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RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Overview of the Legal Literacy Skill in the Social Studies Curriculum from the Perspective of Jurists

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Abstract

Social Studies aims to raise effective citizens. Legal literacy contributes to this aim. Legal literacy skill is a new skill that needs to be drawn for teachers, as it is a skill that was added to the social studies curriculum in 2018 and did not include adequate explanation in the curriculum. So jurists' views about this skill can be a guide for educators. The main purpose of this study is to examine the legal literacy skills in the social studies education program based on the perspective of jurists. The study was designed in a phenomenology pattern. The study was carried out with 20 jurists who were working as lawyers, prosecutors, judges, and academicians. The data of the study were collected through face-to-face interviews. These data were analyzed through content analysis. The following themes were obtained from the analyzed data: the contribution of having legal knowledge to society; the importance of having legal literacy skills in the context of effective citizenship; necessary sources to acquire legal literacy skills; the dimensions in teaching legal literacy skills; potential activities in teaching legal literacy skills; and institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to teach legal literacy skills.

Keywords: Interview, jurists, law literacy, legal literacy, skill, social studies

Introduction

All societies from the past to the present have adopted the existing political system and the rules of law which they make it a way of life. In addition, societies would like to produce citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities and who are sensitive to the country they live in and also to the whole world. The course that serves to raise citizens directly in primary education programs is that of social studies. It would not be incorrect to say that the social studies course is an interdisciplinary field. The learning domains of social studies courses are integrated with different areas of social sciences such as history, geography, economy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, political science, and law, as well as with topics including human rights, citizenship, and democracy (MEB, 2018). The relation of the social studies courses to law is mentioned in the special objectives of the social studies lessons in the social studies education program as follows: "students should know that the rules of law bind everyone and that all individuals and organizations are equal before the law." In addition, it is seen that one of the 27 basic skills aimed to be acquired by students in the program is legal literacy skills. However, there is no explanation in the program about what the legal literacy skill is, which learning areas should be associated with the program, and at what level and in what ways this skill can be given at primary school level. Given that the legal literacy skill is one of the newly added skills in the social studies education program, it can be said that there is an uncertainty in teaching this skill. Goldberg (2004) defined literacy as a way to understand written documents on any subject in daily life activities, to develop individuals'

knowledge in order to achieve this goal in home, business, or society, or to develop their potential.

Legal literacy can be defined in various ways. For instance, it is to understand the sources of law and legal terms as well as to use them at the right time and in the right place when faced with the concepts related to law (Oğuz, 2013) or it refers to the ability to read and write legal documents (Zariski, 2014). It is having knowledge and an understanding about law and capacity to critically think about legal processes and sources (Manley-Casimir & Cassidy, 1986). Legal literacy is also defined to be familiar with the rights and responsibilities and about how to access necessary legal information and to employ legal ways to solve the problems (Canadian Bar Association, 1992). The legal literacy project conducted by Turkey Bar Association, which was initiated to improve legal literacy of individuals from different age groups and occupations, is introduced as follows: "it is a program in which basic legal information and fundamental rights are transferred by sharing the subject." The major goals of the legal literacy are stated as follows:

- Contributing to the rule of law and awareness of right seeking in society with our intellectual legal identity,
- Informing citizens about basic legal information and their rights, raising awareness of individuals, contributing to the functioning and development of freedom to seek rights,
- To contribute to the development of the law profession, the defense institution, to understand that there will be no defense without a lawyer and to improve the dignity of the profession and to inform

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those individuals who do not have an economic opportunity to access to justice,

- To organize public seminars and informative meetings together with city councils, municipalities, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and institutions to explain basic legal information. (<http://www.tbbhukukokuryazarligi.com/Home/Amaclar>).

When the project aims are analyzed in terms of educational goals, it can be said that the prominent elements are included with the dimensions of the rule of law, right-seeking behavior, basic legal information, professional guidance on legal professions, and cooperation with official and civilian stakeholders in the society. In this context, these dimensions can be taken into consideration while dealing with the legal literacy skills in the social studies courses.

In the USA where legal literacy is a dimension in the social studies courses, legal literacy is named with the concept of law-related education. Legal literacy has been featured in the social studies courses for many years in the context of issues related to citizenship. In the law-related education there are two major perspectives: traditional perspective and modern perspective. In traditional understanding, individuals are given information about the American Constitution and its first 10 articles as well as about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, in regard to the educational activities adopting this approach it is stated that the majority of learners have difficulty in comprehending and associating the importance of the universal declaration of constitution and human rights with daily life. In modern approach the content of political sciences is employed, and the focus is on what is the function of law in daily life. More specifically, the major topic is how the law can help people in social life problems and conflicts by rational and critical handling of social problems and conflicts. However, it does not mean that this approach does not deal with the constitution and human rights statement. Instead, in modern approach these topics are discussed somewhat differently (Savage & Armstrong, 1996). It can be said that addressing legal literacy only at the cognitive level will not contribute to the transformation of this concept into skills.

Today, priority values and issues affecting our lives are more emphasized in law-related education. For instance, in this education living documents are employed. Such documents are used in government, law, education, universities, business, and technology companies and for various other purposes. Law-related education attempts to make it possible for individuals to observe the legal system and to make use of the legal system positively. This education allows students to fully grasp the roles of those who make, administer, and enforce the law and to recognize the values uniting the society and the conflicts dividing the society. It is important to design courses to help students understand the difficult problems with rarely correct or incorrect answers and to consider priority values as well as evidence in decision-making in order to examine controversial issues and social problems in the law-related education process. There is a learning-teaching process in which it is

encouraged to find legal solutions to problems (Savage & Armstrong, 1996). Michaelis and Garcia (1996) summarized the legal themes that can be addressed in the social studies courses (Figure 1).

Lack of legal literacy in a society causes failure in the protection and continuation of fairness and equality. Citizens must have legal literacy skills for peace and continuity of societies (Rani, 2014). Law-related education is not intended to turn students into miniature lawyers. Instead, it attempts to serve for the general goals of social studies courses. It contains the following topics: learning of the basic content, categorizing the values and using the skills of critical thinking and problem-solving. On the other hand, Savage and Armstrong (1996) provide the topics that can be dealt with in social studies courses in relation to law as follows (Figure 2).

In the context of basic legal concepts, the concepts of justice, injustice, freedom, equality, property, legal process, power, discrimination, and privacy can be emphasized. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be discussed using daily-life examples. In order to observe how the legal system works, the activities performed by courts, lawyers, prosecutors, judges and the trial process can be emphasized. Intervention limits and role of the security forces in society can be discussed. Students can be made aware of the fact that laws are the basis of the decision-making processes (Savage and Armstrong, 1996). While the issues related to law are addressed in the social studies courses, there are some concepts that students should know as a prerequisite or that they should learn in the process. Michaelis and Garcia (1996) propose to teach the following law-related concepts in the courses which are illustrated in Figure 3.

Within the law-related education the goals are to make students to gain basic competency in the fields of criminal law, the law of domestic relations, and consumer law. In regard to the criminal law, students have knowledge from an early age, and this contributes to the reduction of crime rate by raising individuals who adopt lawful behaviors. Concerning the criminal law, basic elements such as what kind of behaviors are included in the scope of crime and what are the consequences of behaviors that violate the law are taught in the courses. In regard to consumer law, the basic topics to be discussed include consumers rights and responsibilities. In addition, in the courses, advertisements, contracts, warranty documents, fraud, and information and symbols on the products are emphasized. In regard to the law of domestic relations, topics such as marriage, divorce, legal responsibilities of parents, adoption, child abuse, violence, will, and death are emphasized. Resource persons can be invited to the classroom as speakers to help students acquire legal literacy skills. Lawyers, members of legal associations, managers, or employees invited from legal institutions and organizations can contribute to classes as resource persons (Savage & Armstrong, 1996). Law-related issues at primary school level can be addressed in the context of necessary rules and principles by addressing business life, play, coexistence, home, school



Figure 1.

Legal Themes That Can Be Addressed in the Social Studies Courses (Adopted from Michaelis & Garcia, 1996).

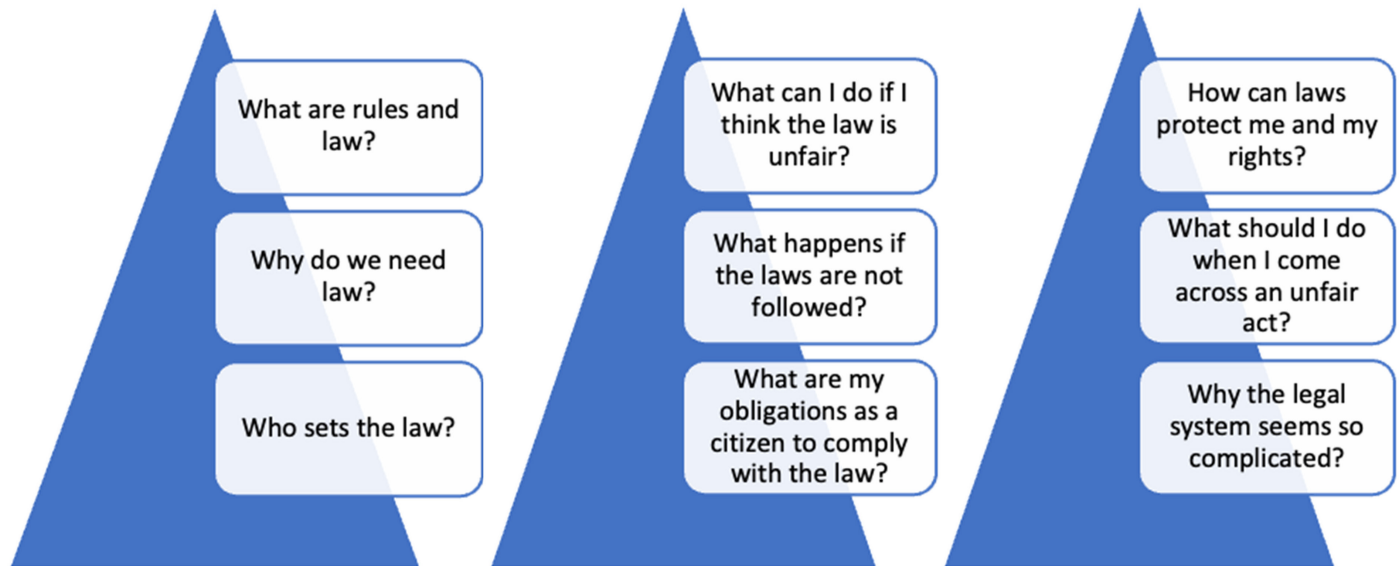


Figure 2.

Topics That Can Be Dealt with in Social Studies Courses in Relation to Law (adapted from Savage & Armstrong, 1996).

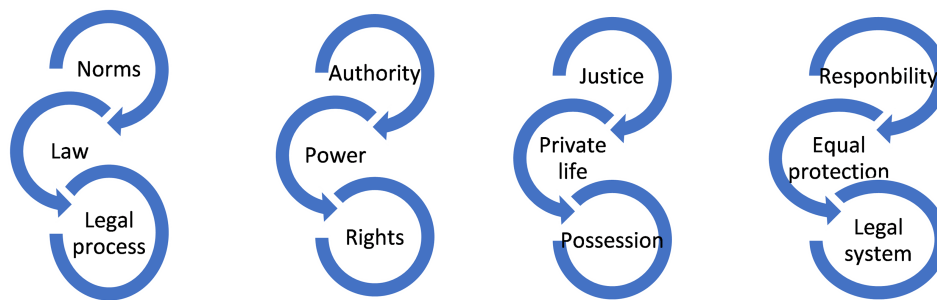


Figure 3.

Concepts That Can Be Dealt with in Teaching Issues Related to Law.

and society. In the later levels of education, topics should be expanded to include both current and historical events, and should be addressed in the light of the topics such as justice, equality and human rights. Laws and regulations regarding rights, responsibilities, use of authority, health, safety, entertainment, and property acquisition should be emphasized by considering the dimensions that touch the life of students in the teaching of legal issues. The main objectives of teaching legal literacy skills can be listed as follows (Michaelis & Garcia, 1996):

- To meet the need for the classification of rules and laws aimed at achieving a balance between individual freedom and social welfare.
- To contribute to the understanding of concepts such as justice, equality, authority, judicial process, responsibility, property acquisition, human rights, and private life.
- To ensure understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the representatives of the legal system, as well as understanding the constitution that underlies the legal system.
- To develop thinking and decision-making skills on legal issues.
- Supporting the fight against abuse of authority as individuals and groups by increasing students' self-competence beliefs and by reducing their insensitivity and alienation.

There are limited number of studies on legal literacy in Turkey (Kara & Tangülü, 2017; Oğuz Hacı and Çakmak, 2018; Oğuz, 2013; Sabancı and Karaman Kepenekçi, 2018; Sönmez et al., 2019). However, such studies are very frequent in international context (Cassidy, 2014; Decker, 2014; Gilbert, 2017; Grimes, 2018; Jacopson and Palonsky,

1981; Kozhukhova and Zhiyenbayev, 2018; Leming, 1995; Militello and Schimmel, 2008; Mirabile, 2013; Peña Carranco, 2016; Sametz et al., 1983; Zariski, 2014). The term legal literacy is also used with distinct terms, including law literacy, law-related education, and legal education. However, the content of these terms is almost similar. No study has been found in which the legal literacy skills are examined from the perspective of jurists. However, if the legal literacy skills are considered in terms of the understanding of jurists, this enables us to provide legal bases in the social literacy curriculum on a more solid ground, to determine the basic dimensions, and to provide a basis for how legal literacy skills should be gained in collaboration with which institutions and organizations or professions and by using which basic resources. In this context, it is hoped that this study will fill this gap in the related literature and shed light on how practitioners and researchers should develop law literacy among students in the social studies courses. The main purpose of this research is to examine the legal literacy skills in the social studies education program based on the perspective of lawyers.

Methods

Design of the Study

The study was designed based on the principles of the phenomenology pattern. The purpose of the phenomenology pattern is to determine what the experiences of all participants are about a certain case (Creswell, 2013). The reason for choosing the design of the study in the form of phenomenology pattern is that a subject with a phenomenon (the law literacy skill, which is a new skill added to the social studies education program) is selected, as well as that the participants of the

study are selected from those who have direct experience with the subject matter. In the context of drawing a conceptual framework for legal literacy, it is thought that the participants of the study, being jurists, who have experienced law both in business life and who have received legal education, may offer a different perspective.

Participants

The maximum diversity sampling technique was used in determining the participants of the study. In studies where sample size is small, having high levels of diversity is a significant problem. However, this problem can be eliminated by using maximum diversity sampling technique, and similar aspects of the cases examined can be identified by focusing on common patterns of large differences (Travers, 2001). In social studies research the criteria used for maximum variation include the following social and individual variables: occupation, institution, age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, and health status (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The criteria for maximum variation used in the study are lawyers, prosecutors, judges, and academics working in the private or public sphere of law. Maximum diversity can be defined as creating a sample with different characteristics. The participants of the study included three lawyers (one of them had an active role in legal literacy projects conducted by the Bar Association of Turkey), three public prosecutors, three judges, and three faculty members from the school of law (assistant professor Dr., associate professor Dr., professor Dr. holding doctoral degrees). The total number of the participants was 12. The major personal characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

Data Collection

The data of the study were collected through an interview form, which was developed by the author. It is consisted of six open-ended items. The items in the form were developed based on the findings of the related studies on teaching of legal literacy skills within a conceptual framework. The interview form was reviewed by five field specialists (they were five faculty members in the field of teaching of social studies). Based on their feedback the form was finalized. The face-to-face interviews with the participants were conducted between September 10, 2019, and January 10, 2020. Each interview lasted for

15–25 minutes. The total duration of the interviews was 224 minutes. The interviews were recorded.

Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were transcribed. These documents were analyzed through the content analysis method. The content analysis technique was used to analyze the qualitative data. Necessary arrangements were made by discussing the subjects on which there were “consensus” and “dissensus,” and master keys and the printout forms obtained from the interviews were read by the researchers separately. The reliability formula that was suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used for the reliability calculation of the study. As a result of calculation, the reliability of the study was found to be 90%. Reliability calculations above 70% have been accepted as reliable for further studies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, the results obtained in the present study were accepted as reliable for further studies.

Findings

The findings obtained in the study are presented in tables which are supported by direct quotations from the responses of the participants. The findings are gathered under six major themes. These themes are shown in Figure 4.

As can be seen in Figure 4, the views of the participants produced six major themes about the legal literacy skills. These themes are as follows: the contribution of having legal knowledge to society; the importance of having legal literacy skills in the context of effective citizenship; necessary resources to acquire the legal literacy skills; the dimensions in teaching legal literacy skills; potential activities in teaching legal literacy skills; and institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to teach legal literacy skills. Table 2 illustrates the views of the participants about the first theme, the jurists’ contributions to society with their legal identity.

As can be seen in Table 2, the participants’ views on the jurists’ contributions to society with their legal identity are grouped into three subthemes: professional contributions, contributions through educational activities and informal contributions. In the professional context, they provide formal contributions through their legal identity (i.e., lawyer, judge, prosecutor, academician). They expressed their contribution through educational activities in the form of training activities they

Table 1.
Characteristics of the Participants

	Lawyer	Public Prosecutors	Judges	Faculty Members
Gender				
Female	2	3	1	1
Male	1	–	2	2
Professional experience				
1–5 years	1	1	1	–
6–10 years	1	–	1	1
11–15 years	–	–	–	1
16–20 years	1	1	1	1
21+ years	–	1	–	–
Age (years)				
22–30	1	–	–	–
31–40	1	1	–	1
41–50	–	1	1	1
51+	1	1	2	1
Educational background				
Undergraduate	2	2	3	–
Master’s degree	1	1	–	–
PhD	–	–	–	3

Table 2.
Views of the Participants About the Jurists’ Contributions to Society with Their Legal Identity

Professional contributions	Solving the citizens’ problems within the framework of laws Protecting the citizens’ rights within the framework of laws Providing legal consultancy Providing the service of business follow-up
Contributions through education	Participating in educational activities at schools as a resource person Participating in awareness raising activities on legal issues To provide training on legal matters to different professions such as headman, court employee, law enforcement To organize conferences on violence prevention Training in prisons Educational activities carried out with the women’s rights commissions Educational activities carried out with the children’s rights commissions Training activities conducted by the bar associations
Informal contributions	To advise friends and others on legal matters Guiding citizens in what situation and where to apply To remind the environment about citizenship duties Directing citizens to seek rights

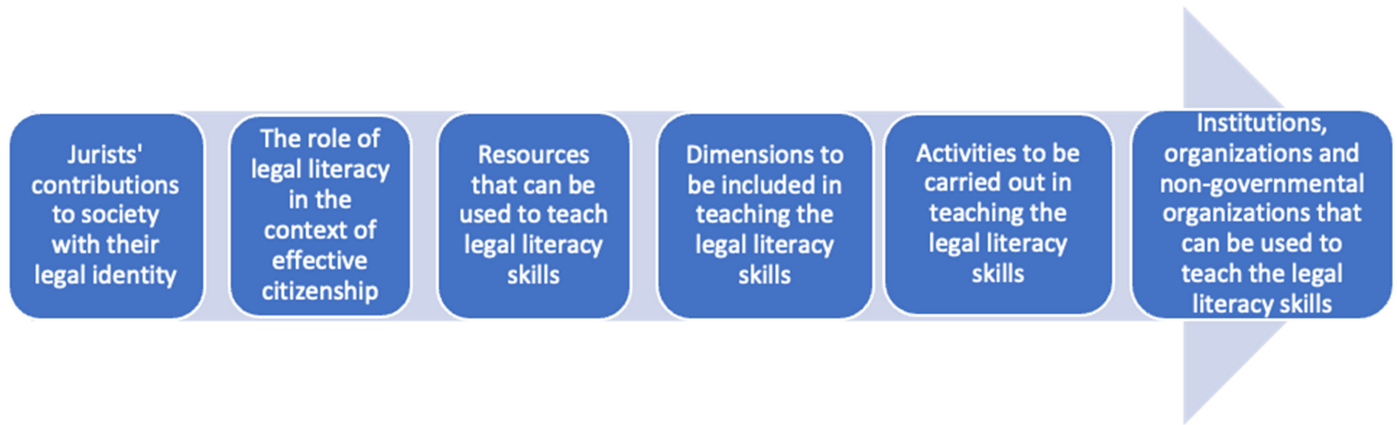


Figure 4.

Themes About Legal Literacy Skills Based on the Views of the Participants.

have given in various institutions, and in the form of acting as an expert person. In the sub-theme of informal contributions, they stated the legal directions and information they provide to their social circles and their family members when they need such an information.

A public prosecutor stated the contributions she provide through professional activities, educational activities and her contributions to the society in the following way:

“Due to work overload, I can only contribute within the scope of work. There are various activities for citizens or students. In particular, we are assigned to high school and university students. Whoever is available makes a contribution. In daily life, when friends, neighbors, shopkeepers, of course ask a legal question, we help, this is something we are used to.”

A lawyer expressed her contribution to society in the professional and social context as follows:

“I think the greatest happiness in this profession is to strive for people’s rights. I’m not just helping people to get their rights while doing my duty here in my room. I constantly remind people of their rights as a person who communicates with people who travel around in the community. In particular, I explain where they should apply, whether they are right, what legal rights they have in getting their rights. In this regard, I get positive reactions from people. I think I have contributed to them in this sense.”

An academician stated his contributions to the society through educational activities as follows:

“I have contributed to the society by training lawyers, judges prosecutors and future academicians who can distribute justice in the way of creating a just society and through the scientific studies I have done in the field of law and through the professional organizations in which I am a member. I think that when we train lawyers who turn fairness into a lifestyle rather than a professional feature, we will do our duty well.”

A judge explained his informal contributions as follows:

“I try to solve the problems of our citizens within the framework of laws based on the authority and responsibility given by the state. Apart from this, in my daily life, for example, when I go to my hometown, there are people who come to consult me with an ongoing lawsuit or a legal problem. I am informally doing my job and I try to contribute to people in my daily life.”

Table 3 illustrates the views of the participants on the role of legal literacy in the context of effective citizenship.

As seen in Table 3, the participants stated that having legal literacy skills is a prerequisite for effective citizenship. They added that possession of legal literacy skills refers to know the principles about where and how to apply on matters such as knowing their rights and responsibilities, applying to the related institutions in the case of the violations of their rights and to have knowledge of law. They also argued that it refers to use this information in daily life and to know how to solve the problems using legal ways. They emphasized that if individuals have enough information about law, they would successfully deal with the reliable use of media and Internet, the use of citizenship rights, the cases of violence against women, children abuse, the relationships with neighbors, and the other topics such as inheritance, shopping, traffic, e-commerce, and children’s rights. In short, it can be said that a citizen with legal literacy skills should have knowledge in these dimensions and use this information in the solution of daily-life problems when

Table 3.
Participants’ Views on the Role of Legal Literacy in the Context of Effective Citizenship

Knowing the rights as a citizen
Knowing the responsibilities as a citizen
Knowing the laws and law-related rules as a citizen
Knowing what action is a crime
Knowing what actions can lead to loss of rights
Having awareness about the points to be considered in order not to be exposed to fraud
Having awareness in order not to use social media illegally
Contributing to the easing of file load in judicial authorities
Being aware of the rights that start with birth
Being able to search for the rights and to protect these rights in the fields such as inheritance law
Being conscious in traffic
Being conscious in shopping
Having basic knowledge in the legal context in the solution of the problems between individuals
Knowing how to seek your rights legally
Being able to solve the daily life problems such as neighborhood problems
Being conscious about violence against women
Being conscious about issues such as child rights and child abuse
Being conscious about Internet security
Being able to express himself correctly to official authorities

necessary. While teaching legal literacy skills, paying attention to these dimensions in the context of citizenship will undoubtedly contribute to the effective delivery of these skills.

A judge expressed the following views about legal literacy skills in relation to effective citizenship:

“In the Constitution, it is not an excuse not to know criminal laws. If we don’t know the law, we won’t know through what action we commit crimes and through what actions we lose our rights. We can only learn about these actions by reading the laws or the books that interpret the laws. For example, our people are experiencing many grievances at the moment due to not knowing the laws and rights especially in relation to the fraud cases. Such cases happen due to the fact that both social media and access to Internet have become widespread. In addition, there are some deficient rules in the laws and some of our citizens are not aware of the laws. In relation to such events I can argue that an individual who has legal literacy skills should have a reading habit. In addition, such individuals should have an interest in social and political events and be aware of the administrative, legal and social events around themselves.”

An academician expressed the following views on the role of legal literacy in the context of effective citizenship and emphasized the fact that law is functional in each dimension of everyday life:

“Law is a necessary field of information in every period of human life in terms of sharing our assets from the day we were born to the day we died and even after we died. There are legal basis for walking, sitting, getting up, driving in traffic and even shopping. Therefore, knowing the law enables citizens to get their rights easier and to solve various problems among citizens more easily. In order for citizens to take their rights, be happy and ensure social peace, people need to know their rights and respect each other’s rights. But first he should know how to call for a legal assistance. The more our citizen knows the law, the more conscious they are about the criminal dimensions of their behavior. The number of cases could be reduced above all. The burden of the legal system is reduced.”

A lawyer expressed the following views on the role of legal literacy in the context of effective citizenship as follows:

“The most frequent legal problem we have come across for years is about the relationships between neighbours. Unfortunately there occur legal problems when the neighbor shakes the carpet on the balcony, hangs the laundry on the balcony and uses the common areas garden or corridors improperly. Almost none of our citizens know about the legislation in this regard. Therefore, we generally do not have such problems in very large house complexes, but there are huge problems in the buildings with three or five flats and in the non-executive buildings. Because the house owners do not know the condominium regulations well. In Afyon the most frequent legal problems are about traffic rules. Because people don’t know the details of such rules which yields a significant amount of cases. Since the provisions of the law on consumer protection are not known by the individuals, we again encounter huge legal problems, for instance, in relation to online shopping. Individuals who are aware of their legal rights and laws don’t commit a crime. Instead, they avoid such events and cases. Therefore, it is one of the most significant skills.”

A public prosecutor expressed the following views on the role of legal literacy in the context of effective citizenship as follows:

“Knowing the law is a privilege. Societies and states are built on law. Although it’s not possible to know all of the laws, at least even knowing the practices creates a significant awareness among the individuals. At least when the citizen is looking for his rights, he acts with the awareness of this, or when he is dealing with government institutions, this awareness creates a privilege for him. A person who knows the laws is not the same with one who doesn’t know anything. When an individual apply for a state department, the reaction that he will get may be different based on his knowledge or awareness about the laws. Law is definitely a divider in this regard, it’s litmus paper.”

The views of the participants in regard to the sources that can be employed in teaching the topics related to legal literacy skills are illustrated in Table 4.

As can be seen in Table 4, the views of the participants in regard to the sources that can be employed in teaching the topics related to the legal literacy skills produce three types of sources: legal documents, interpretative sources, and Internet/media sources. Concerning the legal documents the participants stated that in teaching of legal literacy skills books, articles, columns, brochures prepared by the bar associations could be used due to the fact that the field of law has its own language. Almost all of the participants stated that the development of technology and the spread of the Internet and social media can be turned into an advantage in the provision of legal concepts that are difficult to understand. They also argued that websites, animations, books or e-books, brochures and posters, cartoons and visuals, short videos that can be published by YouTubers, and informative articles and videos from school social media accounts can be used in teaching of legal literacy skills based on the level of the children. Regarding the sources that can be utilized in teaching the legal literacy skills, a judge stated that the interpretative books can be used as well as the law-related documents and emphasized the following views:

Table 4.
Views of the Participants in Regard to the Sources That Can Be Employed in Teaching Topics Related to Legal Literacy Skills

Laws/legal documents	Constitution
	Criminal law
	Law of domestic relations
	Civil law
	Consumer law
	Obligations law
	Labor law
Interpretative sources	Commercial law
	Books
	Opinion column
	Article
	Periodicals
	Brochures and written sources of bar associations
	Books and brochures written/to be written in a way that children can understand
Internet and Media sources	Websites of state institutions beginning with “gov.”
	Websites to be established to gain legal literacy
	Fun videos to be prepared in a way that YouTubers will share
	Interesting public spots to shoot
	Animations to be prepared according to the level of children
	Information published in schools’ websites
	Information messages to be made in school/ classroom social media accounts/WhatsApp groups
	Cartoons to be prepared for legal literacy
	Banners to be prepared for legal literacy

"Of course, in our profession, our main source is our laws. Books explaining the laws will require that new books should be written in a way that children can understand. Because it will be difficult to give the constitution or laws at primary school level. Our laws are broad and heavy. It can be given by exemplifying it with short cases."

Regarding the sources that can be utilized in teaching of legal literacy skills, an academician expressed the following views:

"The main source is constitution and laws. Criminal law, the law of domestic relations, civil law, consumer law, law of obligations, labor law and commercial law can be read from the books written by academicians who interpret the laws. In addition, column articles, journals and periodicals of the bar associations can be used for this aim."

Regarding the resources that can be used to teach the legal literacy skills, a prosecutor stated his opinion as

follows:

"People may use Internet to have some information about law and legal topics since they do not have a formal information about this field. In other words, people need to learn in this regard, in particular, how to use online channels of state institutions properly. Such sources can also be used to teach legal literacy skills. Even adults do not know where they can access current legislation. Of course we can use more technical tools. However, as I stated before even the websites of public institutions publish their own legislation in this way."

A lawyer who emphasized the use of the social media and online tools about the resources that can be used in teaching legal literacy skills expressed the following views:

"I think there is no many available sources to teach the legal literacy skills. There is a book entitled Sophie's World which was written towards children to make them love philosophy and philosophical topics. It is clear that today's generation cannot tolerate such long explanations or they don't have enough patience to read informative books. In this sense, for example, such books can be reproduced by youtubers or short clips that can be easily watched on YouTube can be prepared to teach law-related skills. Also each school should have a social media account such as a twitter account, a Facebook account or an Instagram account. Students may follow these accounts. These accounts should contain visuals and easy-to-understand information about legal information to make children informed about law. For instance, we also use a similar strategy for new lawyers. Although they have formal education on law, we send them short messages about the details on legal topics. For instance, every day we remind them one of the rules of law profession. In other words, it is a method. Children are very prone to digital stuff, they use digital products a lot, I think it can be used to make them have legal literacy skills."

Table 5 illustrates the suggestions of the participants regarding the dimensions that should be included in the teaching to be provided to gain legal literacy skills.

The participants stated that starting from both teacher education and primary school level, children should be educated in the context of legal literacy. The participants argued that social studies and classroom teachers should be provided with in-service training on legal literacy skills. They also stated that information and skills should be included

Table 5.

Suggestions of the Participants Regarding the Dimensions That Should Be Included in Teaching to Be Provided to Gain Legal Literacy Skills

Teacher training programs	Preservice classroom teachers should be given legal literacy education Preservice social studies teachers should be given legal literacy education Preservice teachers should be given legal literacy education
Dimensions to be included	Children abuse Internet security Correct use of social media Basic legal concepts Law of domestic relations Violence against women Children's rights Consumer rights Criminal code Introduction of legal professions Introduction of institutions and jurisdictions Introduction of nongovernmental organizations and their activities Application procedures and practices Peer bullying International law Human rights Searching for rights without infringement Citizenship duties and responsibilities Gender inequality

in teacher training programs in order to teach legal literacy skills. The participants added that the following dimensions should be included in the teaching efforts in relation to legal literacy skills: Children abuse, Internet security, correct use of social media, basic law concepts, the law of domestic relations, violence against women, children's rights, consumer rights, criminal law, introduction of legal professions, introduction of institutions and their activities, introduction of nongovernmental organizations and their activities, application procedures and practices, peer bullying, interstate law, seeking rights without violation of rights, citizenship duties and responsibilities, and gender inequality.

An academician who emphasized the importance of teacher education regarding the dimensions that should be included in the acquisition of legal literacy skills produced the following views:

"Particularly teacher trainers and teachers like social studies teachers should have necessary information about legal topics to make the students have legal competency. For instance, in our Turkey children abuse is very common. Children need to know what behaviors should not be done to them, and whatever behavior are criminal to protect themselves from abuse. Similarly, teachers should know it to inform guidance teachers and institutions whenever it is required. Teachers should also know and teach students how to use social media and Internet in a proper way. Teachers should also know the basic legal concepts. The emphasize should be on the law of domestic relations, violence, children's rights and consumer rights. In teacher training programs, criminal law can be mentioned with different dimensions."

A judge who emphasized that the basic legal concepts should be given as a prerequisite regarding the dimensions that should be included in teaching the legal literacy skills to the students expressed the following views:

“First of all, it is not necessary for citizens or children to know the details of law. Because today even jurists may not know all the details of legal acts. They just need to know where to access such information. In other words, people should know where to apply for whenever a problem occurs, how such an application should be made and I think legal literacy refers to know what legal documents or other materials mean. Now, for example, I always say that especially the general newspapers contain legal news which is a complete disaster, I see that maybe the court correspondents are not proper to publish this news, that is, the law literacy has started incomplete there once, now such news brings anxiety and causes anxiety among people due to this incompetency. Based on this, we see that people’s anxiety increases. In fact, I think that when a news story is published at least on the level of newspaper news, it is necessary to have a basic legal education that is enough to comprehend what it means. Knowledge of basic legal concepts, legal procedures and application procedures are sufficient.”

Regarding the dimensions that should be included in the acquisition of legal literacy skills, an attorney who stated that starting from the childhood period children can be prepared an internal regulation about their classes expressed the following views:

“In addition to the routine education system that I see as the general problem of Turkish education system, I think that it is necessary to arrange some practices for primary school children apart from the concepts. Then what can be done? For instance, an internal regulation can be developed for the class together with the students. Such a simple practice can improve children’s awareness about their acts in the classroom. I think that this kind of practices would be a good example in terms of showing students how to approach the legal problems they will encounter in their adult ages.”

A public prosecutor who emphasized the organizational structure of the institutions and the legal professions regarding the dimensions that should be included in the acquisition of legal literacy skills expressed the following views:

“It may start with the basic concepts. Because the field of law has its own terms and concepts. In addition, it has its own language. Children should be prepared for having legal literacy skills from early ages. Concepts should be concrete. The process may begin with those concepts that are interesting to children. For instance, councils and occupations should be first introduced... For example, some questions can be asked such as what does the police do, what does the gendarmerie do, what does the prosecutor do, what does the judge do. First we need to introduce the institutions and authorities. They may not know the fact that The prosecution orders the police and then the police makes an investigation. The governor’s office does not have the power to order investigations. Nobody can give orders to judges and prosecutors. I think it is necessary to give priority to these points when telling these to the students. Police have various duties and are attached to the interior ministry. Children should be informed about what is the governor and what is the municipality as well as the differences between municipal general assembly and special provincial administration. There are large metropolitan municipalities in Turkey in major cities, what do they do? For me such questions should be the starting points. There are people who do not understand such points even at law school. What does the city council and special provincial administration do? These should be introduced. The organizational structure of public institutions in Turkey must be clarified. These topics should be taught by embodying

Table 6.

Suggestions of the Participants on the Activities That Can Be Carried Out in Teaching the Legal Literacy Skills

Teaching training	Enabling school administrators and teachers to participate in in-service training on legal issues Including courses on legal literacy in teacher training programs Enabling teachers to participate in meetings and conferences organized by bar associations Enabling teachers to learn their personal rights
Teaching at schools	Visits to courthouses Inviting source persons to the classroom who have formal legal information such as judges, prosecutors, lawyers, academics and police Visits to and meeting with the headman Visits to and meeting with the foundations Presenting concrete and interesting cases to attract student attention Participating in available trials at courthouses Organizing practices such as preparing classroom internal regulations Teaching the right consumer behaviors in a practical way such as shopping activities Practices about e-commerce Taking students to official institutions and making them to have application type experiences

and understandable the basic points without focusing on the unnecessary ones.”

Table 6 illustrates the suggestions of the participants on the activities that can be carried out in teaching legal literacy skills.

Table 6 shows that the suggestions of the participants on the activities that can be carried out in teaching the legal literacy skills can be categorized under two headings: those at teacher training programs and those at schools. The participants suggested that teachers and pre-service teachers may participate in preservice and in-service trainings about legal literacy skills. The participants emphasized the importance of teachers knowing their personal rights. The following practices are suggested by the participants in relation to formal teaching about legal literacy skills at schools: inviting people with formal legal information as resource persons to the classroom, organizing visits to courthouses, attending hearings at courthouses, developing classroom internal regulations together with students, shopping and e-shopping, applying to official institutions, organizing trips to various associations and the headman office to solve various problems. An academician expressed the following views regarding the practices that can be implemented in the acquisition of legal literacy skills:

“They may participate in meetings and seminars on law. They may participate in activities carried out by the law schools, police, bar, courthouses and other related institutions. Students can be encouraged to take initiatives to solve social problems by discussing them. Students can learn how to apply by submitting a petition to some institutions. Such practices improve their self-confidence and make them feel the power of participation. Through such practices they also improve their awareness about legal issues. Such daily practices are the only way to transform the information into efficient skills. Otherwise there is just knowledge but no skill. To raise individuals seeking their right, reaching the conclusion by knowing their legal rights and reaching the result through legal means such skills should not be taught through formal courses, but through such practices. The other point is that due to their developmental characteristics such training should include concrete examples.”

A lawyer expressed the following views regarding the practices that can be implemented in the acquisition of legal literacy skills as follows:

“If the school where the social studies course is given is a village school, for example, teachers need to have knowledge about the simple territorial law about the duties of the muhtar and mukhtar. Even they have basic information about it, it is enough. If it is a urban school the subjects that will form the infrastructure of the culture of moving on the street or living in an apartment should be given to the students such condominium, apartment management, association management and association duties. Education should be focused on these topics. This can be organized like an educational program with the cooperation of the bar association that cooperates with the school administration. The topics can be shared, and lawyers are assigned to teach each topic. Such education activities can be organized in a systematical way.”

A judge expressed the following views regarding the practices that can be implemented in the acquisition of legal literacy skills as follows:

“It is the most important problem of our education system. Information is given, but the related practices are ignored. We have experienced this for years in law school as well. We graduated from the school without seeing the courthouses or any trials. Therefore, practical training activities should be allowed besides theoretical education. In short, students may take part in some simple daily practices such as shopping, e-commerce and other related activities.”

A public prosecutor expressed the following views regarding the practices that can be implemented in the acquisition of legal literacy skills as follows:

“Visits to courthouses and using lawyers and other jurists as source persons are all nice practices. However, these are not detailed activities. What can be the contributions of these activities? In such activities only some of the students attend the activity. In my experience as a source person I have come across some interesting but useless questions by the students such as my salary. Topics to be presented to the children should be both concrete and useful to the students. Therefore, visits to proper trials at courthouses would be much more beneficial to the students.”

Table 7 lists the suggestions of the participants regarding institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to gain legal literacy skills.

Table 7 lists various institutions suggested by the participants that can be used in teaching legal literacy skills, including various

Table 7.

Suggestions of the Participants Regarding Institutions, Organizations, and Nongovernmental Organizations That Can Be Used to Gain Legal Literacy Skills

Ministry of Justice-Ministry of National Education cooperation
Ministry of family and social policies
Ministry of social services
Ministry of commerce
Faculty of education
Law schools
Commissions at bar associations
Courthouses
Security forces
Gendarme
Research and development units
Contracted lawyers to be assigned

ministries, universities, bar associations, courthouses, security forces, research and development units, and some legal professionals.

A lawyer expressed the following views regarding the institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to teach legal literacy skills to the students:

“Support can be obtained from lawyers, prosecutors and judges as the source person. In addition, support can be obtained from courthouses, police, gendarmerie and bar associations. Institutions such as the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and social security institution can also support the process. But, the basic support can be given by bar associations. The establishment purpose of the bar associations is to serve in the field of law.”

An academician expressed the following views regarding the institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to teach legal literacy skills to the students:

“Given that legal literacy skills is related to both education and law the ministry of justice and the ministry of national education must shape the education on legal literacy together. The ministry of family, social policies and social services, ministry of commerce and universities should also be involved in this process. This issue is not an educational problem alone, since it is a problem related to society and culture, and therefore, it should be studied together.”

A judge expressed the following views regarding the institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to teach legal literacy skills to the students:

“In each city and district there is a courthouse. Judges and public prosecutors work there. These people may function as a role model for the students. They can be invited to the schools to organize conversations with the students to make them informed about basic legal topics. The school administrators may ask help from bar associations in this regard.”

A public prosecutor expressed the following views regarding the institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to teach legal literacy skills to the students:

“Bar associations can be very effective in this regard. Lawyers who know this job and who can explain it should be engaged in the bar associations. In fact, we have lawyers with such qualifications. They are very beneficial for such attempts. Of course, it is also important not only lawyer prosecutor or judge. I think that it will help to gain this skill effectively by contacting the people who know this work from the security units, especially our senior managers, the gendarmerie commanders and those who know this business. For instance, I am in the narcotic unit. In this sense, I get a lot of requests from schools. I am going there to make speeches. I talk about how the drugs get into schools and what kind of activities sellers do to find clients.”

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

The views of the participants produced six major themes about the legal literacy skills. These themes are as follows: the contribution of having legal knowledge to society; the importance of having legal literacy skills in the context of effective citizenship; necessary resources to acquire legal literacy skills; dimensions in teaching legal literacy skills; potential activities in teaching legal literacy skills; and institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that can be used to teach the legal literacy skills. The participants expressed their formal

contribution in the professional context with their legal identity (lawyer, judge, prosecutor, academician). The participants expressed their educational contribution through their training activities in the form of trainings they provided at various institutions as source persons. In the informal contribution sub-theme, the participants expressed in the form of providing legal guidance and information to their social environment and their family members when they needed. As stated by the lawyers in the context of the contribution provided through education, it can be ensured that the legal literacy skills are provided through the conferences and interviews to be held in the faculties of education, and they can be supported by the information they provide in the courses they can attend as a resource person in high school, secondary, and primary school levels. Wagner (2007) also argued that jurists can support the training activities about legal literacy skills at schools and at teacher training programs.

The participants described the legal literacy skills as a prerequisite for being an effective citizen. They added that possession of legal literacy skills refers to know the principles about where and how to apply on matters such as knowing their rights and responsibilities, applying to the related institutions in the case of the violations of their rights and to have knowledge of law. They also argued that it refers to use this information in daily life and to know how to solve the problems using legal ways. They emphasized that if individuals have enough information about law, they would successfully deal with the reliable use of media and Internet, the use of citizenship rights, the cases of violence against women, children abuse, the relationships with neighbors, and the other topics such as inheritance, shopping, traffic, e-commerce, and children's rights. In short, it can be said that a citizen with legal literacy skills should have knowledge in these dimensions and use this information in the solution of daily life problems when necessary. Therefore, it can be said that a citizen with legal literacy skills should have knowledge in these dimensions and use this information in the solution of daily life problems when necessary. Similarly, Kumar (2013) emphasized that law literacy is important in understanding and evaluating the law, recognizing the scope of the rights of individuals under the law, and giving information about the law that can be used to enforce their rights by acting, and in this context, in the process of gaining legal literacy skills in understanding the laws and solving problems. Janoski (1998) described basic citizenship rights as legal, political, social, and participation rights. Therefore, having legal literacy skills can be considered as one of the main components in the context of effective citizenship. Hoskins et al. (2006) expressed effective citizenship values in the form of tolerance, nonviolent actions, supporting the role of human rights and laws, equality, validity, and democracy, indicating the importance of knowing the roles of laws in terms of effective citizenship. Rachic Hasan (1994) stated knowing rights as an important dimension of legal literacy and focused the knowing rights on social change especially with women's movement for social change in Bangladesh over the past decade. Be aware of your rights as a citizen.

The views of the participants in regard to the sources that can be employed in teaching the topics related to the legal literacy skills produce three types of sources: legal documents, interpretative sources, and Internet/media sources. Concerning the legal documents, the participants stated that in teaching of legal literacy skills books, articles, columns, brochures prepared by the bar associations could be used due to the fact that the field of law has its own language. Almost all of the participants stated that the development of technology and the spread of the Internet and social media can be turned into an advantage in the provision of legal concepts that are difficult to understand. They also argued that websites, animations, books or e-books, brochures and posters, cartoons and visuals, short videos that can be published by YouTubers, and informative articles and videos from school social

media accounts can be used in teaching of legal literacy skills based on the level of the children. Barkan et al. (2015) argued that the application petitions can be used as well as legal dictionaries that contain legal concepts, definitions and abbreviations, law, Internet sources, lawyers, programs discussing legal issues and concepts, documents of international organizations, books and articles on law, publications, jury reports, and various subjects. Similar sources are also suggested by the participants of the current study.

The participants stated that starting from both teacher education and primary school level, children should be educated in the context of legal literacy. The participants argued that social studies and classroom teachers should be provided with in-service training on legal literacy skills. They also stated that information and skills should be included in teacher training programs in order to teach legal literacy skills. The participants added that the following dimensions should be included in the teaching efforts in relation to legal literacy skills: Children abuse, Internet security, correct use of social media, basic law concepts, the law of domestic relations, violence against women, children's rights, consumer rights, criminal law, introduction of legal professions, introduction of institutions and their activities, introduction of nongovernmental organizations and their activities, application procedures and practices, peer bullying, interstate law, seeking rights without violation of rights, citizenship duties and responsibilities, and gender inequality. Redfield (2001) stated that teachers with legal knowledge can take roles to avoid unnecessary obligations, fulfill their responsibilities, take initiative in their schools in the context of acting fairly and resolving conflicts. Schimmel and Militello (2007) argued that having knowledge of law is directly effective on school administrators and teachers' decision-making, interaction, communication, approach to students and students' learning, suggesting the importance of knowledge on law in terms of teacher training activities. Therefore, as suggested by the participants of the study teachers' qualifications should be improved and expanded to include legal literacy which can be taught at teacher training programs.

The suggestions of the participants on the activities that can be carried out in teaching the legal literacy skills can be categorized under two headings: those at teacher training programs and those at schools. The participants suggested that teachers and preservice teachers may participate in preservice and in-service trainings about legal literacy skills. The participants emphasized the importance of teachers knowing their personal rights. The following practices are suggested by the participants in relation to formal teaching about legal literacy skills at schools: inviting people with formal legal information as resource persons to the classroom, organizing visits to courthouses, attending hearings at courthouses, developing classroom internal regulations together with students, shopping and e-shopping, applying to official institutions, and organizing trips to various associations and the headman office to solve various problems.

Participants suggested various institutions such as ministries, universities, bar associations, courthouses, police forces, research and development units and some lawyers that can be used in teaching legal literacy skills. Rani (2014) also stated that places such as institutions, organizations and law offices can be used to gain legal literacy skills. Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions have been developed:

- Legal support can be obtained from the jurists for the preservice and in-service teacher training. Legal literacy training provided by activities such as conferences and interviews can be supported.
- Studies on how to acquire the legal literacy skills in the form of workshops in preservice and in-service teacher training can be carried out.

- Easy-to-understand and interesting short films, public ads, cartoons related to primary school, middle school, and high school for citizens can be shared in social media, YouTube, and television.
- Brochures, posters, and modules can be designed to teach legal literacy skills.
- In the context of teaching legal literacy skills to students in the social studies courses, various databases or modules can be developed and used by the teachers in which the sources expressed by the participants are adapted to the level of students.
- With the cooperation of jurists and educators, practical training on various legal practical processes can be given in the context of citizenship practice with various institutions, organizations, and nongovernmental organizations.
- Legal concepts in textbooks can be given through explanations, cartoons, and news which are developmentally appropriate.

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