were determined as; “giving responsibility”, “discussion method”, “case study method”, “problem solving method”, “drama method”, “getting expert help”, and “ensuring participation in social activities”, respectively. Some sub-themes and the participants’ views are given below.

While a participant (T.2.M) who associated methods and activities used while teaching self-control skills with “being a model” sub-theme expressed his views as *“I think that the teacher should move away from his/her daily habits and behaviors in the classroom environment and act as a teacher, control him/herself, know what, where and how to do it and the teacher should be a model for students in order to help them to develop self-control skills.”*, another participant (T.15.F) expressed her views as *“In the classroom, I try to be a model for my students with my stance, what I say and my behaviors, I think it is a very useful*

way to teach the self-control skills. We tell the student that we do it, you can do it, and you can succeed, too." In fact, self-control skills was stated to carry a special importance for teachers who have an important place in Social Studies teaching process and it was explained that the teachers were a model for students with their thoughts and behaviors.

While a participant (T.7.F) who explained her view about "giving responsibility" sub-theme stated her thoughts as *"I believe that tasks and responsibilities should be given to our students based on their ages and development levels while teaching self-control skills."*, another participant (T.18.M) thinking similarly was found to state his views that self-control skills can be developed by giving responsibilities to the students with his statement that *"If we want our students to be self-controlling individuals who are aware of what they should and should not do, that is, they have self-control skills, we should give them responsibilities. Thus, the students who take responsibility are enabled to fulfill their responsibilities by activating the auto-control mechanisms."*

While one of the participants (T.1.F) stated her views on "case study method" sub-theme as *"Self-control is a learnable skill. I use many methods while teaching this skill. The most important way to strengthen the self-control skills is to give students case events in the classroom and ensure them to examine these examples carefully."*, another participant (T.20.M) who thought the same way, emphasized that case study method allowed students to be aware of what they should and should not do by saying that *"Social Studies lesson has characteristics of being an important course preparing students for life. I generally give examples from the environment the students live in and current events experienced in order to teach them self-control skills. In this way, I try to make students comprehend how they should behave in many issues that they may encounter."*

### **3.4. Results on Regarding the Contributions of Self-control skills on Learning**

The teachers' views on the contributions of self-control skills on learning in Social Studies teaching were obtained. When the data obtained from these views were examined, this theme was determined to have nine sub-themes. Figure 4 shows model and number of loadings for this theme.

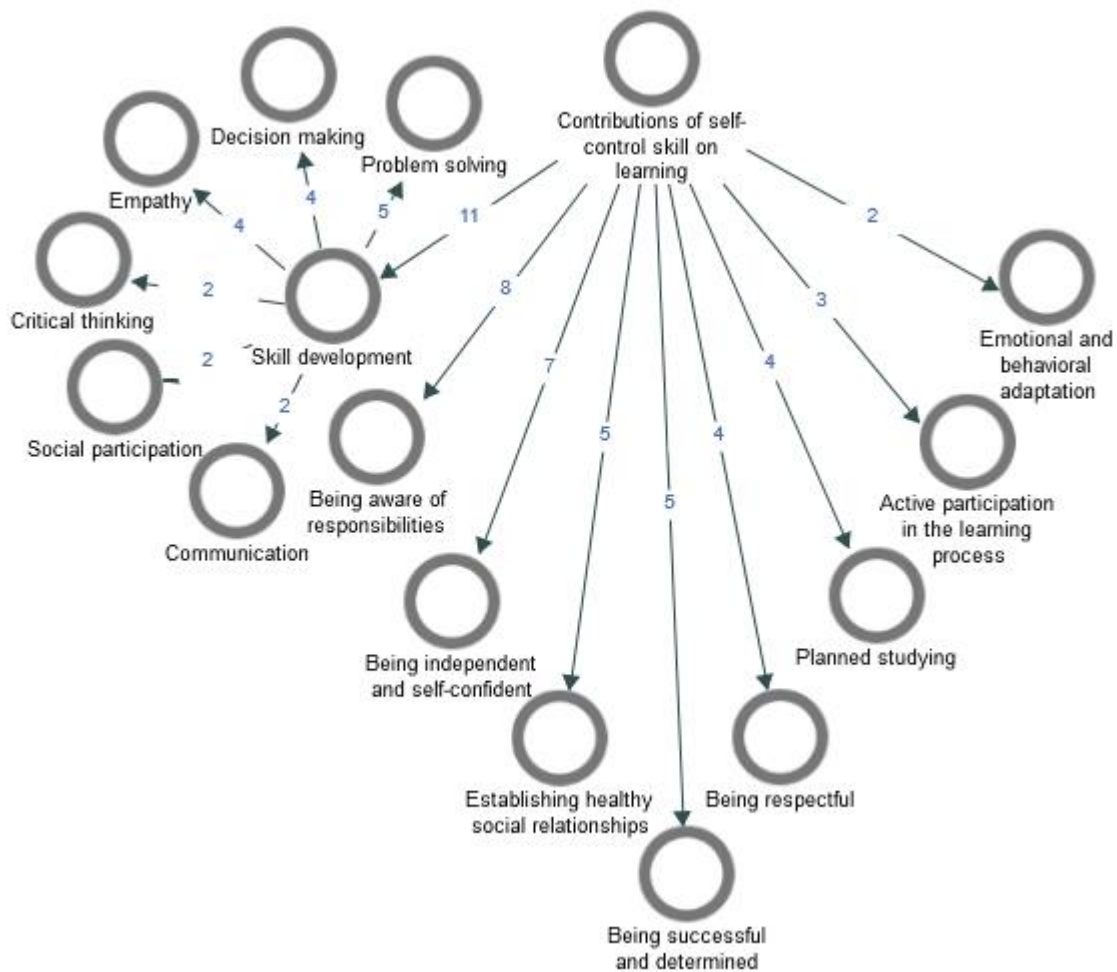


Figure 4. Model for the contributions of self-control skills on learning

When the teachers' views on contributions of self-control skills on learning in Social Studies teaching were examined, the highest loading was seen to be expressed in "skill development" sub-theme. This theme was divided into six sub-categories as "problem solving", "decision making", "empathy", "critical thinking", "social participation", and "communication". The other sub-themes determined for contributions of self-control skills on learning were determined as "being aware of responsibilities", "being independent and self-confident", "establishing healthy social relationships", "being successful and determined", "being respectful", "planned studying", "active participation in the learning process" and "emotional and behavioral adaptation", respectively. Some sub-themes and the participants' views are given below.

While the participant (T.3.F) who associated contributions of self-control skills on learning with "skill development" sub-theme stated her views as *"the most important effect of self-control skills on learning in Social Studies teaching is that it helps students to improve their decision making, social participation, empathy, problem solving and communication skills."*, another participant (T.21.F) stated her views as *"Social Studies is a lesson in which knowledge, skills and attitudes are given to students. Since self-control is a process where students decide on their own behavior, their decision-making skill also improves."* It was determined that Social Studies teachers expressed that self-control skills had a positive effect on the development of some skills such as, problem solving, decision making, empathy, social participation and communication on learning. In addition, self-control skills is seen to be associated with many skills.

While a participant (T.6.M) explained his view on “Being aware of responsibilities” sub-theme as “*Self-control is one of the most important skills that students should develop in Social Studies teaching. Both Social Studies teachers and the students they educate must have this skill. Self-control skills has many positive effects on learning. The first and most important of these effects is that students have being aware of responsibilities.*”, another participant (T.25.M) was seen to express that this skill was effective in terms of helping students to be aware of responsibilities by stating that “*... enables students to be aware of own responsibilities and take responsibility of their behaviors.*”.

While a participant (T.15.F) stating her views on “establishing healthy social relationships” sub-theme explained her thoughts as “*since Social Studies is a lesson that concerns the society and society is made up of individuals, the existence of a healthy society becomes possible by ensuring students to develop self-control skills. I see that the self-control skills developed helped students in establishing healthy social relationship with their environments both in classroom environment and normal life.*”, another participant (T.18.M) thinking similarly stated that self-control skills helped students to establish healthy social relationship by saying that “*I see that students who have self-control skills are more successful in social relations with their friends at school.*”.

### 3.5. Results on the Problems Encountered in Teaching Self-control skills

The teachers’ views on the problems encountered in self-control skills in Social Studies teaching were obtained. When the data obtained from these views were assessed, this theme was determined to have nine sub-themes. Figure 5 shows model and number of loadings for this theme.

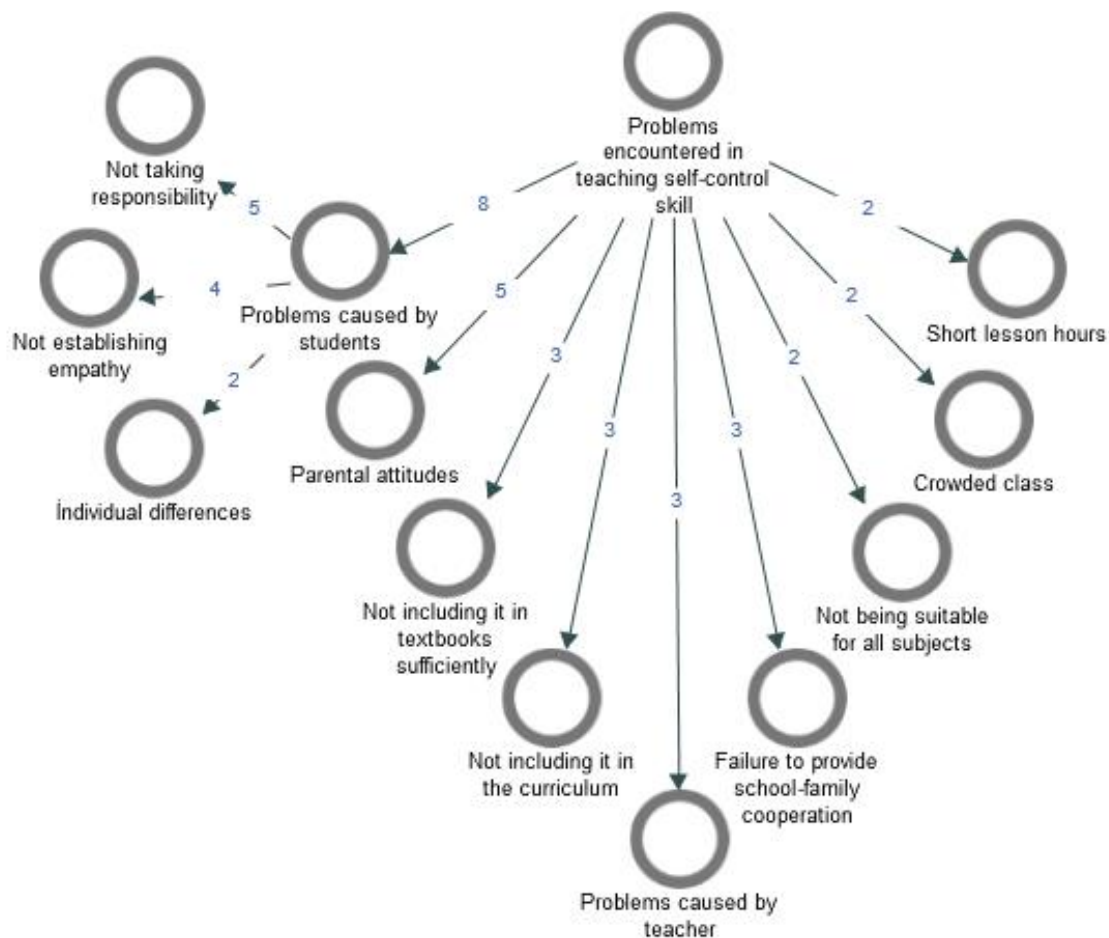


Figure 5. Model for problems encountered in teaching self-control skills

When the views on the problems encountered in self-control skills in Social Studies teaching were evaluated, it was determined that the sub-theme that teachers uploaded the most was “problems caused by students”. This theme was seen to be divided into three sub-categories including “not taking responsibility”, “not establishing empathy” and “individual differences”. The other sub-themes determined about the problems encountered were listed as “parental attitudes”, “not including it in textbooks sufficiently”, “not including it in the curriculum”, “problems caused by teacher”, “failure to provide school-family cooperation”, “not being suitable for all subjects”, “crowded class” and “short lesson hours”, respectively. Some sub-themes and the participants’ views are given below.

While a participant (T.4.M) who associated problems encountered in teaching self-control skills with “problems caused by the student” sub-theme express his views as *“We encounter some problems caused by the student during self-control skills teaching process. For example, student does not want to take responsibility, does not establish empathy to understand his/her friends and the presence of individuals differences etc.”*, another participant (T.5.F) explained her views as *“Self-control is one of the most useful processes in personality structure. However, there are individual differences in students’ self-control capacities. These individual differences can cause negative situations in the classroom. For example, some of my students have problems controlling their anger or keeping their promises.”*. It was determined that the teachers stated that they experienced problems caused by the students related to not taking responsibilities, not trying to establish empathy and the presence of individual differences between students during self-control skills teaching.

While a participant (T.16.M) stated his view about “parental attitudes” sub-theme as *“We generally encounter problems due to parental attitudes. The biggest problems for us are that whatever the child wants are done, there are no rules at home or the rules are not obeyed, given homework and responsibilities are done by the families, families take decisions on behalf of the child, and there are excessively oppressive or free family environment.”*, another participant (T.19.F) with similar thoughts expressed her views as *“The negative effect of the family on the child is just one of the problems experienced. We see that some parents are too oppressive and intrusive. Such families often tend to control their children and this prevents the child from learning to regulate and control her/himself. Everything that the child learns incorrectly or does not learn in the family environment also negatively affects the teaching and learning process.”*. It is seen that teachers stated that the parental attitudes in family environment are important in the process of teaching this skill but they experience some problems caused by the family.

While a participant (T.9.F) explaining “Not including textbooks sufficiently” sub-theme stated her views as *“Textbooks also absolutely have a share in developing self-control skills, but it is definitely not enough alone. I believe that self-control skills is not emphasized enough in Social Studies textbooks, even in Social Studies curriculum.”*, another participant (T.22.M) with the same thoughts stated that problems were experienced due to the fact that self-control skills are not included in Social Studies textbooks sufficiently, thus textbooks should be enriched by saying that *“I don't think Social Studies textbooks are sufficient to teach this skill. I believe textbooks should be enriched.”*

### 3.6. Results on Recommendations on Developing Self-control skills Effectively

The teachers’ views on helping to develop self-control skills effectively in Social Studies teaching were obtained and the theme was determined to concentrate around ten sub-themes

in line with the data obtained from these views. Figure 6 shows model and number of loadings for this theme.

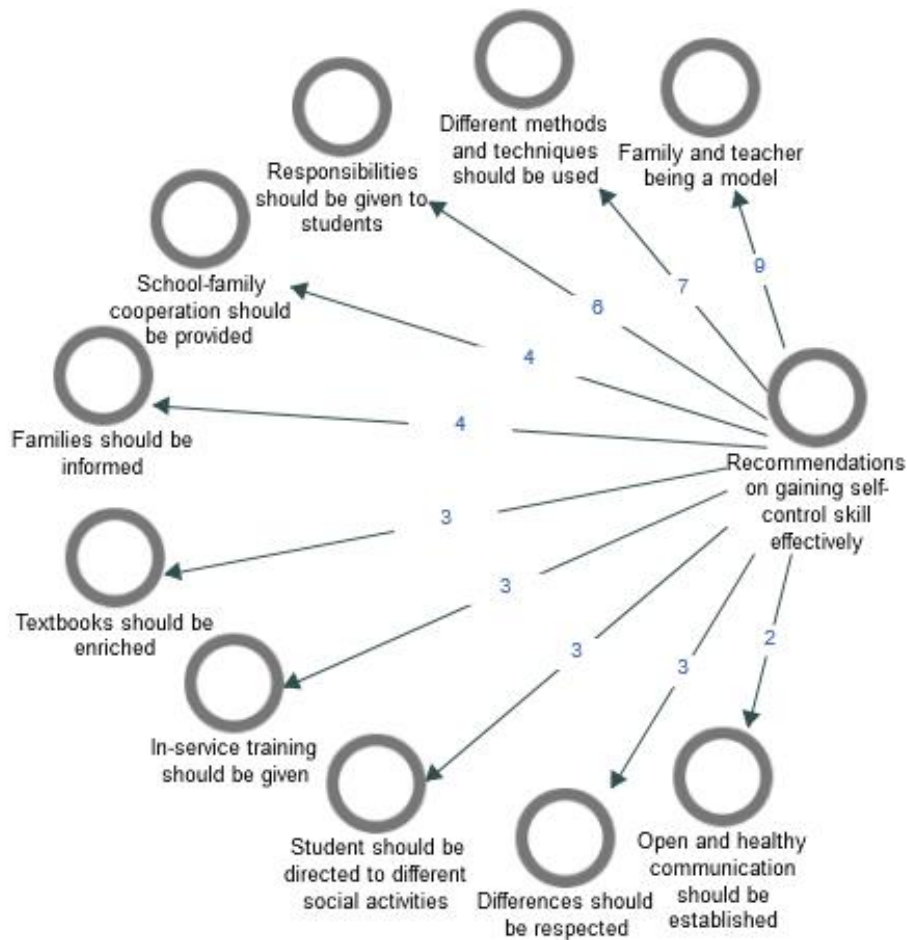


Figure 6. Model on the recommendations on developing self-control skills effectively

When the data obtained from the teachers' views on developing self-control skills effectively in Social Studies teaching were examined, the highest loading was determined to be made in "family and teacher being a model" sub-theme. The other sub-themes for this main theme were determined as; "different methods and techniques should be used", "responsibilities should be given to students", "school-family cooperation should be provided", "families should be informed", "textbooks should be enriched", "in-service training should be given", "student should be directed to different social activities", "differences should be respected", and "open and healthy communication should be established". Some sub-themes and the participants' views are given below.

While a participant (**T.2.M**) associating recommendations on developing self-control skills effectively with "family and teacher being a model" sub-theme expressed his views as "In order to help children to develop self-control skills, families and teachers need being a model by reviewing their own behaviors. In this regard, we first apply what we say ourselves, we should be a model for the child with our behavior and we must always behave consistently.", another participant (**T.13.F**) recommended that families and teachers should be a model for students in order to raise individuals with high self-control by saying that "I believe that families and teachers should always be a model for children in order for the children to be individuals having the skill of controlling their own thoughts, emotions and behaviors."

A participant (T.6.M) explaining “different methods and techniques should be used” sub-theme stated his views as *“attention should be paid to use different method and techniques in Social Studies lesson in order to solve problems encountered about self-control skills.”*. Another participant (T.24.M) thinking similarly about the theme explained his views as *“I believe that many different methods and techniques such as case study, discussion, drama and problem solving method should be used in order to teach self-control skills more effectively in Social Studies lesson and other lessons.”*. In fact, it was stated that different methods and techniques should be used more in Social Studies lesson in order to help students to develop self-control skills effectively since using different methods and techniques in lessons draw students’ attentions more easily and makes the education process more enjoyable.

While a participant (T.17.F) stated her views about “school-family cooperation should be provided” sub-theme as *“In order to prevent unwanted student behaviors in the classroom, cooperation should be made between the school administration and the family and act accordingly.”*, another participant (T.19.F) thinking the same way pointed out that school-family cooperation should be provided in order to help students to develop self-control skills by saying that *“Social Studies Teaching is a lesson that helps students to regulate and control their behaviors. In this lesson, school-family cooperation should be provided in order for students to develop self-control skills effectively.”*

#### **4. Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations**

When the results obtained in line with the views of Social Studies teachers about self-control skills were examined, the following results were obtained.

It was determined that Social Studies teachers defined the self-control skills as “self-check and control capacity”. In addition, it was also seen that the teachers expressed self-control skills as “self-change and adaptation skill”, “understanding the world and coping mechanism”, “will of delaying requests and desires”, “capacity to prevent unwanted behaviors”, “ability to manage and direct emotions”, and “awareness of what to do and not to do”.

It was concluded that Social Studies teachers evaluated themselves about self-control skills competence as “yes, sufficient”, “partially sufficient” and “no, insufficient”.

It was determined that Social Studies teachers benefited from different methods and activities such as “being a model”, “giving responsibility”, “discussion method”, “case study method”, “problem solving method”, “drama method”, “getting expert help” and “ensuring participation in social activities” in teaching self-control skills.

In Social Studies teaching, self-control skills has significant contributions on learning in terms of “skill development (problem solving, decision making, empathy, critical thinking, social participation and communication)”, “being aware of responsibilities”, “being independent and self-confident” “establishing healthy social relationships”, “being successful and determined”, “being respectful”, “planned studying”, “active participation in the learning process” and “emotional and behavioral adaptation”. Similarly, in the study by Tangney, Baumeister & Boone (2004), they concluded that the students with high self-control level also had high success level. In another study by Bertrams, Baumeister & Englert (2016), high self-control of students was seen to affect their mathematics lesson success positively.

It was determined that teachers mostly expressed that the problems encountered in self-control skills in Social Studies teaching were related to “problems caused by students (not taking responsibility, not establishing empathy and individual differences)”. In addition, teachers were also stated that they experienced problems such as “parental attitudes”, “not



including textbooks sufficiently”, “not including in the curriculum sufficiently”, “problems caused by teacher”, “failure to provide school-family cooperation”, “not being suitable for all subjects”, “crowded class” and “short lesson hours”. This result is similar to the result found in the study conducted by Özgül (2017) on the correlation between self-control and parental attitude in high school students, indicating that excessively oppressive-authoritarian parental attitude negatively affected adolescent’s inability to express him/herself comfortably, his/her inability to make decisions without his/her parents on many issues, personal development along with self-development and self-control.

Concerning developing self-control skills effectively in Social Studies teaching, teachers were mostly seen to recommend “family and teacher being a model”. It was also determined that teachers made different suggestions such as “different methods and techniques should be used”, “responsibilities should be given to students”, “school-family cooperation should be provided”, “families should be informed”, “textbooks should be enriched”, “in-service training should be given”, “student should be directed to different social activities”, “differences should be respected” and “an open and healthy communication should be established”.

Depending on the study results, the following suggestions can be put forward:

- It can be ensured that the families and teachers are being a model to students in order to develop and develop the self-control skills.
- In developing self-control skills, different methods and techniques can be included more in teaching process by considering individual difference and development levels of the students.
- Contents and activities in Social Studies textbooks can be enriched in such a way to develop the self-control skills which the curriculum aims to have student develop.
- According to the study results, developing self-control skills in students was significantly affected by the parents’ attitudes. For this reason, families can also be informed about the self-control skills.
- In helping students to develop self-control skills, it was seen that some problems caused by the skill being unsuitable for all subjects, crowded classes and short lesson hours were experienced. For this reason, necessary arrangements can be made by considering these problems in order for students to reach an education level with a higher quality.
- Considering the effect of attitudes of teachers who educate students in developing self-control skills, in-service training can be given to teachers in order to help students to develop self-control skills more effectively.
- In order for students to develop self-control skills, which is crucial in education, responsibilities, that will make the students active in this process, should be given to them by considering their development levels.
- School-family cooperation should be provided so that the self-control skills can be developed and developed.
- This study was conducted with Social Studies teachers for helping students to develop self-control skills. It can be recommended to conduct studies dealing with the views of teachers and students about self-control skills together.

## 5. Conflict of Interest

The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

## **6. Ethics Committee Approval**

The ethics committee approval was received from Fırat University (No: 382207).

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