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## THE VIEWS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ABOUT TODAY AND FUTURE OF CURRENT WORLD PROBLEMS

*Research article*

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## THE VIEWS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ABOUT TODAY AND FUTURE OF CURRENT WORLD PROBLEMS

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the opinions of social sciences pre-service teachers on the present and future of world problems. The study is a qualitative one and modeled according to the phenomenological research. The participants consist of pre-service teachers in the social sciences teaching undergraduates in Turkey. A survey that consists of open-ended questions developed by the researcher was used to collect the data. The data were analyzed using the qualitative descriptive analysis method. According to the research results, most of the participants stated that they were mostly concerned about human-based world problems. The world problem they are affected mainly by was women's issues when they hear these problems from the news or experience these problems in their personal lives. Most of the pre-service teachers stated that education was the most important factor in solving the world problems and that women's problems, which emerged as the most important problem, could also be solved by education. In their predictions for the future, they put forward that 50 years later, the world's most important problem would be water scarcity, and most of the future problems would be related to nature.

*Keywords:* current world problems course, world problems, pre-service teachers, geography

### 1. Introduction

The focal point of the science of geography is humans (Doğanay, 2011). Everything that concerns people is the subject of geography. Geography tries to conclude while questioning the distribution of physical, human, and economic events. This result tries to reveal information for the benefit of human beings (Girgin, 2002). Therefore, many physical, human, and economic world problems in today's world are at the center of geography. It is inevitable for the future of the world to produce solutions for these problems. In today's world where world problems are increasing (Yazıcı, 2013; Işık Mercan & Sarı, 2019; Koç & Dumlu, 2020), and more and more people are physically, economically, and psychologically affected, the Covid-19 epidemic continues to impact the people from the age of 3 to 90 and older in different dimensions.

2020 has been called a "year of disasters" (Coşkunarda, 2020, Uçkun & Tosun, 2020). The relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and other world problems has been investigated widely; such as economic problems (Karakaya, 2020; Bahar & Çelik İlal, 2020; Skare et al., 2021; Aktar et al., 2021), problems related to mental health of children (Çalışkan, 2020; Akoğlu & Karaaslan, 2020; Şahbudak & İnal Emiroğlu, 2020; Sarman, et al., 2020; Erol, 2020) and the mental health of adults (Bahar, Çuhadar & Bahar, 2021, Aşkın, et al., 2020; Yıldırım, 2020; Kasapoğlu, 2020; Öcalan & Üzar Özçetin, 2020). Covid-19 caused problems in many areas of life, it changed the way people live, caused deaths, and is expected to impact social life (Akyol, 2020; Gorgulu Arı & Hayır Kanat, 2020). However, the pandemic has also had a positive effect. It showed that the precautions the world has not taken for global problems for years could be taken urgently and quickly in the first six

months of 2020 has contributed to humanity's experience with a disaster and to find clues for solutions. The fact that this disaster experience gave important clues also contributed to the development of solutions (Karakaya, 2020; Alugar, 2022).

The countries of the world have been organizing days during the year regarding the world problems for years, reminding the world problems and discussing the solutions, even once a year (Özey, 2011); such as April 22- World Day, March 8 International Women's Day, October 5 - World Children's Day, December 10 - World Human Rights Day, March 21 - International Day of Struggle against Racial Discrimination, and June 5 World Environment Day

It is the greatest responsibility and duty of human beings to face the realities of today's world. And learning the world problems is an important step to find solutions to the world's problems (Özey, 2011). Especially social sciences teachers need to be aware of these problems. In Turkey, the national social sciences curriculum for 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grades has objectives related to today's world problems. These objectives aim students to gain awareness, a critical point of view, and sensitivity about current world issues and think about solutions to world problems. More specifically, the main objectives of the social science courses are also presented as being aware of the limitations of the natural environment and resources, attempting to protect natural resources with environmental awareness, having a sustainable environmental understanding, showing sensitivity to the issues that concern their country and the world, and expressing their opinions for the solution of personal and social problems (Ministry of Education Turkey, 2018). For social sciences education to achieve its purpose, future teachers must be aware of the current and future world problems and think about solutions. According to Avcı and Gümüş (2019), the ideal social sciences pre-service teacher is expected to be able to research how to reduce the impact of current world problems and make predictions for the future using the information on different dimensions such as economic, social, and social dimensions.

This study presents an example for teaching world problems to pre-service teachers. This study also seeks to understand the pre-service teachers' opinions, solutions, and predictions about current world problems. The following research questions guided the current study:

1. Which world problem have the pre-service social sciences teachers mostly affected by and why?
2. What are the opinions of pre-service social sciences teachers regarding the solution to current world problems?
3. What are the predictions of pre-service social sciences teachers about future world problems?

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Research design**

The study is a qualitative one and modeled according to the phenomenological research. In qualitative research, facts and events are considered in their context and interpreted in terms of the meanings people attribute to them (Altunışık et al., 2010). It includes focusing on experiences and orientations in the phenomenology design, revealing and interpreting different perceptions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). In this study, preservice social sciences teachers from a state university in Turkey are examined regarding their opinions about the word problems.

## 2.2. Participants

Participants were 112 (68 women and 44 men) undergraduate students enrolled in the social science teacher education program at a state university in Turkey. The participants were 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>-year students attending the “Current World Problems” course during the 2020 fall semester. This course was a compulsory course for 4<sup>th</sup>-year students and an elective for other students. Convenient sampling has been used as a sampling method as the researcher is the instructor of the “Current World Problems” course.

## 2.3. Current world problems course and motivation for this study

The “Current World Problems” course was offered 2 hours weekly in the social science teacher education undergraduate program. For the 4th year students, this course is offered as a field education course in the fall term. Course content involves; “*Natural disasters (global warming, earthquakes, tsunami, etc.), environmental problems, limitation of natural resources, hunger, poverty, unemployment, human rights, racism, pandemic and epidemic diseases, overpopulation, terrorism, and plans that aim to solve these problems nationally and internationally.*” (YÖK, 2007). However, in Turkey, teacher education programs have been renewed in 2018 and in the new program this course was removed from the compulsory course group, and it was started to be given as a 2 hour-elective course. The 4<sup>th</sup> year students of 2020-2021 are the students who took this course as the compulsory one for the last time. The course content in the 2018 new program involves; “*The political, economic, ecological and social problems facing the world; hunger, poverty, human rights, population, racism, terrorism, landslide, erosion, earthquake, flood, drought, avalanche, traffic, noise pollution, aviation, water pollution, the energy problem, and solution suggestions, environmental education, the place and importance of social sciences course on this subject; sustainable society discussions and education*” (YÖK, 2018).

The researcher has been teaching the Current World Problems course in the faculty of education for many years. In fall 2019, one day after she introduced the course in the first meeting, a student paid a visit and said that he had an anxiety disorder and did not want to continue the course stating that many problems and scenarios in the course could affect him badly. Reflecting on this problem, the following year, the design of the course was changed. The instructor planned the course in which students would actively participate as solution-makers, and the content would not be scary. Besides, instead of making the students painfully highlighting their experiences of the problems, students were also expected to act like future teachers and empathize that their students might have similar problems.

In fall 2020, at the start of the semester, students were given a survey that consists of one open-ended question. This question asked about the current world problems that affect them the most in their personal lives. The following week, students submitted this form to the instructor. In the middle of the semester, they were knowledgeable about world problems and their prospective solutions; therefore, the second survey with an open-ended question in which students will write solutions to their problems was given at the end of the lesson. At the end of the semester, the third form in which students write their predictions for the future world problems was given, and students’ responses were discussed.

Overall, it was observed that pre-service achieved the aim of the course, they had information about the world problems’ past, understood the present problems, contributed to suggesting solutions, and they were thinking ahead. Besides, the lecturer gained awareness about students’ problems and recognized their interests and concerns. It felt like meeting with students’ inner selves. Although it is the reality of the world, showing destructive earthquake

images in the classroom where a student who lost his mother and father in the earthquake, and teaching the lesson in the context of our responsibilities and cause and solution instead of doomsday scenarios created a satisfaction for the lecturer. This experience formed the basis for this study. In fall 2020, this course was not face-to-face, but online due to Covid 19 pandemic. In many online courses during the pandemic, it was difficult to attract students to a course and keep them active during the live sessions. To a great extent, students were actively involved in the “Current World Problems” course by using students’ own experiences and making students solution-makers to their problems.

#### **2.4. Data collection tool**

A survey consists of three open-ended questions that the researcher developed were used in this study. The questions were administered in two settings, at the beginning and the middle of the semester. The first question was asked at the beginning of the semester: “*What is the current world problem that affects you the most when you see it (news, social media, magazine, lesson, an event you have heard, TV, or chat with friends) when you hear it in the past or today? Can you write down why*” is. The second and third questions were administered in the middle of the semester: *What is your solution proposal for the current world problem that you answered before and which attracted your attention the most?, and the third question was; “What could be the most important problem in the world in 50 years?”*.

#### **2.5. Data collection and data analysis processes**

The data were collected during the “Current World Problems” course offered online in distance education due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The course took place two hours per week and the researcher was the instructor. Students were informed throughout the data collection that no penalty would be imposed on students if they do not fill the survey questions and their identities would be kept confidential. All the students taking the course volunteered to fill the survey questions during the course, and questions were submitted online to the instructor’s e-mail address by individual students. The data collection process took place in two stages.

In the first week of the course, students were informed about the purpose and content of the Current World Problems course. In the second week, the topics of the curriculum were presented. At the end of the lesson, the survey with the first open-ended question (“*When you hear it in the past or today (news, social media, magazine, lesson, an event, TV, or friend chat) what is the world problem today? Can you write down why?*”) Was administered and students were given one week to fill the survey. In the 3rd week, the online form of the surveys sent by pre-service teachers to the instructor, and the first stage of the data collection process was completed.

For the second stage of the data collection process, a form with two open-ended questions was prepared. The instructor continued to cover the course topics every week. Between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, the pre-service teachers filled the form with two open-ended questions in a week and sent it online to the instructor. Thus, the second stage of the data collection process was completed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the possibility of both pre-service teachers and the instructor having health problems was planned. For the data collection process to be sufficient, the data collection was completed in seven weeks.

The survey could be given to pre-service teachers in one setting. However, the first question was given separately to focus on the event that they were most affected by. In the meantime, the reasons for various world problems and the things that can be done to solve them were mentioned in the general flow of the course. In this process, while talking about different problems, it was assumed that students would keep thinking about the problem that

they mentioned. In the second administration, they stated their opinions about the solution and the predictions for the future.

The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis and themes were generated. Also, frequency tables were created based on the code densities accumulated under themes. While evaluating and presenting the expressions in the data, participants were given nicknames as Teacher-1 (T1, T2...) to keep the identities of pre-service teachers confidential.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. The most concerning world problems for pre-service social science teachers

The first research question of the study is: “Which world problem have the pre-service social sciences teachers mostly affected by and why?”. Participants’ responses were identified, common problems were categorized under the same codes, and the frequencies and percentages were presented (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. *Frequency (f) and percentage (%) distribution of “Current World Problems” affect them the most according to Social Sciences pre-service teachers.*

Current problems of the World that affect pre-service teachers	f	%
Women’s issues (violence, murder, etc.)	22	19.6
Children problems (violence, abuse, murder, etc.)	10	8.9
Environmental problems (air, water, soil pollution, etc.)	9	8.0
Earthquake	8	7.2
Racism	8	7.2
Poverty	7	6.2
Animal problems (violence, abuse, extinction of animal species, etc.)	6	5.4
Hunger	5	4.5
Water problems (scarcity)	5	4.5
Terrorism	4	3.6
Unemployment	3	2.6
Refugee problems	3	2.6
Forest fires	3	2.6
Overpopulation	2	1.8
Gender inequality	2	1.8
Drought	2	1.8
Epidemics	2	1.8
Genocide	2	1.8
Traffic accidents	2	1.8
Raw	1	0.9
Religious conflicts	1	0.9
Education problems	1	0.9
Food waste	1	0.9
Climate change	1	0.9
Mining accident	1	0.9
Nuclear accidents	1	0.9
Total	112	100.0

As presented in Table 1, the pre-service teachers who participated in the study reported that they were affected the most by 26 current world problems. The most frequently reported problem was “women’s problems” (violence, murder, etc.) with a rate of 19.6%. This is followed by “child problems” (violence, abuse, murder, etc.) with 8.9%, “environmental

problems” (air, water, soil pollution, etc.) with 8%. "Earthquake" (7.2%), "racism" (7.2%), "poverty" (6.2%), and "animal problems" (violence, abuse, extinction of animal species) (5.4%), were among the other problems.



Figure 1. “Current World Problems” that most affect Social Sciences pre-service teachers.

In general, the majority of the pre-service teachers participating in the study (84.9%) stated that they were most affected by the human-based world problems. The share of natural problems consisting of “earthquake”, “water problems”, “drought”, “avalanche”, “climate change”, which can be collected under the heading of natural problems, was only 15.1%.

The resources that pre-service teachers learned from or experienced the world problems have been grouped in six categories: their own life experiences, social media, movies, books, and magazines. The first three most reported categories were news ( $f= 45$ , 40.2%), their own life experiences ( $f= 32$ , 28.6%), and social media ( $f= 27$ , 24.1%). World problems also influenced the pre-service teachers through movies, books, and magazines. (Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency ( $f$ ) and percentages (%) of the resources that Social Sciences pre-service teachers hear about the world problems

The resources	$f$	%
News	45	40.2
Own life experience	32	28.6
Social media	27	24.1
Film	4	3.6
Book	3	2.6
Magazine (Cartoon)	1	0.9
Total	112	100.0

Some statements about the events that social sciences pre-service teachers have experienced through their own lives:

*“It turned into life-long violence due to the divorce of my aunt due to the violence she suffered in the family, the continued threats of her husband afterward, and the inability to see her children. That is why closely witnessing*

*violence against women led me to learn about this problem by experiencing it, it was only one of the problems these women have experienced” (T34- Violence against women).*

*“I live in the same city as Özgecan Aslan. The fact that he was killed in Mersin, where I lived in our city, maybe the same place where I got on the same bus, affected me greatly. I followed the topic for days, I read it, I was so sorry. I feel the same feelings in every news of violence and murder against women and it draws my attention” (T6- Femicide).*

*“When we were young, there was a child abuse problem in our neighborhood. We were searching for the boy with his family altogether. I remember how much his mother beat about the incident. Currently, every problem related to children reminds me of their mothers and the cries of that mother and draws my attention” (T29-Child abuse).*

*“I am from Elazig and when there was an earthquake in Elazig, I was going to my hometown on the bus. When I found out that there was an earthquake, I called my family, I could not reach anyone, the journey did not end for me. My family was fine, but the fear we lived in, the fear of the people, the ruin of my country, the deceased people, the people left homeless, the people suffering from cold, the destruction and change of every place I knew deeply affected me. Earthquake is a reality of our world and the most important problem in my opinion” (T7- Earthquake).*

*“An incident that my father told me when I was little. It affected me when the avalanche occurred in Ağrı Doğubayazıt in 2004 and every snowfall reminds me of an avalanche. My father, an AFAD [rescue organization] officer, removed the bodies of two girls when they dug them with the signs given by the dog in this avalanche, and we were all very sad. Avalanche is a reality of our country” (T81- Avalanche).*

*Environmental pollution has always been in our lives, but it affects me more now. We got used to seeing plastic bottles and packaging while walking on the road, but people started throwing away the masks and gloves they use during the pandemic process. Once, a child leaned over, took that mask in his hand, and then put his hand to his mouth, this picture I came across was very upsetting” (T41-Environmental problems).*

Some statements about the events that social sciences pre-service teachers have experienced through news they read and see are presented below:

*“I remembered the news that I saw with the headline “the man had his donkey torn apart the puppies”. I think that violence and murder against animals have been increasing. I think harming living creatures that have no fault is the most important problem in the world” (T2- Animal problems).*

*“A two-year-old boy was brutally burned in the stove in the news. This news haunts me. I’m sure the little boy is afraid even to approach the stove. Every problem related to children is the most important problem in the world” (T99- Child murder).*

*“In the news, a mother committed suicide because she could not find food for her children. This incident affected me very much and I think poverty should be addressed as a world problem and a solution should be found. As the poverty continues, humanity will die” (T14- Poverty).*

*“A father who sets himself on fire because his kids are hungry was on the news, he wanted a job. Seeing the news of a father trying to end his life with this*

*psychology when his economic troubles increased during the pandemic, I was upset. I know that living with this anxiety every day is very heavy and the most important problem in the world at this time” (T106- Unemployment).*

*“As a person who is interested in soccer and sports, I was watching the game on the screen on the evening of the event. The field was confused after the referee called one of our representative’s trainers as the Black Man (Negro) instead of calling him by name. They did not continue the game to react to racism. This event had a great impact on the world. I was also very irritated by this incident on the screen. The humiliation of people by other people for their race left deep traces on me” (T16-Racism).*

*“I was very touched by the refugee issue when I heard it in the TV news. The war victims and the children are mercilessly left to die, and people only watch this situation. Speaking of wars and economic crises, there are refugees in every corner of the world. This problem is the problem of the world” (T49-Refugee problem).*

Some statements about the events that social sciences pre-service teachers have experienced through social media posts are presented below:

*“Frankly, as a man, I started to feel seriously uncomfortable with the increasing violence of women in recent years. I have been seeing the violence against women and the felonious murder of the women is a huge problem” (T35-Women’s problems).*

*“The murder of a young woman caught my attention on social media. We see countless murders of women every day. However, what happened to a university student of the same age and the brutal comments about him impressed me very much. Because, our fellow men, by looking for faults in the woman who died, sometimes violently, with their comments, rather than the man who killed. The incident of a murdered woman who was subjected to violence to her death affected me very much” (T39- Women’s problems).*

Some movies also impacted the participants of the study:

*“I was very touched by a short film I watched earlier this year. In this movie called “25-liters”, people are limited to use only 25 liters of water a day because of the scarcity that occurred years later. The difficulties experienced in this process are explained. In the film, people queuing for drinking water, increasing diseases are worse than the COVID-19 epidemic we have right now, and of course, this short film has contributed a lot to me, I am more careful now” (T4-Water problem).*

*“I was very touched by a boy lost in an Indian movie I watched. Millions of losses in crowded countries, millions of hungry people in poor countries, children who were subjected to violence in many countries caused me to think for days” (T72-Child problems).*

Participants of the study stated that they are affected by the world problems when they read about them in the books;

*“A book named “A” cut me off from real life. While I was reading the book, I constantly remembered whether these incidents happened or not, but what difference did it make that the author might not have happened to him, but these incidents had happened in other people’s lives in that area. While I was reading*

*the book, I started to research the country in the book. It was very difficult to be a child” (T90- Child problems).*

Cartoons also impacted one of the participants concerning the world problems:

*“Actually, in a magazine, I read for fun, the cartoon frame was engraved in my memory. Under the guns that exploded in the cartoon, a boy was reaching for a piece of bread, bursting with bullets. Yes, hunger is a real problem in our world” (T37-Hunger).*

### 3.2. Pre-service social sciences teachers’ suggestions for solving the world problems

The study’s second research question is: “According to the Social Sciences pre-service teachers, what are the solution suggestions for today’s world problem that affects them the most?”

Table 3. The frequency (*f*) and percentage (%) distribution regarding the suggestions

Today’s Problem of the World	Solution suggestion	<i>f</i>	%
Women’s issues (violence, murder, etc.)	Education	20	90.9
	Legal regulations	2	9.1
Child problems (violence, abuse, murder, etc.)	Education	7	70.0
	Legal regulations	3	30.0
Environmental problems	Education	9	100.0
	Legal regulations	5	62.5
Earthquake	Education	3	37.5
	Legal regulations	3	37.5
Racism	Education	8	100.0
Poverty	Education	6	85.7
	World peace	1	14.3
Animal problems	Education	4	66.7
	Legal regulations	2	33.3
Hunger	Education	3	60.0
	Population policies	1	20.0
	World peace	1	20.0
Water problems (thirst)	Education	3	60.0
	Legal regulations	2	40.0
Terrorist incidents	Education	4	100.0
Unemployment	Population policies	2	66.7
	Education	1	33.3
Refugee problem	Legal regulations	2	66.7
	World peace	1	33.3
Forest fires	Education	2	66.7
	Legal regulations	1	33.3
Population explosion	Education	2	100.0
Gender inequality	Education	2	100.0
Drought	Education	2	100.0
Epidemics	Education	1	50.0
	World peace	1	50.0
Genocide	Education	2	100.0
Traffic accidents	Education	2	100.0

Raw	Education	1	100.0
Religious conflicts	Legal regulations	1	100.0
Education problems	Education	1	100.0
Food waste	Education	1	100.0
Climate change	Education	1	100.0
Mining accident	Legal regulations	1	100.0
Nuclear accidents	Education	1	100.0
Total		112	100.0

As shown in Table 3, education was the most frequently reported solution to the current world problems by the participants. It is seen that in the solution of the first three problems that affect pre-service teachers the most, women's problems (90.1%), children's problems (70%), environmental problems (100%), education was common. Education was also reported as the most important solution for both human problems (79.9%) and natural problems (58.8%).

Education, adjusting legal regulations, sustaining world peace, and changing population policies have been prominent topics in the solution of the 26 world problems that emerged in the study. Pre-service teachers reported that women's problems, children's problems, forest fires, animal problems, earthquakes, and water problems could be solved with education and legal regulations; environmental problems, racism, terrorist incidents, overpopulation, gender inequality, drought, genocide, traffic accidents, avalanches, education problems, food waste, climate change, nuclear accidents with education; poverty, epidemic diseases with education and world peace; hunger, education, population policies, and world peace; unemployment could be solved with population policies and providing education on these matters. They stated that conflict of religion and mine accidents could be resolved by adjusting legal regulations. Some examples of social sciences pre-service teachers' suggestions for solutions are presented below:

*"Before a building is built, it should be checked by the state whether the land is earthquake resistant or not. The government should create deterrent penalties for contractors who do not obey the rules" (T31-Earthquake).*

*"The solution is definitely to educate our girls. Changing a girl's world through education means changing the world of a society's creator, organizer. If women with a well-educated and bright mindset make the change in the society, the brute force brought by the masculine energy that prevails in the world will be replaced by the power of compassion, kindness, and forgiveness, which are not called incapacity" (T39-Women's problems)*

*"It can only be solved through education. Raising future generations with a very good environmental awareness because every individual who grows up with environmental awareness realizes the importance of natural resources and environment for human life" (T41- Environmental problems).*

*"Legal arrangements should be made among those who pollute the water, they even should be judged." (T46-Water problems).*

*"My most effective solution is of course world peace. Because the refugee problem is not a situation that concerns a certain region or a country. Therefore, if the world acts together, this problem will be solved" (T49- Refugee problem)..*

*"To prevent hunger, first of all, excess population growth should be prevented. Finding enough food for the increasing population would be difficult to employ this population" (T61-Hunger).*

*“Saplings grown with a correct education and training system will turn into trees, trees will turn into forests, sharing will increase, greed, wars, and exploitation will decrease, and this will contribute to the reduction of poverty to a great extent” (T67-Poverty).*

*“Water, which is an indispensable element of life, is a limited natural resource. People should be educated to gain awareness in this direction. Idioms such as “cheap than water”, “excuse like water”, “talking about the water and air” [Turkish idiomatic expressions] that we often hear in daily life, unfortunately, give the impression that water is an unlimited, cheap, and insignificant resource. It is more difficult for a person who has grown up with these thoughts to get used to saving water. People should be educated” (T103- Water problem).*

### 3.3. Predictions of the pre-service social sciences teachers about the future

The third research question of the study is: *According to Social Sciences pre-service teachers, what could be the most important problem in the world after 50 years?*

Participants reported 25 world problems that can be experienced after 50 years. According to the pre-service teachers, they stated that the most important problem in the world after 50 years could be “Water problems (thirst)” (35.7%) (Table 4. and Figure 2.).

Table 4. *Frequency (f) and percentage (%) distribution of the predictions*

Today's Problem of the World	f	%
Water problems (thirst)	40	35.7
Drought	17	15.1
Global warming	9	8.0
Population explosion	7	6.2
Environmental problems	4	3.6
Climate change	4	3.6
Famine	4	3.6
Technology addiction	4	3.6
Mechanization	3	2.6
Cultural corruption and destruction of cultures	2	1.8
Desertification	2	1.8
Violence	2	1.8
Poverty	2	1.8
Child problems	1	0.9
Depletion of natural resources	1	0.9
Women's issues	1	0.9
Animal problems	1	0.9
Gluttony	1	0.9
Psychological problems	1	0.9
Epidemics	1	0.9
Wars	1	0.9
Cyberbullying	1	0.9
Armament	1	0.9
Colonialism	1	0.9
Elderly problems (aged care)	1	0.9
Total	112	100.0

When Table 4 is examined, in the predictions of prospective teachers for the future, “drought” (15.1%) and “global warming” are the most important problems awaiting our world after “water problems (thirst). Again, “overpopulation growth” (6.2%), “environmental problems (air, water, soil pollution, technology waste, etc.)” (3.6%), “climate change” (3.6%), “famine” (3.6%), and “Technology addiction” (3.6%) is at the top.

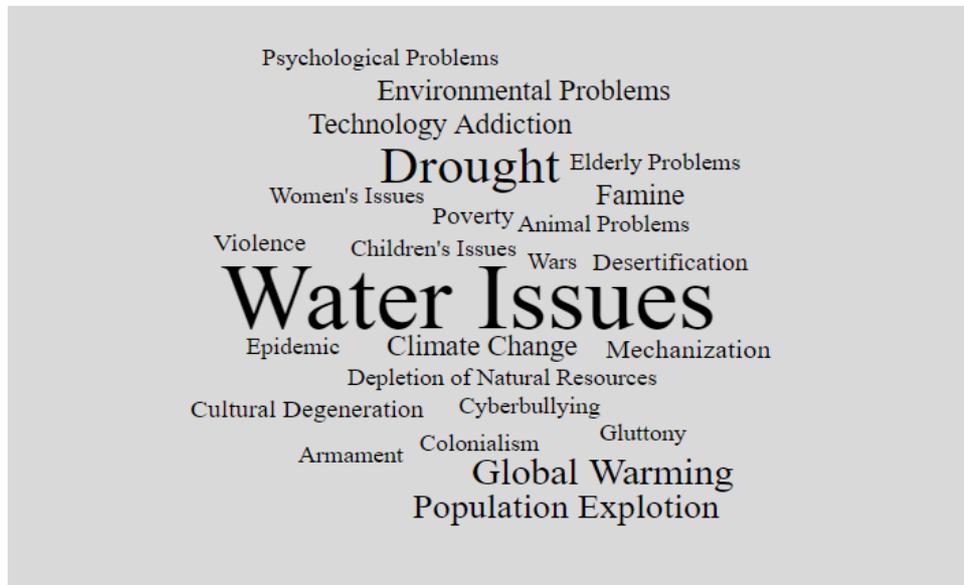


Figure 2. According to Social Sciences pre-service teachers, “Current World Problems” after 50 years.

“Child problems” (childhood diseases), “depletion of natural resources”, “women's problems” (murder), “animal problems” (extinction of animal species), “gluttony”, “psychological problems”, “epidemic diseases”, “wars”, “Cyberbullying”, “armament”, “colonialism”, “elderly problems” (elderly care) are the problems with a low rate (0.9), but Social Sciences pre-service teachers stated that world might have these problems after 50 years.

In general, most of the pre-service teachers ( $f= 72$ , 64.3%) stated that natural problems consisting of “water problems (thirst)”, “drought”, “global warming”, “climate change”, “desertification” may be experienced in the future. The rate of pre-service teachers who foresee that human problems may be experienced is 35.7% ( $f= 40$ ). Social sciences pre-service teachers’ predictions for the future world problems are presented below:

*“I think water will be the biggest problem in the world 50 years later. We are facing this problem today. Lack of water cannot be solved by using any medicine or needles. This problem may cause great disasters and even bring the end of humanity” (T24- Water problem).*

*“I think we will face drought worldwide in 50 years. We don't even have to wait 50 years. Water resources in the world continue to decrease with each passing year, just like this year. Drought is both a natural danger and a danger created by humans due to unconscious behavior” (T75-Drought).*

*“I think 50 years from now, the most important problem in the world will be psychological problems. The reason is that I think that people will become more lonely in the future, they will lose some emotions, they will be their prisoners without trying to cope with problems. 50 years later, I think that people will deal*

*with psychological problems in a situation where they cannot enjoy anything” (T43-Psychological problems).*  
*“I believe that too much population growth will not be a problem of the world but it will be the end of the world” (T20-Overpopulation).*

#### **4. Discussion and conclusion**

Pre-service teachers participating in the study reported a total of 26 categories of current world problems. The pre-service teachers' reports of various current world problems are interpreted as being aware of this issue. Ünlü et al. (2011) also found in their study that, between 2000-2010 in Turkey, individuals had awareness and sensitivity about global warming, the greenhouse effect, and the threats posed by various environmental issues. Again many studies mentioned that social sciences preservice teachers have awareness of current world problems (Şeyihoğlu et al., 2018; Işık Mercan & Sarı, 2019; Akdağ & Yıldız, 2020; Çengelci Köse et al., 2020; Karadağ & Acar, 2020).

In the current study, the problem that pre-service teachers report that they are most concerned about is "women's problems" (violence, murder, etc.). This is followed by "child problems" and "environmental problems" respectively. Again, “earthquake”, “racism”, “poverty”, “animal problems” are the current world problems that pre-service teachers are mostly affected by. This situation can be interpreted as the pre-service teachers are more affected by current issues. Social sciences pre-service teachers are expected to be aware of current problems and to address current problems when they become teachers (Memişoğlu & Güçin, 2017). Şeyihoğlu et al. (2018) examined the most common current world problems reflected in the mind maps created by social sciences and geography pre-service teachers in their studies, and according to pre-service teachers, the most common problems were "natural disasters", "wars and occupations", "hunger and famine", and "environment". They revealed that there are current problems such as the “global warming-greenhouse effect”. In Yazıcı's (2013) research, which examined the attitudes of secondary school students towards “current world Problems, it was concluded that students are more sensitive to current problems such as “hunger”, “violence”, “gender discrimination”, and “poverty”.

Despite the pandemic caused by the epidemic, only two pre-service teachers mentioned that the current world problem most affected them. This situation can be interpreted as pre-service teachers getting used to the new life that comes with the pandemic. In his studies, Duman (2020) stated that university students 'tolerance of Covid-19 fear and uncertainty was at a moderate level'. Tural and Efe (2020), in their studies to investigate the psychological resilience levels of individuals aged 18-65 during the pandemic process, concluded that the participants' levels of Covid-19 fear were moderate.

When the resources that participants hear about the current world problems, which affect them the most, are examined, it is seen that their life experiences, news, movies, social media posts, the cartoons they see in the magazine, and the books they read affect them personally. It is seen that the first three categories of resources are news, own life experiences, and social media, respectively. Tomal et al. (2008) stated that newspaper news is the most up-to-date source and that environmental problems are mostly mentioned in the news about geography. Öztürk & Erten (2020), in their studies conducted to investigate pre-service science teachers' attitudes towards the environment, their behaviors, their knowledge about the environment, and their effect on environmental consciousness in total, stated that their reading environmental news affects environmental behaviors.

Education takes the first place in the solutions social sciences pre-service teachers suggest to current world problems that affect them the most. They stated that in the solution of the first three problems that affect them the most, women's problems, children's problems, environmental problems, education was the most important solution. Albayrak and Deniz Anamur (2020), in their study on March 8, International Women's Day, analyzed women's problems in the national newspapers. They observed that even though the newspapers mentioned women's problems, there was no evaluation of this situation as a cause and effect relationship, and solution proposals were not discussed much in the news content. It can be assumed that they did not read information about the solution from the current resources. Given the importance of education, pre-service teachers are expected to be aware of their role in the solution of world problems.

According to the pre-service teachers participating in this research, 25 categories of problems can be experienced after 50 years. According to the pre-service teachers, the world's most important problem in 50 years will be mainly about natural problems. For them, "water problems (lack of water)", "drought", and "global warming" are the most important problems awaiting our world. "Overpopulation", "environment", "climate change", "famine", "technology addiction" are also at the forefront.

In sum, most of the pre-service teachers stated that they were most affected by the problems of the human world. The share of natural problems consisting of "earthquake", "water problems", "drought", "avalanche", "climate change", which can be collected under the heading of natural problems, is only 15.1%. Education takes the first place in solutions to today's world problem that affects them the most. They predicted that 50 years later, the world's most important problem would be "water problems". To summarize, the problems that pre-service teachers are most affected by are humanities, their solutions are human, and their predictions of world problems related to the future are natural problems. In this context, it can be interpreted that prospective teachers believe that human beings will solve current world problems, but they see natural problems as more worrying in the future.

#### 4.1. Suggestions

- Current world problems education should be given to students at all levels starting from preschool to pre-service teachers in every branch of education faculties, especially to Social Sciences pre-service teachers.
- Elective courses on sociology and psychology can be offered to pre-service teachers for them to better analyze and cope with the current world problems.
- Activities such as seminars and conferences can be prepared to increase the knowledge and awareness of pre-service teachers about current world problems.
- Extracurricular activities can be planned so that prospective teachers can provide relevant information in national and international official and voluntary organizations about current world problems and learn what they can do in cooperation.
- This study was an example of teaching an online course effectively during the pandemic. Making use of students' experiences from their personal lives and make them responsible for the flow of the course is suggested for enhancing the active participation of the students in the course.

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