# STUDENT VIEWS ON THE USE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES

## OPINIÕES DOS ALUNOS SOBRE O USO DE AMBIENTES DE APRENDIZAGEM EXTRAESCOLARES EM CURSOS DE ESTUDOS SOCIAIS

**Aydın Güven**
Atatürk University, Türkiye
aydinguven@atauni.edu.tr

**İsmail Ayyıldız**
The Ministry of National Education, Türkiye
isml.Ayyildiz@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research is to determine the views of 6th-grade students regarding historical site trips organized within the context of out-of-school learning environments in social studies courses. The research was conducted with a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. The study group of the research consisted of 12 students attending the 6th grade in a secondary school affiliated with the Muş Provincial Directorate of National Education during the 2022-2023 academic year. In the research, "Open-Ended Questionnaire Form", "Semi-Structured Interview Form", and "Student Trip Diary" were used as data collection tools. The data obtained was evaluated through content analysis in the research. It was determined that students were willing to visit out-of-school learning environments such as historical sites or museums to gain knowledge, to see different places, and to learn lessons in these environments. It was concluded in the study that the school trips organized to out-of-school learning environments and the activities carried out during these trips provided benefits in terms of evoking emotions such as excitement, happiness, pride, and enjoyment in students. Furthermore, it was observed that the activities conducted during these visits to the historical sites were liked by students due to being both fun and educational. The research revealed that students' level of knowledge about historical sites in their local environment increased. In addition, it was concluded that out-of-school learning environments contributed to students' experiential learning, facilitating permanent and effective learning, and fostering students' enjoyment of the subject.

**Keywords:** Historical site, museum, out-of-school learning, trip, social studies.

<center>**RESUMO**</center>

O objetivo desta pesquisa é determinar as opiniões dos alunos do 6º ano sobre as visitas a locais históricos organizadas no contexto de ambientes de aprendizagem extraescolares em cursos de estudos sociais. A pesquisa foi realizada com estudo de caso, um dos métodos de pesquisa qualitativa. O grupo de estudo da investigação era composto por 12 alunos que frequentavam o 6º ano de uma escola secundária afiliada à Direcção Provincial de Educação Nacional de Muş durante o ano lectivo de 2022-2023. Na pesquisa foram utilizados como instrumentos de coleta de dados o "Formulário de Questionário Aberto", o "Formulário de Entrevista Semiestruturada" e o "Diário de Viagem do Aluno". Os dados obtidos foram avaliados por meio de análise de conteúdo na pesquisa. Foi determinado que os alunos estavam dispostos a visitar ambientes de aprendizagem fora da escola, como locais históricos ou museus, para adquirir conhecimento, conhecer lugares diferentes e aprender lições nesses ambientes. Concluiu-se no estudo que as viagens escolares organizadas para ambientes de aprendizagem extraescolares e as atividades realizadas durante essas viagens proporcionaram benefícios em termos de evocar emoções como excitação, felicidade, orgulho e diversão nos alunos. Além disso, observou-se que as atividades realizadas nessas visitas aos locais históricos foram apreciadas pelos alunos por serem lúdicas e educativas. A investigação revelou que o nível de conhecimento dos alunos sobre os locais históricos no seu ambiente local aumentou. Além disso, concluiu-se que os ambientes de aprendizagem extraescolares contribuíram para a aprendizagem experiencial dos alunos, facilitando a aprendizagem permanente e eficaz e promovendo o gosto dos alunos pela disciplina.

**Palavras-chave**: Sítio histórico, museu, aprendizagem extraescolar, viagem, estudos sociais.

## Introduction

Throughout the human history, one of the most important goals of education has been to raise qualified individuals. Over time, rapid changes have also influenced the education system, and in contemporary societies, understanding and memorizing information merely is no longer considered sufficient to be a qualified individual (Çalışkan, 2009, p. 58). It is expected that contemporary education system should train individuals who are inquisitive, critical thinkers, socially aware, possess problem-solving skills, and can make decisions freely in social and political matters (Stevenson, 2007, p. 144). When new approaches in education are examined with this understanding, active learning methods come to the forefront. These approaches involve learning processes in which students actively participate and construct the information they encounter in their minds (Koç, 2011, p. 28) as active learning methods are designed to shift students away from a passive role as receivers and, in turn, engage them as active participants in the learning process. This situation arises by encouraging individuals in the learning process to engage in

cognitive thinking, rather than oversimplifying, enabling them to make interpretations and decisions during the learning process. In this process, the teacher serves as a guide and a facilitator to the student and assumes the role of a learner (Kalem & Fer, 2003, p. 435). In this context, education should not be confined to traditional teaching methods and physical school/classroom settings to train individuals in line with the goals of the 21st century. In this direction, a constructivist approach was adopted in Turkey in 2005, and within this framework, an educational system that is based on student-centred instruction and fosters interaction with the environment has been established. These principles were also adopted in the social studies curriculum. Thus, it was designed to ensure that learning was more permanent and higher-level skills would be developed, and the students were placed at the centre of the curriculum. In this context, out-of-school learning environments have come to the forefront, where students participate more actively in educational activities and take a central role in instructional activities.

**Out-of-School Learning**

The student-centred education approach, which is prominent in today's world, aims to make students' learning more permanent. Accordingly, students can engage in learning not only within the school environment but also in various out-of-school settings (Mutlu & Şimşek, 2019, p. 270). A school is not just a building or classroom but an institution that conducts educational activities in various locations within the surrounding community. In this context, the concept of out-of-school learning becomes prominent (Şimşek & Kaymakçı, 2015, p. 2).

Out-of-school learning is defined as educational activities conducted outside the traditional school setting. This method is executed in a structured and organized manner, similar to classroom lessons, and it makes a significant contribution to the curriculum, playing a complementary role (Bozdoğan & Kavcı, 2016, p. 15). Payne (1985, pp. 2–3) defines out-of-school instruction as the most effective teaching method or strategy chosen by a teacher to convey the intended curriculum outcomes to students. According to Ford (1986, pp. 4–5), out-of-school learning

encompasses extensive learning environments that start from the schoolyard and include places such as zoos, nearby industrial facilities, sea or lakes, and forests.

**Contribution of Out-of-School Learning Environments to Education**

According to the constructivist approach, individuals should take responsibility for their own learning, be able to solve problems, and make decisions in the learning process. Out-of-school learning environments play an important role in imparting the mentioned higher-level skills because they provide individuals with direct, concrete interactions in various settings, allowing them to construct knowledge and thus reach subjective outcomes. In this context, out-of-school learning is one of the exemplary learning approaches that can be used to achieve the desired outcomes of the constructivist approach (Öztürk, 2019, pp. 13–14). Educational activities carried out outside the physical school/classroom environment are undoubtedly more enjoyable and instructive for students. Teachers, who serve as an educator in the educational environment, also become learners outside the school, the variety of activities increases, and the interaction between students and teachers enhances (Karakaş Özür & Şahin, 2017, p. 327). Out-of-school learning environments provide students with direct access to primary sources and offer opportunities for experiential learning (Griffin, 1998, p. 657). Additionally, Lakin (2006, p. 89) has pointed out that out-of-school learning provides real-world experiences, and these real experiences give meaning to the experiences gained within the classroom, allowing the learned information to retain in memory. Moreover, out-of-school learning allows students to compare the theoretical knowledge they acquire in school with practical applications in natural settings. In this context, students can internalize information by questioning it (Taner, 2019, p. 652). The lessons carried out in out-of-school settings and the activities implemented within this framework provide students with the opportunity to develop themselves not only cognitively but also physically and psychologically (Bozdoğan & Kavcı, 2016, pp. 26–27). Students have the freedom to choose out-of-class activities and this situation gives them a sense of autonomy and allows them to relax emotionally. These extracurricular activities are often carried

out in a group rather than individually, and thus promoting socialization among students (Karaküçük, 1999, as cited in Esen, 2010, p. 15). Furthermore, when the activities planned in out-of-school learning environments are implemented effectively and properly in line with educational goals, not only students will be limited to what they learn from textbooks in the classroom, but also they will develop social skills and the ability to express their thoughts freely (Esen, 2010, p. 14). However, a good and effective planning is required to maximize the benefits from out-of-school learning environments and activities and to align them with the goals and outcomes of the lesson (Bodur, 2015, p. 16). To effectively benefit from out-of-school learning environments, it is essential to have a good planning before conducting activities, ensure quality implementation of suitable activities in the appropriate out-of-school learning environment, and follow up with the supplementary activities in the school/classroom setting concerning the process (Torun, 2021, p. 11).

**Social Studies and Out-of-School Learning Environments**

Out-of-school learning environments are places where students are provided with opportunities to closely acquaint themselves with their living environment in accordance with the topics explicitly specified in the curriculum prepared by the Ministry of National Education and the learning outcomes aimed to be acquired by students. These opportunities are realized through activities carried out alongside regular classroom lessons or outside the physical school environment. These environments enable students to learn by doing and through experience (MEB, 2019). In this regard, the Ministry of National Education published the social studies curriculum in 2018, and the seventh item of the curriculum directly included out-of-school learning environments. Out-of-school learning environments specified in the curriculum included public institutions, schoolyard, factories, markets, exhibitions, archaeological excavation sites, workshops, museums, national parks, historical sites (historical buildings, monuments, museum cities, battlefields, virtual museum tours) (MEB, 2018, p. 10).

**The Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this study is to determine students' views on the use of out-of-school learning environments in social studies courses. Within the scope of this purpose, the research problem statement has been defined as follows: What are the students' views on historical site visits carried out within the context of out-of-school learning environments in social studies courses? In line with the purpose of the research and the problem statement, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the students' views regarding the concept of out-of-school learning?

2. What is the level of knowledge that students possess about historical sites?

3. What is the level of student participation in historical site visits?

4. What are the students' opinions on the activities conducted during historical site visits?

5. What are the students' feelings and views while visiting historical sites?

6. What are the students' views on teaching social studies lessons in out-of-school learning environments?

**Method**

In the research, a case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was employed. Qualitative research is a method that provides an interpretive perspective on the problem situation in the research with an interdisciplinary holistic approach (Altunışık et al., 2010, p. 302). In the research carried out with qualitative method, there is an effort to delve deeply into the subject of study to seek an in-depth understanding of the information. Therefore, researchers approach the research like an explorer, asking additional questions to uncover reality, and they value the subjective interpretations and perspectives of the participants (Neuman, 2012, as cited in Karataş, 2015, pp. 63–64).

**The Study Group**

The study group of the research consisted of a total of 12 students, including 7 girls and 5 boys, who were enrolled in two different 6th grade classes at a secondary school affiliated to the Muş Provincial Directorate of National Education during the 2022-2023 academic year. While determining the study group for the research, convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-probability sampling methods and suitable to the purpose, was used. This sampling method provides fast data and ease of use to the research process. Moreover, due to being easily accessible and cost-free, it is more practical when compared to other sampling methods (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p. 113).

**The Activity Process**

When determining the historical sites to visit within the scope of the research, the priority was given to the 6th-grade social studies curriculum, specifically the Culture and Heritage learning domain, the Journey Through History unit, the topic of the new homeland in Anatolia, and the achievement that analyses "the process of the Turks making Anatolia their homeland". Subsequently, the researcher explored historical sites in the vicinity, primarily in Muş province, as well as the neighbouring provinces of Bitlis, Van, and Erzurum. Considering factors such as the principle of proximity in education, alignment with the 6th-grade students' level, the design of activities in line with the subject matter and learning outcomes of the social studies course, and ease of accessibility, the area was narrowed down to historical sites within the Malazgirt district of Muş province and the Ahlat district of Bitlis province. The researcher initially carried out research on the historical sites located in the Malazgirt district, and it was determined that Malazgirt Museum, Victory Monument, Malazgirt Battle National Park, Malazgirt Castle, and Hatun Bridge were suitable for the research. Following this, the researcher did research on the historical sites located in the Ahlat district, and it was determined that Ahlat Museum, the Seljuk Square Cemetery Site, Emir Bayindir Tomb and Mosque, Twin Tombs, and Emir Bayindir Bridge were suitable for the study. After determining the historical sites to visit within the scope of the research, it was decided to conduct

the study in three stages: pre-trip, during the trip, and post-trip. Accordingly, the researcher created a total of 14 activities, each designed to be carried out individually within these three stages, in alignment with the purpose of the research. The stages at which the activities would be implemented and the names of the activities were displayed in Table 1:

Table 1 – Activities

| Pre-trip | During the Trip | Post-trip |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ➢ Photography Activity<br>➢ Virtual Museum Visit(Ahlat The Seljuk Square Cemetery ) | ➢ Guess What<br>➢ Worksheet (Hatun Bridge)<br>➢ Worksheet (Emir Bayındır Bridge)<br>➢ Search and Find Activity<br>➢ Become a Statue Activity<br>➢ My Trip Diary (Emir Bayındır Mosque and Tomb)<br>➢ My Trip Diary (Ahlat The Seljuk Square Cemetery) | ➢ Photography Activity<br>➢ My Dear Diary (Malazgirt)<br>➢ My Dear Diary (Ahlat)<br>➢ Puzzle Activity<br>➢ Taboo Activity |

While developing the activities, it was considered that they should align with the 6th grade Culture and Heritage learning domain, the learning outcomes of the Journey to History unit, reflect the distinct skills and values associated with the social studies course, and be tailored  to the specific historical sites to be visited.

**Data Collection**

The "Questionnaire Form", "Semi-Structured Interview Form", and "Student Trip Diary" developed by the researcher were used to determine the opinions of the students who participated in the research regarding the use of out-of-school

learning environments in social studies courses. The open-ended questionnaire aimed to determine students' opinions about out-of-school learning and the concept of historical site. In addition, it also aimed to gather information about any previous experiences they may have had with historical site visits and and their level of knowledge regarding the historical and cultural sites in their local area before historical site visits. The questions included in the survey form were created by receiving expert opinion, and an attention was paid to prepare the questions objectively and to ensure that they were clear and understandable regarding students' levels. In the research, a semi-structured interview form was used to reveal students' opinions about historical site visits after the visits had taken place. During the preparation stage of the interview form, similar studies were examined, and a semi-structured interview form was created by preparing the survey items. Expert opinions were sought, and necessary corrections were made on the form. Subsequently, following a pilot study, some questions that were not understood by the students were removed, and the interview form was finalized. In addition to the questions in the survey and interview forms used for collecting qualitative data in the study, diary forms prepared by the researcher were distributed to the students after the trips. This allowed data to be collected in written form from the participants through the diaries. The trip diaries were distributed to the students immediately after the Malazgirt and Ahlat trips, and the students were asked to keep a diary about their experiences during the trips.

**Data Analysis**

The qualitative data obtained in the study were analysed with content analysis. After analysing the data, content analysis is described as the systematic coding of data following specific rules to condense specific terms in a text into smaller content categories. The purpose of content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships in order to explain the obtained data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p. 227). The data obtained through the interview form in the study was transcribed by the researcher using a computer, and care was taken to ensure that all the participants' responses were accurately transcribed at this stage. Codes were created based on

the concepts derived from the data obtained in content analysis. Direct quotations were included to support the data obtained from the questionnaires and interview forms and to reflect the participants' views more accurately. At this stage, the principle of confidentiality was observed, and quotations from the students' responses were indicated as Q1, Q2, Q3, ... Q12.

**Findings**

In this section of the research, data analysis was executed for the 6 sub-problems identified in line with the purpose of the research, and the findings obtained were presented elaborately. The findings in this section were obtained from the questionnaire form and the students' opinions were presented below the tables.

**Findings related to the 1st sub-problem**

In the first sub-problem, the question "Can you explain what comes to your mind when we say out-of-school learning in social studies course? was asked to determine students' opinions regarding the use of out-of-school learning environments in social studies lessons, and the results obtained from the responses were classified.

Table 2 – Students' Views on Out-of-School Learning in Social Studies Courses

| Views | ƒ | % |
|---|---|---|
| Museums | 10 | 31 |
| Out-of-school teaching activities | 7 | 23 |
| Historical sites | 6 | 19 |
| Out-of-school settings | 4 | 13 |
| Historical artifacts | 2 | 7 |
| Other(s) | 2 | 7 |
| **Total** | 31 | 100 |

When Table 2 is examined, it is observed that when out-of- school learning in social studies courses is mentioned, the first concept that most students associate with out-of-school learning in social studies lessons is museums. The students regarded instructional activities conducted outside the school, historical sites, locations outside the school, and historical artifacts as various forms of out-of-school learning. Some student views on this topic are expressed below:

- *Q1: Out-of-school learning is defined as getting to know historical sites, museums, and works of art by seeing them, expressing our thoughts, and expressing ourselves.*

- *Q5: Education, as they say, is not confined to a four-walled structure; it can take place in museums, in nature, and everywhere.*

- *Q8: We learn in museums, for example, museums house historical artifacts. We benefit from these historical artifacts, or we read historical books. In this way, out-of-school learning occurs.*

- *Q10: It is about learning things that we haven't learnt in school in out-of-school environment. It's about going to museums and learning about historical things. It's about applying what we learned in the classroom in real-life situations.*

- *Q6: Learning social studies course outside the school.*

- *Q2: Education that occurs outside the school environment, where instruction is delivered, knowledge is imparted, and teaching is both effective and engaging, is commonly referred to as out-of-school learning. Examples include museums, national parks, bridges, mosques, mansions, and similar places.*

- *Q6: Going to historical sites and teaching lessons, gaining information about them. Q12: Palaces, gardens, cities, power plants open to visitors, cemeteries, parks, and museums are visited.*

**Findings related to the 2nd sub-problem**

In the second sub-problem, the aim was to determine the level of knowledge that students have about historical sites. For this purpose, the following questions were posed: "How would you define the concept of a historical site?" and "Can you

provide examples of historical sites in your surroundings?", and the results obtained from the responses were classified.

Table 3 – Students' Views on the Definition of the Concept of Historical Sites

| Views | ƒ | % |
|---|---|---|
| Historical artifacts | 8 | 53 |
| Surviving architectural structures from the past | 4 | 27 |
| Museums | 2 | 13 |
| Other(s) | 1 | 7 |
| **Total** | 15 | 100 |

When Table 3 is examined, it is evident that students most commonly associate historical artifacts with the definition of historical sites. Additionally, students also define historical sites as architectural structures from the past, museums, and science centres. Some student opinions on this topic are as follows:

- *Q1: Historical sites, buildings and architectural structures and artifacts that have survived from different periods or ancient eras and have reached the present day.*

- *Q3: When we say historical site, it is a place with old mansions, houses, madrasas, and decorated with art and paintings.*

- *Q8: For example, mosques and bridges are historical places. They are the historical artifacts in museums.*

- *Q9: Tombs, mosques, madrasas, castles, cemeteries, houses, and bridges could be historical places.*

- *Q12: Historical sites refer to old houses, mosques, madrasas, mausoleums, and schools from the past.*

- *Q6: Historical sites are places that were built in the past and have survived up to the present day.*

- *Q7: For example, museums, old mosques, old schools and so on.*

Table 4 – TheViews Regarding Students' Awareness of Historical Sites in Their Surroundings

| Views | f | % |
|---|---|---|
| Not knowing historical sites | 11 | 92 |
| Knowing historical sites | 1 | 8 |
| **Total** | 12 | 100 |

When Table 4 is examined, it is observed that the vast majority of students (92%) stated that they do not know the historical sites in their surroundings. Some student opinions on this topic are presented below:

- **Q1:** *I don't know any historical sites.*
- **Q11:** *I don't know the historical sites in my surroundings.*
- **Q6:** *The Seljuk cemetery in Ahlat.*

**Findings related to the 3rd sub-problem**

In the third sub-problem, the aim was to determine whether or not the students joined any historical site trips. For this purpose, the following questions were asked: "Have you ever participated in a historical site visit (castle, ancient city, mosque, tomb, house, bridge, monument, etc.)?" and "If you have never participated in such a visit before, would you like to join such visits? Can you explain the reasons?", and the results obtained from the responses were categorized.

Table 5 – Student Views Regarding Their Participation in Historical Site Visits

| Views | f | % |
|---|---|---|
| I haven't | 9 | 75 |
| I have | 3 | 25 |
| **Total** | 12 | 100 |

When Table 5 is examined, it is observed that the vast majority of students participating in the research (75%) have not participated in any historical site visits before. Some student opinions on this topic are as follows:

Table 6 – Student Views Regarding Their Desire to Participate in Historical Site
Visits Which They Haven't Joined Before

| Views | ƒ | % |
|---|---|---|
| I would like to | 9 | 100 |
| **Total** | 9 | 100 |

When Table 6 is examined, it is observed that all students who have not participated in historical site visits (100%) expressed their desire to participate in such visits.

Table 7 – Students' Views Regarding Their Reasons Why They Want to Join
Historical Site Visits

| Views | ƒ | % |
|---|---|---|
| Having information | 7 | 43 |
| Exploring different places | 3 | 19 |
| Being curious | 3 | 19 |
| Other(s) | 3 | 19 |
| **Total** | 16 | 100 |

When Table 7 is examined, it is observed that students generally express their desire to participate in historical site visits with the intention of acquiring knowledge and learning. Furthermore, students have expressed their willingness to participate in historical site visits for various reasons, such as the desire to explore different places, satisfy their curiosity, personal development, and engage in research. Here are some student opinions related to this:

● *Q1: Because I would like to see different places, learn about different states, visit museums, and witness historical buildings and structures.*

● *Q3: I really wonder what I will encounter there.*

● *Q4: I would like to explore historical places.*

● *Q6: Yes, I really would like to join such visits. My family and teachers have not organized any trips. I have not joined any trips, but I would like to because I want to learn and have information about our history and past.*

- ***Q11:*** *Because I want to gain more information.*
- ***Q12:*** *Yes, because I want to learn about the history, culture and the states that were founded here.*

The findings in this section have been obtained from the  semi-structured interviews and are presented below the tables, reflecting the views of the students.

***Findings related to the 4th sub-problem***

In the fourth sub-problem, the question "Which activity carried out during the historical site visits did you like most? Why?" was asked to determine students' opinions about the activities carried out during the historical site visits, and the results obtained from these responses were categorized.

Table 8 – Students' Views on Which Activities They Liked Most During the Historical Site Visits

| *Views* | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Guess What? | 9 | 31 |
| Search and Find | 6 | 21 |
| Worksheet | 6 | 21 |
| My Trip Diary | 5 | 17 |
| Become a Statue | 3 | 10 |
| **Total** | 29 | 100 |

According to Table 8, it is revealed that students liked the activity "Guess What" most among the activities carried out during the historical site visits.

Table 9 – Students' Views Regarding Their Reasons for Liking the Activities Carried out During the Historical Site Visits

| Views | ƒ | % |
|---|---|---|
| Being enjoyable | 8 | 44 |
| Being interesting | 5 | 28 |
| Being educational | 4 | 22 |
| Expressing no opinion | 1 | 6 |
| **Total** | 18 | 100 |

When Table 9 is examined, it is found that the most frequently mentioned reason among students for liking the activities conducted during the historical site visits is that they find them enjoyable. Additionally, the reasons such as being interesting and educational also have an effect on students' liking of the activities. Here are some student views on this topic:

- *Q3: Sir, well what we did was to read. We were running around while trying to find out which one they were, and thus we had fun. It was really good.*
- *Q4: Sir, I really enjoyed it. We were not only running around but also participating in a competition to identify the great Turkish states.*
- *Q8: Because it caught my interest at the cemetery, I wrote down the things that drew my attention there.*
- *Q2: Sir, because they were both fun and educational. They were informative as well.*
- *Q5: Sir, I got a little out of breath, but there were many questions there, and I could understand them. It also contributed to the lesson.*

**Findings related to the 5th sub-problem**

In the fifth sub-problem, the question "What did you feel while visiting the historical sites? Can you explain?" was asked to determine what students felt during the historical site visits, and the data obtained from the responses were categorized.

Table 10 – Students' Views Regarding Their Feelings During the Historical Site Visits

| Views | F | % |
|---|---|---|
| Feeling emotional | 7 | 17 |
| Getting excited | 6 | 14 |
| Being frightened | 6 | 14 |
| Being happy | 5 | 12 |
| Having fun | 5 | 12 |
| Being surprised | 3 | 7 |
| Feeling sad | 3 | 7 |
| Feeling curious | 3 | 7 |
| Feeling proud | 3 | 7 |
| Not expressing an opinion | 1 | 3 |
| **Total** | 42 | 100 |

When Table 10 is examined, it is observed that the students experienced various emotions during historical site visits. They most often felt emotional, excited, and frightened. Additionally, the students expressed that they not only  had fun but also they were happy, surprised, sad, curious, and proud during these visits. Here are some student opinions on this topic:

- *Q4: Sir, for example, our soldiers were fighting in ancient times, that's why I was moved. For instance, how they protected the country and how things happened, sir. That's why I was moved. Sir, in the National Park, you know the flag was on the ground. The flag shouldn't have been placed on the ground. Sir, for example, the Turkish flag shouldn't have been on the ground.*

- *Q8: I felt excited. For example, I both felt excited and saw that my friends were excited, too. That was also an emotion. In the museum, you know, when we entered the museum, I got very excited because I was stepping on that ground.*

- *Q5: For example, sir, those sculptures, that is, they looked as if they were alive. When I touched them, I got a little scared because, you know they looked like real people.  I saw those figures who were chopping wood, representing life in Anatolia, and I thought they were real. I got very scared when I saw them.*

- ***Q12:*** *I was really surprised when I saw the Victory Monument, sir. I have never seen something so huge in my life before. And not only was I surprised, but I also found it very interesting. When I went to Malazgirt Castle, I thought a lot and was amazed because I saw the inside of Malazgirt Castle for the first time. The inside of the castle was so large that I was amazed. When we reached the edge of the castle, there was such a huge flag that I thought of it as a skyscraper. That's why I was very, very surprised. I was surprised and had thoughtful feelings. In addition, I felt as if I had seen something interesting. I was just amazed.*
- ***Q2:*** *Sir, I was filled with a sense of pride due to the events in our history and their efforts to protect our country. There was a feeling of pride.*

Some of the opinions expressed by the students in the "Student Trip Diary" distributed to the students after the trips included the following:

- **Q1:** *In the National Park, there was a conquest road. It was a very wide plain. Alp Arslan had fought here and used the crescent tactic. We also had a race there. We had so much fun.*
- **Q2:** *When I visited the historical museums, I got a bit excited but to be honest, I was very proud.*
- **Q3:** *We carried out activities, had fun, and laughed.*
- **Q6:** *While we were doing research in Ahlat Museum, I saw a statue made of wax It looked like a person and I got scared.*
- **Q8:** *We had our pictures taken during the trips. We learned and had fun, that is, it was really good.*

**Findings related to the 6th sub-problem**

In the sixth sub-problem, the question "Can you explain the benefits of having lessons in out-of-school learning environments for the social studies lesson?" was asked to determine the students' views on the advantages of teaching social studies lessons in out-of-school learning environments, and the data obtained from the responses were categorized.

Table 11 – Students' Views on the Benefits of Teaching Social Studies in Out-of-School Learning Environments

| Views | f | % |
|---|---|---|
| Learning by doing (Experiential learning) | 10 | 32 |
| Better understanding of social studies course | 9 | 29 |
| Making it fun | 3 | 10 |
| Rapid learning | 3 | 10 |
| Learning the past | 3 | 10 |
| Arousing curiosity | 2 | 6 |
| Not expressing an opinion | 1 | 3 |
| **Total** | 31 | 100 |

When Table 11 is examined, the students express that teaching social studies course in out-of-school learning environments contributes most to learning by doing, in other words, experiential learning. In addition, students have expressed that lessons taught in out-of-school learning environments help them better understand social studies, make the subject more fun, facilitate faster learning, and arouse their curiosity about the subject. Here are some student opinions on this topic:

- **Q8:** *I think learning outside the school is better because we can see, touch, and feel these things. That's the difference in touching. It's about feeling. For example, sir, this is a cemetery. I can't touch it at school. But at school, I can only see it on the blackboard, but when I go there, I can touch it, feel my emotions, and understand what I feel better.*

- **Q10:** *Sir, you see, we study it in school, but we learn it better outside, it retains in our minds better. Besides, at school, we see it on the blackboard, but when we go there, we see it in real life. We learn better, and it retains in our minds better.*

- **Q2:** *Sir, firstly, out-of-school learning helps us get to know our surroundings, learn about historical sites, and understand what happened in our past. It contributes to us in these ways. Knowing our history, understanding our*

*culture, and all these things contribute to our social studies lessons. This means*
*to understand the events in our history and get to know them.*

- ● **Q1:** *Sir, what I mean is that it makes contribution to us by being more curious*
  *and learning social studies lesson better.*

**Results and Discussion**

In this section of the study, the findings obtained as a result of the research questions have been associated with the relevant literature, and the results obtained have been presented. The results have been compared with the relevant literature, and some recommendations have been made.

**Results Related to the 1st Sub-Problem**

The first sub-problem of the research aims to reveal students' views on the concept. In this context, when the obtained data were examined, it was found that the majority of the students associated the concept of out-of-school learning with museums. In addition, it was determined that the participants expressed their association of carrying out instructional activities outside the physical school environment and historical sites with the concept of out-of-school learning. Furthermore, the participants also connected various places outside of school, such as cram schools, libraries, parks, gardens, and historical artifacts with out-of-school learning environments. These results align with the results of the studies carried out by Çetin (2021), Torun (2021), Seyhan (2020), Öztürk (2019), Topçu (2017), Öner (2015) and Çepni & Aydın (2015).

**Results Related to the 2nd Sub-Problem**

The second sub-problem of the research aims to reveal students' views regarding the definition of the concept of historical sites and their level of knowledge related to historical sites in their surroundings. In this context, when the data obtained was exmined, it was concluded that a significant number of the students defined the concept of historical sites as historical artifacts such as houses,

mansions, madrasas, mosques, castles, cemeteries, shrines, bridges, schools, and so on. In addition, it was observed that the students also defined the concept of historical sites as museums and architectural structures surviving from the past. Another opinion mentioned in relation to the definition of historical sites is science facilities. According to the results obtained, it was concluded that most of the students did not know the historical sites in their surroundings. The results show similarities with the findings in the studies carried out by Yalçın (2019) and Öner (2015) but differ from those in the study conducted by Şahin (2022).

**Results Related to the 3rd Sub-Problem**

The third sub-problem of the research aims to determine whether or not the students participated in historical site visits before. In this context, when the data obtained was examined, it was concluded that a significant number of the students had not participated in historical site visits before. The results obtained in the research are similar to the findings in the studies carried out by Şahin (2022), Atayeter & Tozkoparan (2014), and Kızılay (2014), Dinç (2017) and Gürkan (2004) in their studies determined that most of the students had joined museum trips before. The results of these studies are different from the results of this study.

**Results Related to the 4th Sub-Problem**

The fourth sub-problem of the research aims to determine students' views on the activities carried out during the historical site visits. In this context, when the data obtained was examined, it was revealed that the students liked the "Guess What" activity carried out at the Malazgirt Battle National Park a lot. The students stated that they chose this activity because it was fun. When the students' responses were examined, it was concluded that they also liked the "Search and Find" activity carried out at the Ahlat Museum, as well as the "Worksheet" activities conducted at the Malazgirt Hatun Bridge and Ahlat Emir Bayındır Bridge. In addition, the students expressed that they liked the "My Trip Diary" activity at the Seljuk Square Cemetery and Emir Bayındır Mosque and Tomb, as well as the "Become a Statue" activity at the Ahlat Museum. In addition to these, it was concluded that because the

extracurricular activities were interesting, had educational qualities, provided students with the opportunity to move freely and have fun, and the activities were carried out in the form of educational games, they played an important role in students enjoyment of the activities. The results obtained in the research are similar to the results obtained from the studies carried out by Prince and Diggory (2023), Egüz'ün (2020), Avcı and Gümüş (2019), Mert (2019), Özdemir (2016), Kızılay (2014), Çalışkan & Çerkez (2012), Tunç Şahin (2011) and Çulha (2006).

**Results Related to the 5th Sub-Problem**

The fifth sub-problem of the research aims to explore what students feel when they visit historical sites. In this context, when the data obtained was examined, it was concluded that a significant number of the students were deeply moved during the trips. In addition, it was determined that students experienced excitement, fear, happiness, and enjoyment during historical site visits. In terms of what they felt during the historical site trips, some students expressed that they felt different emotions such as being surprised, sad, curious, and proud.

The results obtained in the research are consistent with the existing studies carried out in the relevant literature. The following studies can be given as examples: Abdurakhman et al.(2022), Sevigen (2021), Kartal & Şeyihoğlu (2020), Avcı & Gümüş (2019), Yalçın (2019), Harris & Bilton (2019), Fägerstam (2014), Karadeniz & Ata (2013), Çalışkan & Çerkez (2012), Humberstone & Stan (2011), Ballantyne & Packer (2002), Filiz (2010), Yılmaz, Kaya & Çolak (2009).

**Results Related to the 6th Sub-Problem**

The sixth sub-problem of the research aims to determine students' views regarding the benefits of teaching social studies lessons in out-of-school learning environments. In this context, when the data obtained was examined, it was observed that the majority of students expressed that studying lessons in out-of-school learning environments contributed to experiential learning. In this context, the students mentioned the benefit of experiential learning due to the prominence of the sense of touch when visiting historical sites. A significant number of the

students expressed that they better understood social studies lessons when they studied them in out-of-school learning environments. Moreover, the students also expressed that the lessons taught in out-of-school learning environments were more enjoyable. They also stated that when they studied social studies lessons in out-of-school settings, they learned the material more quickly. Furthermore, the students mentioned that out-of-school learning environments contributed to their understanding of the past and aroused their curiosity about the course.

The results in this study are similar to the results of the studies carried out by Sulistyo et al. (2022), Çetin (2021), Alfiani (2020), Torun (2021), Çınar, Utkugün & Gazel (2021), Demir (2021), Sevigen (2021), Arianti & Aminatun (2019), Avcı & Gümüş (2019), Anahtarcıoğlu (2019), Thomas (2019), Sjöblom & Svens (2019), Topçu (2017), Uztemur, Dinç & Acun (2018), Çepni & Aydın (2015), Kamçı (2015), Öner (2015), Sözer (2015), Zayimoğlu Öztürk (2014), Fägerstam (2014), Akkuş & Meydan (2013), Çengelci (2013), Yılmaz & Şeker (2011), Filiz (2010), Ajiboye & Olatundun (2010), Yazıcıoğlu (2010), Yılmaz, Kaya & Çolak (2009), Gökkaya & Yeşilbursa (2009), Yeşilbursa (2008), Çulha (2006), Gürkan (2004), Orion et al. (1997).

**Recommendations**

- Bureaucratic procedures necessary for organizing trips to out-of-school learning environments (official permits, vehicle procurement, etc.) can be made more streamlined and easier.
- School trips can be organized to help students become familiar with historical sites located in their local area.
- Virtual museum applications can be utilized in the schools where access to out-of-school learning environments, especially museums and historical sites, is limited.
- Out-of-school learning activities should not be limited to just social studies course but should be conducted in harmony with other courses as well.

- In this research, the study group consisted of 6th-grade students. Studies can also be conducted in out-of-school learning environments with the students studying in the 7th and 8th grades, as well as with students at the secondary and higher education levels.
- The study group of the research consisted of 12 participants. Researchers can conduct similar studies with larger study groups.
- In this research, the students' views on out-of-school learning environments have been included. Researchers can also carry out studies that incorporate teacher and administrator views on this topic.

## Aknowledgment

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