An Examination of Social Studies Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Political Literacy Education According to Various Variables
Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenlerinin Politik Okuryazarlık Eğitimi Özyeterliklerinin Bazı Değişkenlere Göre İncelenmesi

Yusuf E. B. ONGANER

Dr., Balıkesir Üniversitesi Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesi Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi ABD
Dr., Balıkesir University, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Studies Education
onganer@balikesir.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0002-8730-7667

Duran AYDINÖZÜ

Prof. Dr., Kastamonu Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi ABD
Prof. Dr., Kastamonu University, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Studies Education
daydinozu@kastamonu.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0003-2777- 0024

Abstract

Political literacy is of paramount importance for the sustainability of democratic societies and for individuals to engage in active citizenship. To enhance individuals' political literacy competencies, systematic and structured practices must be implemented within educational settings. In this context, schools should be designed as environments where students can develop political literacy skills in a critical and participatory learning atmosphere. Teachers, in turn, should facilitate this process through their pedagogical expertise, helping students bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The aim of this study is to assess the self-efficacy levels of social studies teachers regarding political literacy education and to investigate whether these levels vary based on various demographic and professional factors. The study employed a survey model, with a sample comprising 690 social studies teachers from across Türkiye during the 2022–2023 academic year. The data collection instrument utilized was the "Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy Scale for Social Studies Teachers," developed by the researcher. The quantitative data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques. The findings revealed that teachers generally possessed high levels of self-efficacy in political literacy education, with significant differences observed in relation to variables such as gender, completion of political science-related courses, and the frequency of discussions on national and international political issues. The results of the study indicate that teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding political literacy education could play a crucial role in developing students' democratic awareness and political participation skills. Based on these findings, it is recommended that political literacy-focused content be strengthened in teacher education programs and that practices supporting these competencies be incorporated into teachers' professional development processes. Furthermore, conducting similar studies with larger sample sizes is essential for enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Keywords: Political Education, Political Literacy, Self-Efficacy, Social Studies Teachers

Öz

Politik okuryazarlık, demokratik toplumların sürdürülebilirliği ve bireylerin etkin yurttaşlık rolleri üstlenebilmeleri açısından merkezi bir öneme sahiptir. Bireylerin politik okuryazarlık yeterliklerinin geliştirilmesi amacıyla eğitim ortamlarında sistematik ve yapılandırılmış uygulamalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda okullar, öğrencilerin politik okuryazarlık becerilerini kazanabilecekleri, eleştirel ve katılımcı bir öğrenme ortamı sunacak şekilde kurgulanmalı; öğretmenler ise pedagojik yeterlikleri doğrultusunda bu sürece yön vererek öğrencilerin teorik bilgilerini pratikle ilişkilendirmelerine katkı sağlamalıdır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin politik okuryazarlık eğitimi özyeterlik düzeylerini belirlemek ve bu düzeylerin çeşitli demografik ve mesleki değişkenler bağlamında farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını incelemektir. Çalışma, tarama modeli kapsamında desenlenmiş olup araştırmanın örneklemini 2022-2023 eğitim-öğretim yılında Türkiye genelinde görev yapmakta olan 690 sosyal bilgiler öğretmeni oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen "Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenlerinin Politik Okuryazarlık Eğitimi Özyeterlik Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın nicel verileri bağımsız örneklem t testi ve tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) teknikleriyle değerlendirilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, öğretmenlerin genel olarak yüksek düzeyde politik okuryazarlık eğitimi özyeterliğine sahip olduklarını ve cinsiyet, siyaset bilimine ilişkin ders alma, Türkiye'yi ilgilendiren politik konuları konuşma sıklığı, uluslararası politik konuları konuşma sıklığı durumları gibi bazı değişkenler açısından anlamlı farklılıklar gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Araştırma sonuçları, öğretmenlerin politik okuryazarlık eğitimi konusundaki özyeterlik algılarının öğrencilerin demokratik bilinç ve siyasal katılım becerilerinin gelişiminde belirleyici bir unsur olduğu söylenebilir. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular doğrultusunda, öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında politik okuryazarlık odaklı içeriklerin güçlendirilmesi ve öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim süreçlerinde bu yeterliklerin desteklenmesine yönelik uygulamalara yer verilmesi önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, daha geniş örneklem gruplarında gerçekleştirilecek benzer araştırmalar, bulguların genellenebilirliğini artırma açısından önem arz etmektedir.

Ethical Statement	This study is based on the doctoral dissertation titled "*An Examination of Social Studies Teachers' Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy,*" which we completed under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Duran AYDINÖZÜ on July 9, 2025, at the Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education, Institute of Social Sciences, Kastamonu University. The research was conducted with the approval of the Ethics Committee of Social and Human Sciences at Kastamonu University (Decision No. 8, dated August 4, 2022). Following the ethics approval, permission to carry out the study was obtained from the Ministry of National Education with the official letter dated November 28, 2022, and numbered E-70297673-605.01-64373665.
Author Contributions	Conceiving the Study: YO (%50), DA (%50) Data Collection: YO (%70), DA (%30) Data Analysis: YO (%60), DA (%40) Writing up: YO (%80), DA (%20) Submission and Revision: YO (%90), DA (%10)

1.Introduction

In democratic societies, the sustainability of democracy fundamentally depends on the active participation of citizens in civic and political life. This participation, however, does not emerge spontaneously; rather, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for effective engagement are primarily cultivated during youth, when schools play a pivotal formative role. Consequently, numerous scholars have emphasized the decisive influence of educational institutions in shaping students' political attitudes and fostering their long-term civic participation (Torney-Purta, 2002, ss. 203-204; Niemi - Junn, 2005; Dostie-Goulet, 2009, ss. 405-407; Quintelier, 2010, ss. 137-138; Campbell et al., 2012; Castillo et al., 2015, s. 17; Claes - Hooghe, 2017, ss. 33-34). Moreover, schools serve not only as sites of knowledge transmission but also as critical arenas for political socialization and civic identity formation (Torney-Purta, 2002, s. 203; Zukin et al., 2006, s. 139). Thus, civic education—together with the broader curriculum—functions as an indispensable mechanism for nurturing democratic values and preparing informed, responsible, and active citizens (Crick, 2000, s. 118; Sherrod et al., 2010, ss. 1-5; Colby, 2003).

Building upon this conceptual foundation, the structure and implementation of curricula designed to foster civic and political engagement differ across national contexts. In this regard, schools—recognized as the primary institutions for formal citizenship education—adapt their programs in line with their societies' democratic traditions, political culture, and educational priorities. Within the Turkish context, this foundational role is primarily—though not exclusively—undertaken by the Social Studies course, which constitutes the main curricular space where civic knowledge, democratic values, and participatory competencies are systematically addressed. Nonetheless, complementary contributions also arise from subjects such as Turkish, T.C. Revolution History and Kemalism, and Religious Culture and Ethics, as well as from broader school culture and extracurricular activities. Therefore, examining the historical evolution and curricular transformations of Social Studies education provides a key, though not singular, lens for understanding the overall development of citizenship education in Türkiye.

Following this line of development, Social Studies education in Türkiye was for a long time shaped by behaviorist principles and, until 2005, primarily focused on the transmission of citizenship knowledge. During this period, educational practices aimed to cultivate obedient individuals who accepted information without questioning (Kabapınar, 2019, s. 12). However, the adoption of the constructivist paradigm marked a significant pedagogical shift, steering the curriculum toward fostering critical thinking, inquiry, and democratic values (Kabapınar, 2019, s. 12). In this new framework, citizenship—traditionally defined as the awareness of social roles and responsibilities and the anticipation of their consequences (Doğanay et al., 2007), began to evolve in tandem with a growing democratic consciousness. Consequently, the notion of citizenship expanded to encompass values such as freedom of the press, universal suffrage, and women's political rights, all of which contribute to the consolidation of democratic social order (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998, ss. 7-10). This conceptual transformation underscores that individuals should not only be aware of their rights but also actively exercise them and participate in democratic decision-making processes. Accordingly, the Social Studies curriculum now seeks to equip students with the knowledge, attitudes, and participatory skills necessary for democratic engagement

(Kabapınar, 2019, s. 13). Aligned with this vision, the 2018 curriculum reform introduced an "Active Citizenship" domain, placing political literacy at its core (MEB, 2018). Thus, fostering democratic citizenship competencies has emerged as a central educational objective, making teachers' roles pivotal in realizing the aims of the curriculum.

Considering these developments, the transformation of Social Studies education in Türkiye has profoundly reshaped both the course content and the professional roles of teachers, placing greater emphasis on the cultivation of students' core democratic competencies. Social Studies now serves as a crucial platform for enabling young learners to understand, interpret, and critically evaluate social phenomena. Accordingly, this paradigm shift requires teachers not merely to transmit knowledge but to act as facilitators who guide students in internalizing and practicing democratic values. Within this framework, classroom practices that involve discussing current events and fostering open, deliberative learning environments become essential for encouraging civic engagement, promoting respect for diverse perspectives, and nurturing decision-making grounded in democratic principles (Kahne - Sporte, 2008, ss. 739-745; Gindi - Erlich, 2018, ss. 58-61). Therefore, teachers' pedagogical competence and their capacity to implement contemporary, learner-centered instructional strategies are of paramount importance for cultivating active, informed, and responsible democratic citizens.

Effective democratic citizenship education fundamentally depends on teachers' knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy in political literacy. In this regard Hess and McAvoy (2014), emphasize the necessity of a participatory instructional approach that transcends mere theoretical knowledge. Similarly, Putnam (2000), found that teachers who possess confidence in developing students' civic competencies significantly enhance their levels of civic engagement. Moreover, Parker (2003, s. 81) argues that experiential learning methods—such as classroom deliberations and community-based projects—play a pivotal role in deepening students' understanding of political processes and motivating them to act as active citizens. In addition, classroom practices that explicitly address political and social issues have been shown to markedly increase students' civic commitment (Kahne - Sporte, 2008). Taken together, these findings highlight the crucial role of teachers' pedagogical competence

in facilitating political discussion and promoting civic action. Consistent evidence further suggests that teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in addressing political topics directly influence students' adherence to democratic values and their capacity for critical thinking (Hess, 2009; Payne - Journell, 2019).

Despite the acknowledged importance of teachers in fostering democratic citizenship, empirical research consistently demonstrates that many teachers hesitate to address current and controversial political issues in the classroom, often perceiving themselves as insufficiently competent in this domain (Hess - McAvoy, 2014; Kus - Tarhan, 2016; Kaka et al., 2021; Kindlinger - Hahn-Laudenberg, 2023; Logtenberg et al., 2024). Drawing on Bandura's (1997, s. 3) self-efficacy theory, such hesitation can be understood as stemming not merely from limited knowledge but from a lack of confidence in one's ability to apply that knowledge effectively. Accordingly, enhancing teachers' sense of efficacy is essential for overcoming barriers to political literacy instruction. In particular, teachers' self-efficacy in understanding, interpreting, and communicating political processes plays a decisive role in cultivating students' democratic attitudes and participatory competencies (Eidhof - de Ruyter, 2022). Given that political literacy represents a multidimensional construct encompassing political knowledge, active participation, and the internalization of democratic values (Hess, 2002; Versfeld, 2005), it follows that effective citizenship education requires teachers to possess not only a robust theoretical foundation but also the confidence and pedagogical capability to apply it meaningfully in classroom practice.

This study is expected to contribute to literature in three ways. First, it provides an up-to-date empirical overview of social studies teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy education, thereby addressing a field in which current data remain relatively limited. Second, by examining demographic, professional, and pedagogical factors simultaneously, the study offers a multidimensional perspective that may help deepen understanding of the various elements associated with teachers' self-efficacy. Third, the findings may yield insight into classroom practices related to political literacy and, in turn, inform teacher education programs and in-service professional development efforts aimed at strengthening teachers' political literacy competencies.

Considering these expected contributions, the study proceeds by empirically examining social studies teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy education. Accordingly, the research focuses on identifying overall self-efficacy levels and determining whether these levels vary across key demographic, educational, and professional variables. The main research question guiding the study is: "What are the self-efficacy levels of social studies teachers in political literacy education?" The sub-questions are as follows:

Do social studies teachers' self-efficacy levels in political literacy education vary by gender?

Do their responses differ based on whether they have taken political science courses?

Do they differ based on union membership?

Do they differ based on their educational background?

Do they differ based on the type of settlement where they work?

Do they differ by age?

Do they differ based on their seniority?

Do they differ based on their graduating department?

Do they vary based on the socioeconomic structure of their school?

Do they differ in how often they discuss political issues related to Türkiye?

Do they differ in how often they discuss international political issues?

2.Methodology

2.1. Research Model

This study used a survey design to assess social studies teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy education. Survey designs enable systematic investigation of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in large samples and are commonly used in educational research (Karasar, 2012, ss.76-80; Creswell, 2014, ss. 155-160). Advantages include large-scale data collection, cost-effectiveness, rapid acquisition, and examination of contextual variables (Weisberg et al.,

1996, ss. 147-148; Groves et al., 2004, ss. 30-35; Mertens, 2010, ss. 161; Fowler, 2014, s. 5). Additionally, surveys support inferences across diverse contexts and enhance generalizability, making them well-suited for studying complex constructs like teacher self-efficacy.

2.2. Study Group

The study population comprised social studies teachers across Türkiye during the 2022–2023 academic year. Due to the population's wide geographic spread and the high cost of reaching participants, a cluster sampling method was employed to ensure regional representation and enhance feasibility (Karasar, 2012, s. 110; Neuman, 2008, s. 326).

Cluster determination was based on the European Union's regional policy framework, adapted in Türkiye as the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS). The 12 NUTS Level 1 regions served as the basis, with at least one province from each region included in the sample, resulting in a total of 690 participants. This approach increased sample diversity and strengthened the study sample's representativeness.

The demographic information regarding the study group is presented in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Table 1 Distribution of the Study Group by Regions

Level 1 (12 Regions)	Level 2 (26 Sub-regions)	Level 3 (81 Provinces)	N	%
İstanbul	İstanbul	İstanbul	72	10.43
West Anatolia	Ankara, Konya	Ankara, Konya, Karaman	46	6.67
East Marmara	Bursa, Kocaeli	Bursa, Kocaeli, Eskişehir, Bilecik, Sakarya, Düzce, Yalova, Bolu	46	6.67
Aegean	İzmir, Aydın, Manisa	İzmir, Aydın, Manisa, Denizli, Muğla, Afyon, Uşak, Kütahya	85	12.32
West Marmara	Tekirdağ, Balıkesir	Tekirdağ, Balıkesir, Edirne, Kırklareli, Çanakkale	65	9.42
Mediterranean	Antalya,	Antalya, Adana, Hatay, Isparta,	68	9.86

	Adana, Hatay	Burdur, Mersin, Maraş, Osmaniye		
West Black Sea	Zonguldak, Kastamonu, Samsun	Zonguldak, Kastamonu, Samsun, Karabük, Bartın, Çankırı, Sinop, Tokat, Amasya, Çorum	67	9.71
Central Anatolia	Kırıkkale, Kayseri	Kırıkkale, Kayseri, Aksaray, Niğde, Nevşehir, Kırşehir, Sivas, Yozgat	58	8.41
East Black Sea	Trabzon	Trabzon, Ordu, Giresun, Rize, Artvin, Gümüşhane	24	3.48
Southeast Anatolia	Gaziantep, Urfa, Mardin	Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt	81	11.74
Central East Anatolia	Malatya, Van	Malatya, Van, Elâzığ, Tunceli, Bingöl, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkâri	45	6.52
Northeast Anatolia	Erzurum, Ağrı	Erzurum, Ağrı, Erzincan, Bayburt, Kars, Iğdır, Ardahan	34	4.93
Total			690	100

Table 2 The demographic information of the study group

Demographic characteristics	Subcriteria	f	%
Gender	Woman	291	42.3
	Man	399	57.7
	Total	690	100
Political Science Course	Yes	306	44.4
	No	384	55.6
	Total	690	100
Union Membership	Yes	497	72.0
	No	193	28.0
	Total	690	100
Education Level	Bachelor's	559	81.0
	Ongoing Grad	87	12.6
	Postgraduate	44	6.4

	Total	690	100
Type of settlement	Town/Village	148	21.3
	District Center	262	38.0
	City Center	280	40.7
	Total	690	100
Age	20–30	78	11.3
	31–40	361	52.3
	41–50	230	33.3
	51+	21	3.07
	Total	690	100
Professional Seniority	1–5 years	101	14.7
	6–10 years	183	26.6
	11–15 years	155	22.3
	16–20 years	123	17.8
	21+ years	128	18.5
	Total	690	100
Graduated Department	Social Studies Ed.	581	84.2
	History Ed.	48	7.0
	History Dept.	31	4.5
	Geography Ed.	25	3.6
	Geography Dept.	5	0.7
	Total	690	100
School's Socioeconomic Status	Low	225	32.6
	Medium	412	59.7
	High	53	7.7
	Total	690	100
Frequency of Discussing Political Issues Related to Türkiye	Always	249	36.1
	Sometimes	307	44.5
	Never	134	19.4
	Total	690	100
Frequency of Discussing International Political Issues	Always	206	29.9
	Sometimes	312	45.2
	Never	172	24.9
	Total	690	100

As presented in Table 2, the number of male participants (n = 399, 57.7%) exceeded that of female participants (n = 291, 42.3%). More than half of the participants (n = 384, 55.6%) had not completed any political science courses. A majority (n = 497, 72.0%) were members of a union. Most participants held a bachelor's degree (n = 559, 81.0%) and were primarily employed in city centers (n = 280, 40.7%) or district centers (n = 262, 38.0%). The predominant age group was 31–40 years (n = 361, 52.3%), followed by 41–50 years (n = 230, 33.3%). Regarding professional seniority, the largest proportion had 6–10 years of experience (n = 183, 26.6%), while a significant subset had over 21 years of experience (n = 128, 18.5%). A substantial majority graduated from Social Studies Education programs (n = 581, 84.2%). Participants were mostly employed in schools characterized by a medium socioeconomic status (n = 412, 59.7%). Concerning political discussions, the majority reported engaging in national (n = 307, 44.5%) and international (n = 312, 45.2%) issues "sometimes," although the frequency of "always" responses was also notable.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

In this study, data were collected using the Social Studies Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale for Political Literacy Education (SSTSESPLE), developed by the researcher. The scale was designed to measure social studies teachers' self-efficacy levels concerning political literacy education, following the fundamental steps of the scale development process (DeVellis et al., 2014, ss. 76-85).

First, the study began by clearly defining the construct of social studies teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy education. Since no existing instrument was found in the literature to directly assess this construct, the development of a new measurement tool was deemed necessary. To initiate item generation, an open-ended interview form was sent to four scholars conducting research on various dimensions of political literacy, yielding qualitative data regarding teachers' perceived self-efficacy in political literacy education. Additionally, the outcomes outlined in the Social Studies Curriculum were examined to identify those related to political literacy, and these outcomes were transformed into potential scale items. This process resulted in an initial pool of 48 items.

The scale was structured using a five-point Likert format, with teachers asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item by selecting one of the following options: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Undecided," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree." No reverse-coded items were included, as negatively worded statements can weaken the factor structure and unnecessarily increase respondent burden, particularly in self-efficacy scales.

To establish content validity, the draft form was reviewed by a panel of 17 experts, consisting of academics specializing in Social Studies Education and experienced Social Studies teachers. The experts evaluated each item in terms of representativeness, content relevance, and linguistic clarity. Based on their feedback, five items were removed, and several others were revised both conceptually and linguistically. Consequently, the draft scale was reduced to 43 items.

The revised 43-item form was administered to 450 social studies teachers from various provinces of Türkiye via an online survey (Google Forms). The collected dataset was transferred to SPSS 22.0 and examined for missing values and multivariate outliers; the data were deemed suitable for factor analysis. To assess construct validity, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation. Items with factor loadings below .40 or cross-loadings with less than a .10 difference between factors were eliminated, resulting in the removal of 17 items.

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed a two-factor structure comprising 26 items. The first factor, which included 16 items, reflected teachers' perceived knowledge and skills related to political literacy instruction and was therefore labeled "Professional Competence Perception." The second factor, consisting of 10 items, represented teachers' behavioral tendencies in both classroom and out-of-class practices and was labeled "Professional Behavior Perception." The first factor explained 43.87% of the total variance, while the second factor accounted for 15.28%, resulting in a combined total variance of 59.15%. This level of explained variance is considered acceptable within the social sciences (Karagöz, 2019, s. 953).

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. For the final 26-item scale, the internal consistency coefficients were α = .95 for the first factor, α =

.89 for the second factor, and α = .95 for the overall scale. All item-total correlations exceeded .30, and removing any item did not improve reliability, indicating strong internal consistency.

To verify the factor structure identified through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted using a separate dataset comprising 296 participants. The CFA was performed with LISREL 8.51. Two modification indices (between items 17 and 20, and items 19 and 22) were applied to improve model fit. The resulting goodness-of-fit indices χ^2/df = 2.51; RMSEA = 0.069; CFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.98; SRMR = 0.078 indicated that the model demonstrated acceptable to good fit (Çokluk et al., 2014, s. 275). These findings confirmed the two-factor, 26-item structure of the SSTSESPLE and established its construct validity.

In conclusion, the SSTSESPLE is a 26-item, two-factor, five-point Likert-type instrument that provides strong evidence of validity and reliability for measuring social studies teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy education.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data were collected online via Google Forms and analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS version 22.0. The SSTSESPLE utilizes a five-point Likert scale. In line with this and following Bandura's recommendation that self-efficacy beliefs can be interpreted along a continuum and, when necessary, classified using equal-interval divisions (Pajares - Urdan, 2009, s. 307), the theoretical range of the scale (5 – 1 = 4) was divided into five equal intervals (4 ÷ 5 = 0.80). Furthermore, Likert-type composite scale scores can be treated as interval-level data, allowing for mean-based interpretation (Boone - Boone, 2012). Accordingly, the mean scores in this study were interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.79 (insufficient), 1.80–2.59 (very slightly sufficient), 2.60–3.39 (somewhat sufficient), 3.40–4.19 (quite sufficient), and 4.20–5.00 (highly sufficient).

Composite self-efficacy scores were calculated by taking the arithmetic mean of the 26 items for each participant. The group means reported in the tables represent the average of these composite scores within each demographic category (e.g., gender, political science course status, union membership). This procedure ensured standardized comparisons across all variables.

Data normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis coefficients (Table 3) that values within the range of ±1.5 are considered acceptable (Tabachnick - Fidell, 2007, s. 78). This assessment was supported by a bell-shaped histogram (Figure 1) and clustering near the 45° line in the Q–Q plot (Figure 2). Independent samples t-tests were conducted for binary variables (gender, political science course status, union membership), while one-way ANOVA was applied to variables with three or more categories (age, professional experience, education level, place of duty, graduation department, school socioeconomic level, and frequency of discussing political issues). When variances were homogeneous, the Gabriel post hoc test was used due to unequal but comparable group sizes (Field, 2024, s. 374).

Table 3 Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients of the SSTSESPLE

N	X	Med	Mod	Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Skewness	Std. Error of Kurtosis
690	3.58	3.62	3.65	−0.552	1.142	0.093	0.186

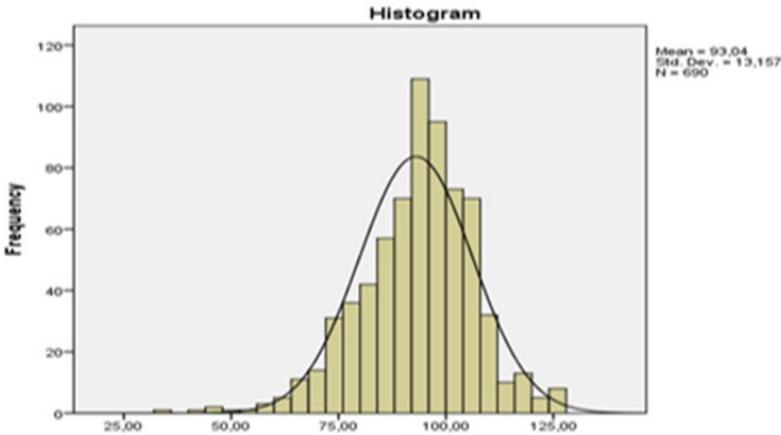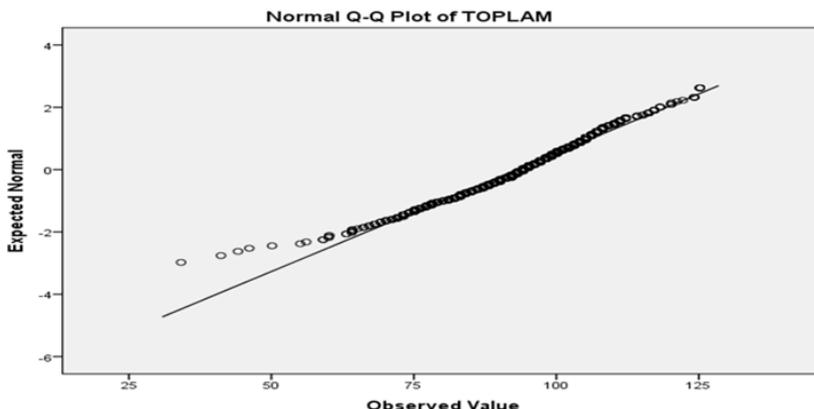Figure 1 Histogram curve of the SSTSESPLE

Figure 2 Q-Q Plot of the SSTSESPLE

2.5. Ethical Permits of Research

In this study, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were complied with. None of the actions specified under the heading "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, have been taken.

Ethics Committee Permission Information

Name of the committees that made the ethical evaluations:

Kastamonu University Ethics Commission 2022/8 and Ministry of National Education 2022/E-70297673.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings on Social Studies Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scores in Political Literacy Education

Table 4 Self-Efficacy Levels of Social Studies Teachers Regarding Political Literacy Education

Factor 1: Professional Competence Perception	$\bar{x}$	Sd	Self-Efficacy Level
1. I can implement effective teaching strategies to	3.49	0.32	Quite Suffi-

improve political literacy.			cient
2. I can design instructional activities that promote political literacy.	3.39	0.34	Somewhat Sufficient
3. I consider myself competent to educate politically literate individuals.	3.29	0.36	Somewhat Sufficient
4. I am skilled in using teaching methods that effectively enhance political literacy	3.46	0.34	Quite Sufficient
5. I am knowledgeable about teaching methods suitable for delivering the political literacy outcomes outlined in the curriculum.	3.41	0.34	Quite Sufficient
6. I consider myself politically literate.	3.27	0.38	Somewhat Sufficient
7. I understand the fundamental concepts of political knowledge.	3.69	0.31	Quite Sufficient
8. I have gained sufficient academic knowledge of the methods and techniques used to teach political literacy.	3.01	0.35	Somewhat Sufficient
9. I can accurately and comprehensively cite the original sources of the political information I have used or will use.	3.21	0.35	Somewhat Sufficient
10. I am skilled at identifying sources of political information.	3.54	0.34	Quite Sufficient
11. I can define political literacy.	3.51	0.32	Quite Sufficient
12. I can provide examples from literary works related to concepts within political literacy.	3.25	0.34	Somewhat Sufficient
13. I can generate novel interpretations and insights from the political information I have accessed.	3.60	0.32	Quite Sufficient
14. I can design extracurricular learning environments that improve students' political literacy.	3.25	0.34	Somewhat Sufficient
15. I can critically evaluate the political information I receive.	3.78	0.31	Quite Sufficient
16. I can develop instructional materials on politi-	3.15	0.34	Somewhat

cal literacy.			Sufficient
Mean Score for Factor 1	3.40	0.68	Quite Sufficient
Factor 2: Professional Behavior Perception			
17. I consistently consider students' rights and freedoms.	4.39	0.27	Highly Sufficient
18. I ensure students fulfill their responsibilities within assigned group roles.	4.28	0.27	Highly Sufficient
19. I facilitate students' respect for diverse opinions.	4.29	0.26	Highly Sufficient
20. I encourage students to freely express their ideas during lessons.	4.48	0.28	Highly Sufficient
21. I provide feedback affirming that students' opinions are valued.	4.52	0.22	Highly Sufficient
22. I create environments that promote democratic behaviors among students.	4.37	0.23	Highly Sufficient
23. I collaborate with stakeholders to assign students social and moral responsibilities beyond the classroom.	4.22	0.26	Highly Sufficient
24. I respond maturely to potential criticisms from stakeholders (e.g., administrators, parents) about my engagement with political issues in the classroom.	3.88	0.31	Quite Sufficient
25. I work with stakeholders to support students in developing political literacy.	3.95	0.29	Quite Sufficient
26. I discuss with parents the importance of valuing students' opinions within the family context.	4.15	0.27	Quite Sufficient
Mean Score for Factor 2	4.26	0.50	Highly Sufficient
Overall Mean Score of the Scale	3.73	0.51	Quite Sufficient

The overall mean score on the Social Studies Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale for Political Literacy Education ($\bar{x}$ = 3.73) indicates that teachers view them-

selves as fairly competent in political literacy education. However, this perception varies across sub-dimensions. The professional competence dimension ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40) reflects a "quite sufficient" self-efficacy level, while the professional behavior dimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.26) shows a "highly sufficient" level.

These findings show that social studies teachers generally have a positive self-efficacy perception regarding political literacy education, feeling especially competent in professional behaviors related to its implementation.

3.2. t-Test Results of Social Studies Teachers' Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy General Scores According to Various Variables

Table 5 t-Test Results of Social Studies Teachers' Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy General Scores According to Various Variables

Variables	Answers	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	t	p
Gender	Male	399	3.63	0.48	688	-3.53	.000*
	Female	291	3.50	0.52			
Course on Politics	Yes	306	3.71	0.48	688	6.25	.000*
	No	384	3.47	0.50			
Union Membership	Yes	497	3.48	0.48	688	.18	.85
	No	193	3.47	0.50			

The results of the independent samples t-test, as presented in Table 5, indicate that Social Studies teachers' overall scores on the Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy Scale differ significantly by gender (t(688) = –3.53, p < 0.05) and by whether they have completed a course related to politics (t(688) = 6.25, p < 0.05). Specifically, both gender and completion of a politics-related course are associated with statistically significant differences in teachers' overall self-efficacy scores for political literacy education. Male teachers and those who have completed a politics-related course exhibit significantly higher overall self-efficacy scores (94.53 and 96.45, respectively) compared to their counterparts (90.98 and 90.31, respectively). Conversely, union membership (t(688) = 0.18, p > 0.05) does not yield a statistically significant difference in Social Studies teachers' self-efficacy scores related to political literacy education.

3.3 One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for Social Studies Teachers' Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy General Scores According to Various Variables

Table 6 One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for Social Studies Teachers' Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy General Scores According to Various Variables

Variables	Answers	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	f	p	Significant Difference
Education Level	1. Bachelor's Degree	559	3.46	0.48			No significant difference
	2. Postgraduate (Master's/Doctoral Degree)	87	3.55	0.44	1.5	.21	
	3. Ongoing Postgraduate Studies	44	3.49	0.56			
Type of settlement	1. Province Center	280	3.47	0.49			No significant difference
	2. District Center	262	3.44	0.49	.46	.62	
	3. Town or Village	148	3.50	0.47			
Age	20-30	78	3.55	0.43			No significant difference
	31-40	361	3.47	0.50	1.99	.113	
	41-50	230	3.44	0.48			
	50 or above	21	3.65	0.53			

Professional Seniority	1-5 Years	101	3.54	0.45	1.94	.101	No significant difference
	6-10 Years	183	3.52	0.44			
	11-15 Years	155	3.41	0.54			
	16-20 Years	123	3.45	0.48			
	21 years and above	128	3.45	0.49			
Graduated Department	1. Social Studies Edu.	581	3.48	0.48	.352	.843	No significant difference
	2. History Education	48	3.41	0.41			
	3. History Dept.	31	3.41	0.41			
	4. Geography Edu.	25	3.46	0.42			
	5. Geography Dept	5	3.46	0.35			
School's Socioeconomic Status	1. High	53	3.50	0.42	.239	.787	No significant difference
	2. Medium	412	3.44	0.49			
	3. Low	225	3.24	0.49			
Frequency of Discussing Political Issues Related to Türkiye	1. Always	249	3.64	0.46	35.61	.000*	1-2 1-3 2-3
	2. Sometimes	307	3.44	0.45			
	3. Never	134	3.24	0.51			
Frequency of Discussing	1. Always	206	3.68	0.47	39.10	.000*	1-2 1-3

International Political Issues	2. Sometimes	31 2	3.4 4	0.4 3	2-3
	3. Never	17 2	3.2 6	0.5 0	

As presented in Table 6, the overall scores of Social Studies teachers on the Political Literacy Education Self-Efficacy Scale did not exhibit statistically significant differences based on their educational status [$F(2, 687) = 1.5$; $p > 0.05$], place of duty [$F(2, 687) = 0.46$; $p > 0.05$], age [$F(3, 686) = 1.99$; $p > 0.05$], seniority [$F(4, 685) = 1.94$; $p > 0.05$], department of graduation [$F(4, 685) = 0.352$; $p > 0.05$], or the socio-economic context of the school in which they are employed [$F(2, 687) = 0.239$; $p > 0.05$].

However, the overall self-efficacy scores of the teachers demonstrated a statistically significant difference based on the frequency of discussing political issues related to Türkiye [$F(2, 687) = 35.61$, $p < 0.05$] and the frequency of discussing international political issues [$F(2, 687) = 39.10$, $p < 0.05$].

Teachers who consistently discuss political issues related to Türkiye ($\bar{x} = 3.68$) exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy compared to those who discuss these issues occasionally ($\bar{x} = 3.44$) and those who never engage in such discussions ($\bar{x} = 3.24$). The Gabriel post-hoc test results indicate that the mean self-efficacy scores of teachers who always discuss political issues related to Türkiye are significantly greater than those of teachers who sometimes discuss them, as well as those who never do. Furthermore, teachers who sometimes discuss these issues demonstrate significantly higher self-efficacy scores than those who never engage in such discussions.

Teachers who always discuss international political issues ($\bar{x} = 3.68$) demonstrate significantly higher levels of self-efficacy than those who sometimes engage in such discussions ($\bar{x} = 3.44$) and those who never do so ($\bar{x} = 3.26$). The Gabriel post hoc test confirmed that the mean self-efficacy scores of teachers who always address international political issues are significantly greater than the scores of both teachers who sometimes and those who never discuss these issues. In addition, teachers who discuss international political issues sometimes have significantly higher self-efficacy scores than teachers who never engage in these discussions.

4. Results, Discussions and Recommendations

The findings of the study indicated that Social Studies teachers generally demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy regarding political literacy education (Table 4). This result aligns with previous research suggesting that teachers tend to exhibit confidence in addressing politically oriented topics in the classroom and in fostering democratic values among their students (Geller, 2020; Geçit - Avcı, 2022; Demirtaş, 2022; Waller, 2023). However, a closer examination of the existing literature reveals that, although teachers frequently report strong self-efficacy beliefs related to political literacy, this confidence does not consistently translate into classroom practice (Kus - Tarhan, 2016; Demirtaş, 2022; Yavaş et al., 2024). This discrepancy suggests a potential gap between teachers' perceived competence and their actual implementation of political literacy instruction—one that may be influenced by contextual factors such as curricular constraints, political sensitivities, and institutional culture.

The results revealed that male teachers demonstrated significantly higher levels of self-efficacy in political literacy education than female teachers. This pattern aligns with previous research showing that men generally report greater confidence in teaching citizenship and politically oriented subjects (Crick & Porter, 1978; Hammon, 2010; Erlich & Gindi, 2019). A range of structural and sociocultural mechanisms may help explain this difference. Gender norms in many contexts tend to associate political engagement and leadership with masculinity, enabling men to develop higher self-efficacy in public, decision-making, and politically salient domains, while constraining women's confidence in these areas (Burns et al., 2001, ss. 358-359; Hofstede, 2001, s. 335; Eagly - Karau, 2002). Moreover, the greater visibility of male political role models can reinforce men's perceptions of competence and limit similar opportunities for women (Campbell- Wolbrecht, 2006). Research also consistently shows that women—often due to socialization patterns—report lower political knowledge, interest, and ambition compared to men, factors strongly associated with political participation and political teaching efficacy (Bennett - Bennett, 1989; Zukin et al., 2006, ss. 145-152; Lawless- Fox, 2010, ss. 93-94). Historical and cultural dynamics further deepen this gap. In societies where women's participation in political life has long been restricted or undervalued, women may internalize lower expectations regarding their influence in

public spheres, which can diminish their perceived capability to teach politically oriented content (Turner, 1993, s. 2; Sharer, 2007, s. 127; Karpowitz - Mendelberg, 2014, ss. 23-25). Taken together, these intersecting factors help account for why female teachers in this study reported lower levels of self-efficacy in political literacy education.

The study further revealed that Social Studies teachers who had completed coursework in political science demonstrated significantly higher self-efficacy in teaching political literacy compared to those without such academic background. This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing the pivotal role of teacher education in shaping professional competence (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Cochran-Smith - Zeichner, 2006, s. 251). Specifically, political science education equips teachers with both conceptual understanding and pedagogical strategies, thereby enhancing their ability to communicate political concepts clearly and effectively (Shulman, 1987). In line with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, increased domain-specific knowledge and skills contribute to higher confidence in performing instructional tasks. Accordingly, teachers who have completed political science coursework tend to possess a more comprehensive grasp of curriculum content, a stronger sense of professional identity, and greater confidence in fulfilling their classroom roles (Tschannen-Moran - Hoy, 2001; Hoy - Spero, 2005). Thus, exposure to political science education appears to enhance teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy by providing the intellectual foundation and pedagogical competence necessary for effectively integrating political issues into classroom instruction.

One of the key findings of the study indicated that Social Studies teachers who reported always discussing political issues related to Türkiye demonstrated significantly higher levels of self-efficacy in political literacy education compared to those who sometimes or never engaged in such discussions. This result suggests that incorporating local and current political issues into classroom instruction enhances teachers' knowledge base, their capacity to design effective pedagogical strategies, and their professional confidence. As emphasized by Shulman (1987), pedagogical content knowledge constitutes a central component of teachers' professional competence and serves as a major determinant of self-efficacy. Similarly, Banks (2008) and Barton and Levstik (2004,

ss. 186-189) contend that integrating local and societal contexts into classroom learning not only increases students' engagement but also strengthens instructional effectiveness. Moreover, teachers' utilization of their cultural and political capital throughout this process further reinforces their sense of efficacy and professional agency (Bourdieu, 1986, s. 245; Klofstad, 2011, ss. 32-35). Therefore, the regular discussion of political issues pertaining to Türkiye can be regarded as a vital pedagogical practice that enhances not only teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy education but also students' democratic participation competencies. Ultimately, such classroom practices contribute to the development of a more critical, participatory, and democratically oriented learning environment, which lies at the very core of political literacy education.

Another noteworthy finding of the study revealed that Social Studies teachers who reported always discussing international political issues demonstrated significantly higher levels of self-efficacy in political literacy education than those who sometimes or never engaged in such discussions. This finding indicates that integrating international political topics into instructional practices not only broadens teachers' knowledge base but also enhances their pedagogical capacity and professional confidence. As highlighted by Shulman (1987), the possession of extensive pedagogical content knowledge substantially contributes to teachers' self-efficacy. In a similar vein, Merryfield (1998; 2000) points out that teaching international political issues fosters critical thinking, empathy, and underscores that teaching international and global political issues fosters critical thinking, empathy, and global awareness, thereby reinforcing teachers' instructional competencies. Likewise, Banks (2008) contends that incorporating diverse cultural and political perspectives into classroom discourse enriches the overall learning experience and deepens students' civic understanding. Furthermore, Klofstad's (2011, ss. 32-35) civic talk framework supports these findings, demonstrating that regular discussions of international political issues serve as a crucial mechanism for enhancing teachers' political literacy self-efficacy. Taken together, engaging with global political themes not only expands teachers' intellectual and pedagogical horizons but also contributes to cultivating globally conscious, empathetic, and critically minded citizens within the classroom environment.

The analysis of Social Studies teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy education revealed no statistically significant differences across demographic and professional variables such as union membership, educational background, school location, age, teaching experience, academic department, or the school's socio-economic status. This finding suggests that political literacy self-efficacy is shaped not solely by demographic or structural factors but also by personal dimensions—including teachers' knowledge, experiences, interests, and attitudes (Bandura, 1997).

First, the absence of a significant difference regarding union membership implies that teachers' participation—whether motivated by ideological affiliation or professional rights advocacy—does not exert a direct influence on their perceived self-efficacy (Eraslan, 2014; Çilek, 2016, s. 150; Durmuş, 2018, s. 135). Nonetheless, union members' slightly higher mean scores may be interpreted through social participation theory, which posits that involvement in politically active or high-status groups enhances individuals' political awareness and perception(Beaumont, 2010, s. 530; Klofstad, 2011, s. 35).

Second, no statistically significant difference emerged between teachers holding bachelor's and postgraduate degrees. This finding indicates that formal education level alone may not constitute a decisive factor influencing confidence in teaching political literacy. Rather, informal learning opportunities, lifelong experiences, and media literacy skills appear to play a more substantial role in shaping self-efficacy (Putnam, 2000; Field, 2006, s. 150; Kellner - Share, 2007).

Third, the lack of significant differences by settlement type (urban or rural) and school socio-economic level demonstrates that teachers' self-efficacy in political literacy remains relatively consistent across contexts. Teachers in rural areas and those working in high socio-economic environments reported slightly higher averages, possibly due to factors such as stronger community engagement in small towns, the innovative practices of early-career teachers, and the supportive school climates typical of better-resourced institutions (Hoover-Dempsey - Sandler, 1997; Wentzel, 1998; Tschannen-Moran - Hoy, 2001; Johnson et al., 2007; Flaagan et al., 2010).

Fourth, the lack of significant differences in age and seniority suggests that self-efficacy is influenced more by motivation, interests, and experiential depth than by chronological age or years of service. Teachers over 50 and those with 1–5 years of experience reported slightly higher means, reflecting the dual influence of early-career enthusiasm and late-career expertise. This pattern may illustrate the coexistence of novice teachers' idealism and energy with veteran teachers' perspective, experience, and political awareness (Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Caprara et al., 2003; Hoy - Spero, 2005; Klassen - Chiu, 2010).

Finally, the absence of a significant difference by undergraduate major indicates that teachers from other disciplines have developed levels of self-efficacy comparable to those of Social Studies Education graduates through professional experience and pedagogical adaptation. Although Social Studies graduates scored slightly higher, this may be attributed to disciplinary orientation, formal preparation, pedagogical knowledge, and a stronger sense of professional identity (Gindi - Erlich, 2018; Merryfield, 2012, s. 68; Kuş - Öztürk, 2019).

Taken together, these findings suggest that self-efficacy in political literacy education is shaped less by external or structural characteristics—such as demographic or institutional variables—and more by teachers' internal dispositions, motivations, and classroom practices. This pattern highlights the central role of teachers' reflective capacity, political awareness, and commitment to democratic pedagogy in fostering effective citizenship education.

Based on these findings teacher education programs particularly within Social Studies departments, should incorporate structured political science modules and practice-oriented coursework that explicitly focus on political literacy pedagogy, as the results show that formal exposure to political science significantly enhances self-efficacy. Second, in-service training should prioritize sustained, workshop-based professional development that provides teachers with opportunities to analyze current political issues, design instructional materials, and engage in guided classroom simulations. Third, schools should encourage teachers to integrate both national and international political issues into classroom discussions by providing curated resource packs, discussion

protocols, and safe classroom dialogue guidelines, given that frequent engagement with political content strongly predicts higher self-efficacy. Fourth, mentorship programs pairing teachers with strong political literacy backgrounds with those reporting lower self-efficacy could support experiential learning and model effective instructional practices. Finally, educational policymakers should promote school-level cultures that value democratic dialogue by allocating time for discussion-based activities, supporting teacher autonomy in topic selection, and fostering partnerships with civil society organizations to ensure that teachers' political literacy practices are reinforced by their institutional environment.

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