

An extended review of the relationship between the social studies teachers' inclusive education awareness and social justice perceptions*

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<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>**Ünal Şimşek¹**, and **Bahadır Kılcan²**

Abstract

This research aimed to review the relationship between the awareness of social studies teachers on inclusive education and their perceptions of social justice. This research designed with a relational survey model was carried out using quantitative research methods to collect data specific to both concepts and to reveal the relationship between them. The study group of the research consists of 148 social studies teachers assigned to public schools in the central district of Aksaray province and Mamak district of Ankara province as of the 2021-2022 academic year. "Awareness Scale for Inclusive Education" and "Social Justice Scales in Schools" were used as the data collection tools for this research. The questionnaires were applied via Google Forms due to the pandemic. As a result of the research executed within the framework of various variables, it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between social studies teachers' awareness of inclusive education and their perceptions of social justice. The reasons concerning the variables pointing to a significant difference as per the findings obtained in the current research may be revealed by collecting in-depth data through qualitative research designs. In addition, the relationship between social studies teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and social justice can be examined based on different variables.

Keywords:

Social studies teachers, Inclusive education, Awareness, Social justice, Perception

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding of inclusive education differs significantly not only between cultures and education systems but also within cultures and education systems. Therefore, there is no clear definition of inclusive education (Dyson, 1999). However, definitions of inclusive education are more common in the international literature. For example, inclusive education is expressed as an ethical component based on a just society within human rights (Forlin, 2013; Reindal, 2016). Besides, there are other definitions that explain inclusive education as a reform that promotes diversity among all students and enables students to enjoy their environment (UNESCO, 2001); as implementation processes developed to ensure full participation, focusing on the need to provide a high quality education to all students (Ainscow, 2015; Messiou et al, 2016); an approach that aims to design an environment that allows and supports the potential learning of all students, regardless of their differences and diversities (Simon, Echeita, Sandoval & Lopez, 2010); an understanding that aims to create a fair educational environment for all students, unites the society around the idea of "high quality education for all" and aims to create a school climate that is free from marginalizing and exclusionary attitudes and behaviors (Şimşek, 2019) and a values-based philosophy that aims to maximize the participation of all in society and education by minimizing exclusionary and discriminatory practices (Booth, 2005). The philosophy underlying inclusive education can be considered as the ability of a wide group of individuals diversified based on different abilities, gender differences, and social and cultural origins to live together in a fair society (Morina, 2017). In other words, inclusive education points out that differences should be perceived as wealth, not as a problem (Şimşek, 2019; 2020; 2021; Şimşek & Kılcan, 2019). In this respect, the aim of inclusive education is expressed as putting an end to social exclusion as a result of attitudes and reactions to individual differences, disabilities, and diversities with regard to race, social class, religion, gender, and ability (Vitello & Mithaug, 1998) while the mission thereof is defined as addressing social justice, inequality, and human rights issues (Polat, 2011).

Social justice, which is recognized by UNESCO (2015) as one of the principles outlined in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) goals of the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is perceived as an important step for achieving the goal of inclusive education, which is a part of the human rights approach. From this point of view, the definitions of social justice were investigated. Miller (1999) defined the concept of social justice as to improve the social well-being of each individual, taking into account the components of need, entitlement and equality; Wendorf, Alexander and Firestone (2002) defined social justice as the equitable distribution of social resources and responsibilities to all members of society; Polat (2007) defined social justice as to ensure economic and social equality; Okşar (2009) defined it as the fair distribution of blessings and burdens in society; Çelik (2013) defined it as an understanding that does not postpone differences, that adopts the democratic participation of different groups in the decision-making process as well as the equitable distribution of economic resources and does not culturally exclude others whereas The Turkish Language Society (2020) defines social justice as *"the state of social balance achieved by taking into consideration the criteria such as living standards and income levels of different segments of the society within the framework of equal opportunity principle"* and Vural (2020) defines social justice as the distribution of opportunities and rights to individuals in proportion to their needs. In addition, social justice was further introduced as a concept that considers the life, needs, requirements, and welfare of individuals and is based on their education, and social and economic situation. This situation has contributed to the emergence of the concept of social justice in education and the pursuit of the empowerment of schools in countries with poor socioeconomic educational conditions by eliminating the deficiencies (Alsburry & Shaw, 2005; Karacan, Bağlıbel & Bindak, 2015).

Social justice in education is expressed as providing a democratic environment by ensuring equality, multiculturalism, and justice (Tomul, 2009). Expressing similar views Banks, Cookson, Gay, Hawley, Irvine, Nieto, Schofield and Stephan (2001) pointed out that the concept of social justice in education is related to providing equal opportunities to the whole society and multiculturalism whereas Furman and Shields

(2005) and Polat (2007) stated that the concept of social justice in education should be considered together with the concepts of ensuring equal access and sustainability.

The concept of social justice in education has been treated in the literature within the framework of three sub-dimensions: distribution, recognition, and participation (Bates, 2005; Enslin, 2006; Gewirtz, 2006; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002; Koçak & Bostancı, 2019; Miller, 1999; Polat, 2007; Wang, 2006). Distributive justice dimension draws attention to the understanding of equality and social state; recognitory justice draws attention to examining and recognizing all individuals (in particular culturally disadvantaged individuals) within the context of multiculturalism and to provide developmental elements, thereby the idea of transferring this understanding of pluralism to the future and the participatory justice dimension draws attention to democracy and the creation of a democratic school climate.

All stakeholders, particularly teachers, should assume a role in the approval of the concept of social justice in educational environments. Teachers do not only lecture in the classroom but also have an important mission in creating a democratic classroom climate (Furman & Shields 2005; Karacan, Bağlıbel & Bindak, 2015; Şimşek, 2019; 2020; 2021; Şimşek & Kılcan, 2019). Teachers, further, assume the role of mediator between their colleagues and society in terms of both achieving the goal of inclusive education and the approval of the concept of social justice both in society and educational institutions (Ainscow, 2005; Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002; Kılcan & Şimşek, 2021; Kortman, 2001; Mullen, 2001; Şimşek, 2019; 2020; 2021; Şimşek & Kılcan, 2019; Tekin-Bozkurt, & Yılmaz-Öztürk, 2022). In addition to this, it is also very important to use education programs that will provide the opportunity to teach knowledge, skills, and values related to justice education. With the use of these programs, students will be able to gain rationales for the social problems around them, and they will be able to understand the underlying causes of these problems and the wider angles caused by the problems (Gezer, 2018). It is used for objectives to consider the above, including broad focuses and objectives that can link disciplines such as social studies program, multicultural education or social justice education (Clark, & Camicia, 2017). The objectives of the Social Studies Course are defined as to assume the mission of raising a good citizen and to raise individuals who are aware of their democratic rights, who have adopted equality and justice and who contribute to the approval of social justice in educational environments (NCSS, 1992). This research is therefore significant for synchronically addressing the inclusive education awareness and the social justice perceptions of social studies teachers who assume a key role in the establishment of a democratic climate in schools. From this point of view, this research aimed to review the relationship between the awareness of social studies teachers on inclusive education and their perceptions of social justice.

For this purpose, this research aimed to seek the answers to the questions about whether variables such as participants' gender, socio-economic status of the school, professional seniority, presence of disadvantaged students in the classroom make a difference in their awareness of inclusive education and their perceptions of social justice.

METHOD

Research Design

This quantitative research was shaped by the relational survey design. The relational survey model is a general survey model that aims to determine the relationship between variables, to make predictions, to determine the existence of the detected relationship or the degree of change together (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2014; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The aim of determining the relationship between the inclusive education awareness and social justice perceptions of social studies teachers assigned in the central district of Aksaray province and Mamak district of Ankara province within the context of various variables constitutes a justification for using the relational screening model for the research.

Study Group

The research was conducted in the 2021-2022 academic year with the participation of 148 (101 female, 47 male) social studies teachers assigned in the central district of Aksaray province and Mamak district of Ankara province. Participants in the research were determined by using convenient sampling, which is one of the non-random sampling types. Convenience sampling is a method where researchers choose their sample based solely on availability along with quick and easy access (Patton, 2005). The convenience with regard to the present research can be explained by the fact that the first and second researchers have met the teachers and the administrators in the study group before.

Data Collection Tool and the Collection of Research Data

Research data were collected by "Awareness Scale for Inclusive Education" developed by Kılcan and Şimşek (2021), "Social Justice Scales in Schools" developed by Karacan, Bağlıbel, and Bindak (2015), and the demographic data of the social studies teachers were collected via "Personal Information Form (PIF)". The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the Awareness Scale for Inclusive Education, which consists of five sub-dimensions and a total of 22 items, is 0.88. The reliability coefficient of the Social Justice Scales in Schools, which consists of three sub-dimensions and a total of 19 items, is 0.91. The research data were collected via Google Forms due to the pandemic. For this process, firstly, the measurement tools were brought together in Word format. Then, independent variables along with a directive for the participants were added revealing why and for what purposes this research was conducted and for what purpose the results would be used. These data, prepared in Word format, were then transferred to Google Forms and checked. The first and second researchers then communicated with some teachers they have already met and the administrators thereof to share the link of the survey research. Data were collected from 148 participants over a period of approximately 10 days. Approximately a week later, relevant teachers and their administrators have communicated once again and were invited to participate in the study. Then the data collection process was terminated, as no additional participation was observed throughout this one week.

Data Analysis

Data collected through Google Forms was first downloaded to the computer in an Excel file and checked for any errors and inaccuracies in the data. Then, a data set was created in the SPSS 21 program in accordance with the data collected and the data in the Excel file were copied herein. Depending on the variables, collected research data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-test. In cases where the variance of the data sets is not homogeneous, Welch test and Tamhane multiple comparison tests were applied whereas different analysis techniques such as Anova were applied for homogeneous data sets.

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings determined as a result of the statistical analysis related to the problem statement and sub-problems of the research are reported.

Table 1. T-test results examining the participants' awareness of inclusive education on the basis of gender variable

Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	df	t	p
Female	101	78.13	11.38	146	3.184	0.002
Male	47	72.68	8.79			

Table 1 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the total scores of the participants' inclusive education awareness and their gender [$t(146)=3.184$; $p<0.05$]. Mean inclusive education awareness score of women participants is ($\bar{x}=78.13$), whereas the mean inclusive education awareness score of men is ($\bar{x}=72.68$). It was concluded that the difference was statistically significant. This finding

can be interpreted as the gender of the participants caused a differentiation in their awareness of inclusive education.

Table 2. Welch Test Results Examining the Participants' Awareness of Inclusive Education on the Basis of Socio-Economic Status of the School

Variable	SES	N	\bar{X}	S		
School SES	Poor	65	72.80	8.10		
	Moderate	75	79.31	12.52		
	High	8	78.38	4.87		
		Statistics	df1	df2	p	Difference Tamhane
Welch		8.253	2	25.410	0.002	Poor-Moderate Moderate-High

Table 2 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the total scores of the participants' inclusive education awareness and the socio-economic status of the school in which they are assigned [$F_{(welch)} = 8.253$; $p < 0.05$]. Tamhane test was conducted to find out to which groups this difference belong. These results demonstrate that there is a significant difference with regard to inclusive education awareness between participants working in schools with a poor socio-economic status and those working in schools with a moderate socio-economic status as well as between participants working in schools with a poor socio-economic status and those working in schools with a high socio-economic status in favor of the participants working in schools with a moderate and high socio-economic status. This finding can be interpreted as the socio-economic status of the schools in which participants have been working caused a differentiation in their awareness of inclusive education.

Table 3. Welch Test Results Examining the Participants' Awareness of Inclusive Education on the Basis of their Professional Seniority

Variable	SES	N	\bar{X}	S		
Seniority	(1) 1-5 yrs	34	79.24	13.36		
	(2) 6-10 yrs	35	73.51	6.93		
	(3) 11-15 yrs	30	84.43	10.54		
	(4) 16-20 yrs	25	69.80	5.88		
	(5) 20 yrs and above	24	73.42	9.52		
		Statistics	df1	df2	p	Difference Tamhane
Welch		11.557	4	68.473	0.000	1-4, 3-2,3-4,3-5

Table 3 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the total scores of the participants' inclusive education awareness and their professional seniority [$F_{(welch)} = 11.557$; $p < 0.05$]. Tamhane test was conducted to find out to which groups does this difference belong. These results demonstrate that there is a significant difference with regard to the inclusive education awareness between participants with a seniority of 1-5 years and those with a seniority of 16-20 years in favor of the participants with a 1-5 years of professional seniority; similarly there is a significant difference between participants with a seniority of 11-15 years and participants with a seniority of 6-10 years as well as between participants with a seniority of 16-20 years and participants with a seniority of 20 years and above in favor of the participants with a seniority of 11-15 years. This finding can be interpreted as the professional seniority of the participants caused a differentiation in their awareness of inclusive education.

Table 4. T-test Results Examining the Participants' Inclusive Education Awareness on the Basis of the Presence of Disadvantaged Students in the Classroom

Presence of Disadvantaged Students in the Classroom	N	\bar{X}	S	df	t	p
Yes	129	75.86	11.12	146	1.573	0.118
No	19	80.05	8.66			

Table 4 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the total scores of the participants' inclusive education awareness and the presence of disadvantaged students in the classroom [$t_{(146)}=1.573$; $p>0.05$]. Mean inclusive education awareness scores of participants with disadvantaged students in their classroom is ($\bar{x}=75.86$) whereas inclusive education awareness scores of participants with no disadvantaged student in their classroom is ($\bar{x}=80.05$). It was concluded that the difference was statistically insignificant. This finding can be interpreted as the presence of a disadvantaged student in the participants' classroom did not cause a differentiation in their awareness of inclusive education.

Table 5. T-test Results Examining the Participants' Perception of Social Justice on the Basis of Gender Variable

Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	df	t	p
Female	101	72.79	10.00	146	0.843	0.401
Male	47	71.23	11.43			

Table 5 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the total scores of the participants' social justice perception and their gender [$t_{(146)}=0.843$; $p>0.05$]. Mean social justice perception scores of female participants were found as ($\bar{x}=72.79$) whereas social justice perception scores of male participants were found as ($\bar{x}=71.23$). It was concluded that the difference was statistically insignificant. This finding can be interpreted as the gender of the participants did not cause a differentiation in their social justice perception.

Table 6. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results Examining the Difference of the Participants' Social Justice Perception in Accordance with the Socio-Economic Status of the School they have been Working

Variable	N	\bar{X}	S
Poor	65	72.80	8.10
Moderate	75	79.31	12.52
High	8	78.38	4.87

SES of the School	Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p	Difference
	Btw Groups	56.494	2	28.247	0.256	0.775	--
	In Groups	16026.425	145	110.527			
	Total	16082.919	147				

Table 6 demonstrates that there is no significant difference between the total scores of the participants' social justice perception and the socio-economic status of the school in which they are assigned [$F_{2-145}=0.256$; $p>0.05$]. This finding can be interpreted as the socio-economic status of the schools in which participants have been working did not cause differentiation in their social justice perception.

Table 7. Welch Test Results Examining the Participants' Social Justice Perception based on their Professional Seniority

Variable	SES	N	\bar{X}	S	
Seniority	(1) 1-5 yrs	34	71.82	12.69	
	(2) 6-10 yrs	35	72.91	6.42	
	(3) 11-15 yrs	30	73.83	13.97	
	(4) 16-20 yrs	25	71.52	7.37	
	(5) 20 yrs and above	24	70.96	9.90	
Statistics		df1	df2	p	Difference Tamhane
Welch		0.352	4	66.955	0.842

Table 7 demonstrates that there is no significant difference between the total scores of the participants' social justice perception and their professional seniority [$F_{(welch)} = 0.352$; $p > 0.05$]. This finding can be interpreted as the professional seniority of the participants did not cause differentiation in their social justice perception.

Table 8. T-test Results Examining the Participants' Social Justice Perception based on the Presence of Disadvantaged Students in the Classroom

Presence of Disadvantaged Students in the Classroom	N	\bar{X}	S	df	t	p
Yes	129	71.32	10.44	146	3.051	0.003
No	19	78.95	8.09			

Table 8 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the total scores of the participants' social justice perception and the presence of disadvantaged students in the classroom [$t_{(146)} = 3.051$; $p < 0.05$]. The mean social justice perception scores of participants with disadvantaged students in their classroom is ($\bar{x} = 71.32$) whereas the social justice perception scores of participants with no disadvantaged student in their classroom is ($\bar{x} = 78.95$). It was concluded that the difference was statistically significant. This finding can be interpreted as the presence of a disadvantaged student in the participants' classroom caused a differentiation in their social justice perception.

Findings about the relationship between participants' inclusive education awareness and their perceptions of social justice

The relationship between inclusive education awareness and social justice perceptions of the participants was analyzed using the Pearson correlation analysis. Table 9 exhibits the findings about the relationship between inclusive education awareness and social justice perceptions of the participants.

Table 9 reveals a statistically significant relationship between participants' awareness of inclusive education and their perceptions of social justice. Accordingly; a weak but significant relationship was determined between participants' awareness on the purpose of inclusive education and their perceptions of participatory justice ($r = 0.29$, $p = 0.000$), and a moderately significant relationship was determined between participants' awareness on the purpose of inclusive education and their perceptions of distributive justice ($r = 0.61$, $p = 0.000$) however no significant relationship was determined regarding their perceptions of recognitory justice ($r = 0.05$, $p = 0.559$) and social justice ($r = 0.07$, $p = 0.416$) in general.

On the other hand a moderate and positive relationship was determined between participants' awareness on inclusive education for disadvantaged groups and their perception of participatory justice ($r=0.39$, $p=0.000$); a strong positive relationship was determined between participants' awareness on inclusive education for disadvantaged groups and their distributive justice perception ($r=0.96$, $p=0.000$); a weak but positive relationship was determined between recognitory justice perception ($r=0.24$, $p=0.003$) and a weak, significant and positive relationship was determined between social justice perception in general ($r=0.26$, $p=0.001$).

Table 9. The Relationship Between Participants' Inclusive Education Awareness and their Perceptions of Social Justice

	Perception of Participatory Justice	Perception of Distributive Justice	Perception of Recognitory Justice	Perception of Social Justice in General
Awareness for the purpose of inclusive education	0.29**	0.61**	0.05	0.07
	0.000	0.000	0.559	0.416
Awareness on inclusive education for disadvantaged groups	0.39**	0.96**	0.24**	0.26**
	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.001
Awareness for inclusive education and legislation	0.23**	0.51**	0.11	0.19*
	0.005	0.000	0.193	0.024
Awareness for success in inclusive education	0.27**	0.37**	0.13	0.15
	0.001	0.000	0.112	0.068
Awareness for the origin of inclusive education	0.33**	0.31**	0.16	0.25**
	0.000	0.000	0.053	0.002
Awareness for inclusive education in general	0.43**	0.82**	0.19*	0.25**
	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.002

Furthermore, a weak positive relationship was determined between the participants' awareness for inclusive education and legislation and their participatory justice perceptions ($r=0.23$, $p=0.005$); a moderate, positive relationship was determined between the participants' awareness for inclusive education and legislation and their distributive justice perception ($r=0.51$, $p=0.000$); a weak positive relationship was determined for the social justice perceptions in general ($r=0.19$, $p=0.024$) while no significant relationship was determined between their awareness for inclusive education and legislation and recognitory justice perceptions ($r=0.11$, $p=0.193$).

A weak positive relationship was determined between participants' awareness for success of inclusive education and their perceptions of participatory justice ($r=0.27$, $p=0.001$) and a moderately positive relationship was determined for their perceptions of distributive justice ($r=0.37$, $p=0.000$) however no significant relationship was determined regarding their perceptions of recognitory justice ($r=0.13$, $p=0.112$) and social justice ($r=0.15$, $p=0.068$) in general.

A moderate positive relationship was determined between the participants' awareness for the origins of inclusive education and their participatory justice perceptions ($r=0.33$, $p=0.000$); a moderate, positive relationship was determined for their distributive justice perception ($r=0.31$, $p=0.000$) and a weak positive relationship was determined for the social justice perceptions in general ($r=0.25$, $p=0.002$) while no significant relationship was determined between their awareness for the origins of inclusive education and their recognitory justice perceptions ($r=0.16$, $p=0.053$).

Finally a moderate and positive relationship was determined between participants' awareness on inclusive education in general and their perception of participatory justice ($r=0.43$, $p=0.000$); a strong positive relationship was determined for their distributive justice perception ($r=0.82$, $p=0.000$); a weak but positive relationship was determined for their recognitory justice perception ($r=0.19$, $p=0.020$) and a weak, significant and positive relationship was determined between participants' awareness on inclusive education in general and their perception of social justice in general ($r=0.25$, $p=0.002$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research tried to explain whether there is a relationship between social studies teachers' awareness of inclusive education and their perceptions of social justice within the framework of various variables. Accordingly, research findings indicated that there is a significant difference between the participants' total inclusive education awareness scores and their gender, however, no significant relation was determined between the participants' total social justice perception scores and their gender. Güler (2021), in his research, concluded that teachers' (high school teachers) social justice leadership levels differed significantly in accordance with their gender. The results of the above-mentioned study, particularly with its conclusion that there is a significant difference between inclusive education, which is the sub-dimension of the social justice leadership scale, are similar in terms of the findings with regard to the relationship between the total inclusive education awareness scores and the gender variable. Furthermore, Şimşek (2019) concluded that the attitudes of social studies teachers towards inclusive education did not differ significantly based on gender, and Yıldırım (2021) concluded that there is no significant difference in the social justice leadership total scores of school principals based on their gender. The findings of both of the researches above differ from the results presented herein with regard to the conclusion that there is a significant difference between total inclusive education awareness scores and gender however they revealed similar results in terms of the conclusion stating that there is no significant difference between the participants' total social justice perception scores and their gender.

The findings of this research indicated that there is a significant difference between the participants' total inclusive education awareness scores and the socio-economic status of the schools in which they are assigned; however no significant difference was determined between the participants' total social justice perception scores and the socio-economic status of the schools in which they are assigned. In this context, Şimşek (2019) concluded in his research that the attitudes of social studies teachers towards inclusive education did not differ significantly on the basis of the socio-economic status of the region where their schools are located. The findings of the research mentioned above differ with the results presented herein with regard to the conclusion that there is a significant difference between the participants' total inclusive education awareness scores and the socio-economic status of the schools in which they are assigned; however they revealed similar results in terms of the conclusion stating that there is no significant difference between the participants' total social justice perception scores and the socio-economic status of the schools in which they are assigned.

In addition, research findings indicated that there is a significant difference between the participants' total inclusive education awareness scores and their professional seniority, however no significant relation was determined between the participants' total social justice perception scores and their professional seniority. Similarly, Yıldırım (2021) could not determine a significant difference between the social justice leadership perception of the teachers and their professional seniority. The findings of the research mentioned above differ with the results presented herein with the conclusion that there is a significant difference between the participants' total inclusive education awareness scores and their professional seniority; however they revealed similar results in terms of the conclusion stating that there is no significant difference between the participants' total social justice perception scores and their professional seniority. In addition, the results obtained by Şimşek (2019) in his research, stating that

there is no significant difference between the attitudes of social studies teachers towards inclusive education and their professional seniority contradicts with the results presented herein stating that there is a significant difference between the participants' total inclusive education awareness scores and their professional seniority; however they are similar to the results stating that there is no significant difference between the participants' total social justice perception scores and their professional seniority. While the participants' awareness of inclusive education differs according to professional seniority, the fact that their perceptions of social justice do not differ according to professional seniority can be considered as proof that the variable of seniority is a factor in awareness of inclusive education. In other words, it can be concluded that the awareness of teachers who are not at the beginning and end of the profession in terms of professional seniority is higher than the others. This can be expressed with inexperience at the beginning of the profession or with burnout at the end of the profession.

The findings of this research indicated that there is no significant difference between the participants' total inclusive education awareness scores and the presence of disadvantaged students in the classroom; however there is a significant difference between the participants' total social justice perception scores and the presence of disadvantaged students in the classroom. Şimşek (2019) concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of social studies teachers towards inclusive education and the presence of disadvantaged students in their classes. This result coincides with the conclusion presented herein stating that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of the participants towards inclusive education and the presence of disadvantaged students in their classes, however contradicts with the results presented herein stating that there is a significant difference between the participants' total social justice perception scores and the presence of disadvantaged students in the classroom.

Finally, it was determined that there is a statistically positive and significant relationship between social studies teachers' awareness of inclusive education and their perceptions of social justice. Within the context of social justice, related researches in the literature conducted by Banks, Cookson, Gay, Hawley, Irvine, Nieto, Schofield and Stephan, (2001), Polat (2007), Tomul, (2009), Okşar (2013), Vural (2020) and Wang (2018) placed emphasis on equality, access, justice, multiculturalism, fair distribution and the well-being of individuals in the society which are important concepts for inclusive education. Çelik (2013), on the other hand, drew attention to the democratic decision-making processes of individuals along with equality. This can be interpreted as that both concepts (inclusive education-social justice) are inter-related. Considering the emergence of social justice in education, as a concept, the pursuit of the countries with limited educational opportunities to strengthen their schools and improve their quality (Alsburry & Shaw, 2005; Karacan, Bağlıbel & Bindak, 2015) overlaps with the aim of inclusive education. Nucci and Ilten-Gee (2021), in their research, also emphasized the key role of moral education, which is another important dimension in ensuring social justice. In their works, they stated that teachers should determine a common ethical principle for their classroom and guide their students accordingly in order to develop a sense of cooperation in between students and to involve them in the process; specific course plans should be prepared and applied equally with the classroom teachers in accordance with the age and individual differences of the students in line with the pre-determined course curriculum; students' thoughts should be listened to, their moral development processes should be revealed in detail and necessary support mechanisms should be offered to students in line with their needs; the moral development of students, their critical pedagogy and digital literacy levels and the connections in between them should be revealed and deficiencies thereon should be determined accordingly; the connections between classroom management, school rules, social justice perceptions and social developments should be revealed and the significance of these in ensuring social justice and achieving the goal of inclusive education should be understood. Sicong (2021), on the other hand, tried to explain the social justice discourse which is used officially in citizenship education through the examples from China and Japan. In his study, the researcher concluded that both countries did not attach enough importance to collective actions and unity in discourses for achieving social justice and that they paid little attention to the global impact of social justice. Above-mentioned research also revealed that both

countries did not adopt a comprehensive, transformative attitude that supports global social justice education. The research further mentions that to spread social justice by getting rid of these understandings is important in terms of achieving both an equal, fair and democratic society and the goal of inclusive education. As a matter of fact, in his research where he discussed the tendencies of university students towards social justice, Yıldırım (2011) concluded that gender equality within the scope of equal opportunity, which is one of the social justice principles, equal citizenship and fair distribution within this scope are generally effective on the social justice perceptions of university students and create significant differences in this respect. Polat (2011), on the other hand, states that the concepts of inclusive education and social justice are inter-related however he further mentions factors such as infrastructure, classroom/learning environment, health, water/sanitation and negative social/cultural practices as the obstacles to the establishment of these understandings. An ideal understanding of social justice should be adopted in schools in order both to overcome these obstacles and to improve students' success. For this purpose, officials, school administrators, teachers and all stakeholders should fulfill their responsibilities (King & Bouchard, 2011; Williams, 2009). Baş and Şentürk (2011) reached a similar conclusion in their research where they stated that school administrators and teachers have a great responsibility in creating a healthy school climate and that a sense of cooperation and trust should be developed between the school administrator and the teacher in order for the process to run smoothly within the school. Considering that students often choose their teachers as role models, these are considered essential in terms of creating a healthy school climate and achieving the goals of inclusive education and social justice.

The results of the existing studies in the literature stated in general that ensuring the social justice is considered essential in the acceptance of inclusive education throughout the society and in schools. These perspectives have supported the conclusion that significant relationships were determined between the inclusive education awareness and social justice perceptions of social studies teachers who participated in the current research. They confirmed the opinion that the concepts of inclusive education and social justice are inter-related. Underlying reasons concerning the variables pointing to a significant difference presented in the findings of this research may be revealed by further studies conducted through qualitative research designs. On the other hand, social studies teachers' inclusive education awareness and their perceptions of social justice can be examined with different variables. Studies aiming to improve social studies teachers' inclusive education awareness and social justice perceptions can be carried out in schools.

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